EG-01

Vardhaman Mahaveer Open Universiy, Kota

"Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried"

Poetry and Drama
1

EG-01

VARDHAMAN MAHAVEER OPEN UNIVERSIY, KOTA

Poetry and Drama

Course Development Committee

Chairman
Prof. (Dr.) Naresh Dadhich
Vice Chancellor
Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University, Kota

Convenor
Prof. (Dr.) Rajul Bhargava
HOD Dept. of English
Rajasthan University, Jaipur

Coordinator
Dr. Kshamata Chaudhary
Convenor, Dept. of English
Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University, Kota

Members

1. Dr. Joya Chakravarty
   Associate Professor (Eng.)
   University of Rajasthan, Jaipur
2. Dr. Rajesh Shukla
   Lecturer (Eng.)
   Government College, Dausa
3. Dr. Suresh Agarwal
   Associate Professor (Eng.)
   JRNRV University, Udaipur
4. Dr. S.P. Singh
   Lecturer (English)
   Agarwal College, Jaipur
5. Dr. Sarita Bang
   Lecturer, Dept. of English
   Vedic Kanya PG College, Jaipur

Editor and Course Writers

Editor
Prof.(Dr.) Rajul Bhargava
HOD Dept. Of English
Rajasthan University, Jaipur

Unit Writer	Unit Number	Unit Writer	Unit Number
1. Dr. Rajesh Shukla Lecturer English Govt. College, Dausa	(1,9,5,7)	2. Dr. Shalini Bhargava Reader Dept. of English Arya Collage of Engg Jaipur	(2,4,6,14, 15,16)
3. Dr. Joya Chakravarty Associate Prof. (English) University of Rajasthan, Jaipur	(11,12,13)	4. Dr. Suresh Agarwal Associate Prof. (English) JRNRV University, Udaipur	(3,8,10)
5. Dr. Sunita Agarwal Associate Prof. (English) University of Rajasthan, Jaipur	(17,18)		

Course Supervision and Production

Director (Academic)
Prof. (Dr.) Anam Jaitly
Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University, Kota

Director (Material Production & Distribution)
Prof. (Dr.) P.K.Sharma
Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University, Kota

Production Oct. 2007

Block Introduction

Block I

This block contains poetry in chronological order which cover a range of interesting, relevant themes and give pupils a taste of classical poetry, which have universal appeal and eternal value. Shakespeare's sonnets immortalize ture love and friendship where as Milton's sonnets are intensely religious poems, with abundance of Biblical quotations and an affirmation of christian faith and virtue.

Besides Shakespeare and Milton you will read the poems of Dryden, lyrics of Donne, Gray, Black and a satire of Pope. We hope you will enjoy reading this block.

Block I

This block contains plays of William Shakespeare ,an renowned English playwright whose works are considered the greatest in the history of English Literature .His famous comedy :The Merchant of Venice' partake less of farce and more of idyllic romance, while historical play :Julius Caesar' successfully integrate political elements with individual characterisation.

This block also gives a detail study of literary ,social and cultural history from Elizabethan Age to The Age of Sensibility.

We hope you will enjoy reading this block and get an insight regrarding the characteristics and themes in the plays.

Unit - 1

Shakespeare: Shall I Compare Thee

Structure

1.0 Objectives

In this unit we will make you familiar with the poetry of William Shakespeare. Apart from being a dramatist par excellence, Shakespeare was also a poet of great merits. We will let you study one of the prominent sonnets of Shakespeare. We will give you practice by:

(i) giving the text of the sonnet of Shakespeare
(ii) giving you meanings & explanations of difficult words and phrases
(iii) critically analyzing the text and explaining the literary devices used in the sonnet
(iv) giving you practice to answer questions based on the text.

We will describe the literary scenario of the age of Shakespeare and see into his life and works, after giving an introduction about the age and the author. We will then discuss the text in detail and critically appreciate it. The unit will have exercises to help you evaluate your understanding. You can check your answer with the answers of the exercises given by us in section 1.5. Try to read and consult other related books suggested.

1.1 Introduction

It happens very rarely in the history of literature that a craftsman who has acquired perfect control of the medium and a masterly ease in handling the techniques and conventions of his day is also a universal genius of the highest order, combining with his technical proficiency a unique ability to render experience in poetic language and an uncanny intuitive understanding of human psychology. William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) has a remarkable combination of all these qualities and has been praised for his knowledge of the human psyche.

In the Elizabethen age the art of words in England flourished without the sustaining influence of the other arts, in subsidiary forms. Further this art of words, which is the art of literature, gained great encouragement from the court and from the Queen herself. Yet even in Elizabethan times when literature seems to be so much at the centre of the national life, it failed to command the attention of the nation as a whole. In later times the court has not often been as genial and as helpful as it was under Queen Elizabeth.

It is strange that a country which has achieved so much in its literature should yet have regarded contemporary literature so often with indifference or, in some periods, even positive hostility. The governmental attitude to printing and to the general circulation of books was hostile from the times of Tudor to the beginnings of the eighteenth century and censorship acted in capricious form.

When the Tudors granted a charter to the Stationer's company in 1557, it was not with any desire of improving the art of printing or of spreading learning or imaginative literature, but to license, control, suppress and watch more closely the activities of printers and publishers. It was on 29th June, 1566 that Queen Elizabeth signed a decree passed by the star chamber requiring every printer to enter into recognizance for his good behaviour. No books were to be printed or imported without the sanction of a special commission of ecclesiastical authorities. Later in 1586 all printing was restricted to London and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and all books had to be licensed. It was under the same period that inspite of great restrictions, some of the greatest literature in English was produced.

The great writers did not have their works printed in good and beautiful books. So while Shakespeare touched the resources of language in a way unmatched in any period of English literature, his plays were published in wretched conditions that were unsightly to read and whose texts were so carelessly reproduced that it has ever since puzzled the ingenuity of generations of commentators. Sonnets composed by Shakespeare about love, became an irresistible poetical fashion during the decade from 1590 to 1600. The sonnets are of the English form, which is now generally referred as Shakespearean.

1.2 Age And Author

In this section we will discuss the sixteenth century with reference to the life, ideals and works of William Shakespeare, the greatest figure in English Literature.

1.2.1 About the Age:

With the revival of learning the study of the ancient Greek and Latin classics was promoted. Reason came in for faith, hence began a revived interest in life and its pleasures, art, literature, science, and philosophy. This attitude is called humanism – concern with human instead of divine. Literature henceforth answered the call of life.

Long before Elizabeth I ascended the throne, the parliament, at the instance of her father, Henry VIII, had declared the English church independent of the Pope, making the king and his successors its heads and defenders of the faith. Elizabeth inherited this tradition. By the defeat of the Spanish Armada that had

long posed a threat to the security of England another external obstacle to its progress was removed. It was a glorious epoch of English history. All the time the message of the ancient Greek and Latin classics was flowing freely into the century which, coupled with the blessings of peace and prosperity and the enlightened era of literary activity, flourished particularly in the fields of drama, poetry and criticism.

Although James I, who succeeded Elizabeth, failed to follow in her footsteps and even in some areas reversed them, the glory that England achieved during her reign lasted throughout his also. In literature it is common to extend the period of her influence to the end of James I's reign.

Although several kinds of verse forms were attempted in this age – the epic romance, the pastoral, the verse tale, the elegy, the sonnet, the lyric, the satire, it is mainly an age of the last three. Following close upon the heels of the renaissance, it availed itself of all that the Greek and Latin classics had to offer but the form of whatever it chose to write is largely its own. It was rather attempted and attracted by its matter. It is important to bear in mind because in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the writers were more attracted by its form than by its matter.

Ranking next only to drama, poetry proved no less popular. For the first time it began to be published in anthologies. The first one was called after the name of its printer, "Tuttle's Miscellany". This was originally called "Songs and Sonnets written by Surrey and Others". This collection of poetry represents the first available instance of blank verse in English. Twenty years later "England's Helion" published in 1600 had poems of Sidney, Spenser, Drayton, Lodge, Greece, Peek and Shakespeare.

1.2.2 About the Sonnet:

Sonnet was first introduced in England by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey in the first half of the sixteenth century. His sonnets and those of his contemporary the Earl of Surrey were chiefly translations from the Italian of Petrarch and the French of Ronsard and others. While Wyatt introduced the sonnet into English, it was Surrey who gave them the rhyme scheme, meter, and division into quatrains that now characterizes the English sonnet. Sir Philip Sidney's sequence *Astrophil and Stella* (1591) started a tremendous vogue for sonnet sequences: the next two decades saw sonnet sequences by William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel, Fulke Greville, William Drummond of Hawthornden, and many others.These sonnets were all essentially inspired by the Petrarchan tradition, and generally treat of the poet's love for some woman; the exception is Shakespeare's sequence. In the 17th century, the sonnet was adapted to other purposes, with John Donne and George Herbert writing religious sonnets, and John Milton using the sonnet as a general meditative poem. Both the Shakespearean and Petrarchan rhyme schemes were popular throughout this period, as well as many variants. Writers, who followed Petrarch, wrote their sonnets addressed to some lady, real or supposed. Love, therefore, is the subject of sonnets, may it be for the sake of form or sometimes real. Where

it is conventional, the lady is always heartless, the lover languishing for her sake, and sometimes even at the point of death, and so on.

A variant on the English form is the Spenserian sonnet, named after Edmund Spenser (c.1552–1599) in which the rhyme scheme is, *a-b a-b, b-c b-c, c-d c-d, e-e*. In a Spenserian sonnet there does not appear to be a requirement that the initial octave set up a problem which the closing sestet answers, as is the case with a Petrarchan sonnet. Instead, the form is treated as three quatrains connected by the interlocking rhyme scheme and followed by a couplet. The linked rhymes of his quatrains suggest the linked rhymes of such Italian forms as terza rima.

Though the sonnet was originally brought over from Italy, it was the French practioners of the form that inspired the English writers. In general, the language of the sonnets is rich and the verse musical. Thoughts, word and metre were happily blended.

Everyone who reads poetry knows Shakespeare's Sonnets. The sonnets include some of the most beautiful poems ever written. Sonnets, within their forthright form, are the most exquisitely wrought creations of sound and syllable in the language. Frequently they give compelling utterance to experiences everyone goes through in love – anguish, elation, joy, dismay; and they realize with directness and fullness basic conditions of existence which love has to confront. Many of the sonnets of Shakespeare are wonderfully generous poems; they give meaning and beauty. The generosity is at once personal, a selfless love, and impersonal, the glow upon the world when Shakespeare began to write. His poems create a world resonant with the friend's beauty. Each of his sonnet is one utterance. Shakespeare's use of form is simple and forthright and also delicate and subtle. He never varies from three quatrains followed by a couplet, *abab, cdcd, efef, gg.*

1.2.3 About the Author:

Of William Shakespeare, in the biographical sense, we know too much and too little. The diligence of investigators has amassed a huge quantity of information. Two great unassailable facts we do know and must never forget: first that a man named William Shakespeare lived and wrote, was seen by many, admired for his works, liked for his qualities; and second that a great mass of work was known by his friends and rivals to be his, was published as his by people, and was never doubted to be his by any contemporary or by any successor.

It was in the nineteenth century in America, that some people began to throw up a succession of cranks, representing the extremes in relation to life and works of Shakespeare. Some began to plead that plays of Shakespeare must have been written by a member of the Peerage, who passed his first few plays under the name of Shakespeare, and then when the name became famous and extremely popular, the peer could not but continue doing the same. Some other were of the view that these plays were compressed by Marlowe, who passed them under the name of Shakespeare as he was being involved in a case of murder and was underground. People have tried to

make him a mystery, by trying to find reasons for what is beyond reason, "All creative genius is a mystery".

All these arguments have not been able to stand the test of time and the real Shakespeare has remained a reality. It has doubled his greatness, as common people try to create doubles and mysteries about the people who are great.

The following entry in the register of baptism is relied upon in fixing Shakespeare's birth:

"1564, April 26, Gulielmus Filins Johannes Shakespeare" [William Son (of) John].

The practice was to baptize the child within a few days of his birth; so 23rd April was fixed as Shakespeare's birth date. His birth place was Stratford-On-Avon in Warwickshire, where his father John was a glover, a corn dealer and farmer. William was the first son and the third child of John and Mary Arden, daughter of a husbandman and landowner. William is expected to join school at the age of six or seven, till he was sixteen, when due to his father John falling on evil days he had to be withdrawn from school. At eighteen he married Anne Hathway, his senior by eight years by special license on November 28, 1582. It was the sum of £6,1354d, which Anne received from her father on her marriage, that attracted the penniless Shakespeare to marry her. His first daughter Susannah, was baptized on May 26, 1583. His twins, Hamnet and Judith, were baptized on February 2, 1585. Whether his marriage was a happy one or not, is not known. Shakespeare of course dwells on the evils of a woman wedding one younger than herself in *Twelfth Night* (II, iv); of the disdain and discard which grow through such incompatible union in The *Tempest* (IV,i) and of a wife's jealousy in The *Comedy of Errors* (V,i).

In 1587 he left Stratford for London, and took the way to fame and fortune. There are many accounts of what he did in London. But one fact remains that by 1592, he was actively engaged in writing plays and acting. About this time he found a patron in Henry Wrothesley, Earl of Southampton. By 1596, he became wealthy enough to apply for a Coat of Arms.

On August 11, 1596, his only son Hamnet died and was buried at Stratford. This must have been a great blow to him. On May 4, 1597 he bought for £60, the largest house in Stratford, New Place, and later on May 1, 1602 he added one hundred and seven acres of land to New Place.

He joined "The Theatre" on coming to London and when it was rebuilt as "The Globe" in 1599, he became its partner. He had formed his own company "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants" to produce and act on stage. On King James I's accession in 1603, his company assumed the title of "The King's Players". He married his daughter Susannah in 1607 to a wine merchant of Stratford. His father died in 1601 and on his mother's death in 1609, he decide to retire from London, after selling or releasing his shares of "The Globe". He remained active in literary and social circles. In 1615 he finalised and got hold of the little deeds of a house and land through the orders of Lord Chancellor from Anne Bacon, the mother of the great essayist Francis Bacon.

He made his will in January 1616 and signed it on March 25, 1616. He died on April 24, 1616 in the chancel of Stratford Church.

Shakespeare's life in London is an unbroken record of success and prosperity, and the rest of his story, so far as it can be read in records is one of continued good fortune.

1.2.4 Self Assessment Questions:

We are giving you here some questions to evaluate your understanding about Elizabethan age and life of William Shakespeare.

Exercise – 1

Choose the correct answer from amongst the three alternatives given below each question:

1. William Shakespeare was :
   (a) a great reformer
   (b) the biggest atheist
   (c) a universal Genius
2. The Elizabethan age of literature was at the centre of:
   (a) National life
   (b) Creative Output
   (c) Imaginative writers
3. Censorship on printing was first imposed during the reign of :
   (a) Queen Elizabeth
   (b) James I
   (c) Tudors
4. The order to get the books licensed was passed in:
   (a) 1566
   (b) 1576
   (c) 1586
5. The Spanish Armada posed a threat to:
   (a) Security of England
   (b) Defense of Spain
   (c) Church of England
6. Queen Elizabeth was succeeded by:
   (a) Charles I
   (b) Tudors
   (c) James I
7. The English Church was declared independent of the Pope by:
   (a) Queen Elizabeth
   (b) Tudors
   (c) Henry VIII
8. Sonnet belongs to:
   (a) Shakespeare
   (b) England
   (c) Italy

9. Twins to Shakespeare were born on:
   (a) May 26, 1583
   (b) February 2, 1585
   (c) November 28, 1582
10. Shakespeare bought 'New Place' on:
   (a) May 4, 1597
   (b) August 11, 1596
   (c) May 6, 1597

1.4 Reading Text (Shakespeare: Shall I Compare Thee)

In this section we will give you practice to study and understand Shakespeare's Sonnet "Shall I Compare Thee".

This is one of the most famous of all the sonnets, justifiably so. But it would be a mistake to take it entirely in isolation, for it links in with so many of the other sonnets through the themes of the descriptive power of verse; the ability of the poet to depict the fair youth adequately, or not; and the immortality conveyed through being hymned in these 'eternal lines'. It is noticeable that here the poet is full of confidence that his verse will live as long as there are people drawing breath upon the earth, whereas later he apologises for his poor wit and his humble lines which are inadequate to encompass all the youth's excellence. Now, perhaps in the early days of his love, there is no such self-doubt and the eternal summer of the youth is preserved forever in the poet's lines. The poem also works at a rather curious level of achieving its objective through dispraise. The summer's day is found to be lacking in so many respects (too short, too hot, too rough, sometimes too dingy), but curiously enough one is left with the abiding impression that 'the lovely boy' is in fact like a summer's day at its best, fair, warm, sunny, temperate, one of the darling buds of May, and that all his beauty has been wonderfully highlighted by the comparison.

1.3.1 Text:

Given below is the text of William Shakespeare's Sonnet

SHALL I COMPARE THEE

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 dimm'd :
And every fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course, untrimm'd
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest :
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st 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.

1.3.2 Glossary:

1-4	I	:	the poet Shakespeare
	thee	:	the beauty of the poet's friend W.H.
	thou	:	you, the poet's friend
	temperate	:	calm and mild
	darling	:	lovely
	buds of May	:	flowers that grow in month of May
	lease	:	life
5-8	too hot	:	in dazzling brightness
	the eye of heaven	:	sun
	gold	:	shining brightly
	complexion	:	face
	declines	:	to loose beauty
	untrimm'd	:	fade away
9-12	eternal	:	permanent, which is never to diminish
	summer	:	beauty
	fade	:	disappear, decline
	brag	:	to take away
	in his shade	:	under its control
	to time	:	for further or future time
	growe'st	:	to become permanent
13-14	breathe	:	live
	life	:	to make permanent

1.4.3 Explanations

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?:

This is taken usually to mean 'What if I were to compare thee etc?' The stock comparisons of the loved one to all the beauteous things in nature hover in the background throughout.

Thou art more lovely and more temperate: The youth's beauty is more perfect than the beauty of a summer day.

More temperate - more gentle, more restrained, whereas the summer's day might have violent excesses in store, such as are about to be described.

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,: May was a summer month in Shakespeare's time, because the calendar in use lagged behind the true sidereal calendar by at least a fortnight *darling buds of May* - the beautiful, much loved buds of the early summer; favourite flowers.

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Legal terminology. The summer holds a lease on part of the year, but the lease is too short, and has an early termination (*date*).

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

Sometime = on occasion, sometimes; *the eye of heaven* = the sun.

And often is his gold complexion dimmed, his gold complexion = his (the sun's) golden face. It would be dimmed by clouds on overcast days generally.

And every fair from fair sometime declines, All beautiful things (*every fair*)

occasionally become inferior in comparison with their essential previous state of beauty (*from fair*). They all decline from perfection.

By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:

By chance accidents, or by the fluctuating tides of nature, which are not subject to control, *nature's changing course untrimmed*. *untrimmed* - this refers to the ballast (trimming) on a ship which keeps it stable

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,

Nor shall it (your eternal summer) lose its hold on that beauty which you so richly possess. *ow'st* = ownest, possess. By metonymy we understand 'nor shall you lose any of your beauty'.

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st, in eternal lines = in the undying lines of my verse. Perhaps with a reference to progeny, and lines of descent *to time thou grow'st* - you keep pace with time, you grow as time grows.

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,

For as long as humans live and breathe upon the earth, for as long as there are seeing eyes on the earth.

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. That is how long these verses will live, celebrating you, and continually renewing your life.

1.4.4 Summary:

The poet does not feel inclined to compare his friend's beauty to the beauty of a day in summer season. He believes that his friend his more mild, calm and beautiful than the beauty acquired by a day of summer. The beauty which we witness in a summer's day is very short lived. The good and beautiful flowers are shaken away and broken down by wild winds, hence, their beauty is short lived.

During summer the sun is sometimes very hot and dazzles very brightly, but sometimes when its rays are covered by clouds, its shine becomes dim. Every beautiful thing in this world looses its beauty and charm, either suddenly or in due course of time.

But the beauty of his friend is eternal and thus will never become less. It is immortal it will neither fade nor decline. The poet is confident that his friend's beauty would not be taken away even after death. It is eternal and permanent. It would increase with the passage of time. He says that he has immortalized his friend's beauty through this sonnet, and as long as this sonnet would be read by people, his friend's beauty would remain alive.

1.4.5 Critical Analysis:

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets in all. The first 126 sonnets are addressed to his friend W.H., while the other 26 sonnets are conventional exercises in verse. The present sonnet is No. 66. The poet points out that every beautiful thing in nature is sure to decline either abruptly or in due course of nature's time.

But the intellectual and spiritual beauty of his friend W.H. is eternal as it cannot be diminished by the passing of time like other objects. It, on the other hand, will grow permanent because it has been immortalished through this sonnet. So long as this written literature remains, and people read this poem, the beauty of his friend will survive's unlike other objects of beauty.

The sonnet is addressed to W.H. This young man may have been Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton or Sir Philip Sidney's nephew, William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke.

1.4.6 Theme:

The theme of this sonnets, as of the other 153 addressed to W.H. is the permanence and supremacy of love. This is a recurring theme in other sonnets of Shakespeare. The poet gives an assurance of poetic immortality, love and friendship. So long as the written word remains and this poem is read in future, the beauty of his friend, and the poets' love for his friend would remain alive in the heart, eyes and mind of the readers. It proves the power of written words, which would prove mighter than the law of nature.

1.4.7 Style:

This sonnet has been composed in the format of English Sonnet, popularly known as the Shakespearean Sonnet. It has three quartrains of four lines each and a two lines couplet at the end. Two characteristics of Shakespeare stand out. The first is known as cantabolic. This refers to the work of someone whose ear is unerring. He is intent upon making his verse as melodious, in the simplest and most obvious sense of the word, as possible and there is scarcely a line, which is out of rhyme, rhythm or tune.

The second characteristic that this sonnet displays is a mystery of every possible rhetorical device. It avoids the monotony. On the whole the style is very wholesome and powerful. It catches the attention of the reader and makes him believe to be true whatever he reads.

1.4.8 Self Assessment Questions:

You have gone through the marvelous sonnet of Shakespeare and have understood the content, theme, style and the idea of the poet. Now answer the following questions:

1. The sonnets addressed to the Dark Lady are:
   (a) 26
   (b) 54
   (c) 24
2. Shakespeare addressed 126 sonnets to:
   (a) H.W.
   (b) D.L.
   (c) W.H.

3. The 'eyes of the heaven' are:
   (a) The sun
   (b) The God
   (c) The poet
4. Death can not take away the:
   (a) Beauty of W.H.
   (b) Power of heaven
   (c) The laws of nature
5. More powerful than nature and heaven is:
   (a) Beauty
   (b) Poem
   (c) Sun

Exercise – 3

Answer the following questions in your own words:

1. Discuss the theme of the sonnet you have read.
2. What would the poet immortalise?
3. What happens to things of beauty?
4. Discuss the structure of "Shall I Compare Thee".
5. How does Shakespeare describe the sun and its brightness?

1.5 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have acquired knowledge and had practice:

(i) to understand the sonnets,
(ii) to understand the Elizabethan age,
(iii) to know about life of Shakespeare
(iv) to know and understand various literary trends of the Elizabethan age,
(v) to critically analysis Shakespeare's sonnet
(vi) to understand, analyse and appreciate the poem and answer the questions based on it in your own words.

1.6 Answers To The Exercises

Exercise – 1

1. (c) Universal genius
2. (a) National life
3. (c) Tudor
4. (c) 1586
5. (a) Security of England
6. (c) James-I
7. (c) Henry VIII
8. (c) Italy
9. (b) February 2, 1585
10. (a) May 4, 1597

Exercise – 2

1. (a) 26
2. (c) W.H.
3. (a) The sun
4. (a) Beauty of W.H.
5. (b) Poem

Exercise – 3

1. The beauty of a person is immortal and does not wither with time. He here refers to the inner beauty which is supreme and unaffected by laws of nature. The loved one has been compared to all the beauteous things in nature and this hovers in the background throughout the poem.

2. The poet wishes and is confident enough to immortalize true love and friendship. According to him love is eternal and poetry is immortal. Thus, as long as the written words remain and are read, the beauty of his friend would prevail and enchant the hearts of the readers.

3. The natural objects of beauty are under the control of nature. Nature and time have their effect on them and thus they loose their beauty with time. The things of beauty are short-lived. The beauty of the summer's day and a flower are destroyed by strong winds, similarly physical attraction may diminish any time. His friend's beauty is incomparable to such time bound things of beauty and shall remain forever.

4. The structure is typically English sonnet. These are the alterations made by surrey in the structure of original Petrarchan sonnet it has three quatrains of four lines each and a couplet of two lines at the end of the sonnet.

5. Shakespeare describes the Sun as the eyes of the heaven. The poet feels that the brightness of the sun can be dimmed anytime with the advent of cloudy weather. Similarly every beautiful object can lose its charm anytime.

2.7 Books Suggested

1. Alexander, P.H., *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* S.Chand: New Delhi, 1976.
2. Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* Macmillan: Bombay, 1986.
3. Daiches, David, *A Critical History of English Literature* (Four Volumes) Allied: New Delhi, 1984.
4. Bloom, Harold, *William Shakespeare's Sonnets* Viva Books private Limited: New Delhi, 2007

Unit-2

Shakespeare : Let Me Not To The Marriage Of True Minds

Structure

2.0 Objectives

In this unit we will make you familiar with the poetry of William Shakespeare. Apart from being a dramatist par excellence, Shakespeare was also a poet of great merits. We will let you study one of the prominent sonnets of Shakespeare. We will give you practice by:

(i) giving the text of the sonnet of Shakespeare
(ii) giving you meanings & explanations of difficult words and phrases
(iii) critically analyzing the text and explaining the literary devices used in the sonnet
(iv) giving you practice to answer questions based on the text.

2.1 Introduction

The forces produced during the reign (1558–1603) of Elizabeth I, one of the most fruitful eras in literary history were remarkable. . Stronger political relationships with the Continent were developed, increasing England's exposure to Renaissance culture. Humanism became the most important force in English literary and intellectual life, both in its narrow sense—the study and imitation of the Latin classics—and in its broad sense—the affirmation of the secular, in addition to the otherworldly, concerns of people

The energy of England's writers matched that of its mariners and merchants. Accounts by men such as Richard Hakluyt, Samuel Purchas, and Sir Walter Raleigh were eagerly read. The activities and literature of the Elizabethans reflected a new nationalism, which expressed itself also in the works of chroniclers (John Stow, Raphael Holinshed,

and others), historians, and translators and even in political and religious tracts. A myriad of new genres, themes, and ideas were incorporated into English literature. Italian poetic forms, especially the sonnet, became models for English poets.

Sir Thomas Wyatt was the most successful sonneteer among early Tudor poets, and was, with Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, a seminal influence. *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557) was the first and most popular of many collections of experimental poetry by different, often anonymous, hands. A common goal of these poets was to make English as flexible a poetic instrument as Italian. Among the more prominent of this group were Thomas Churchyard, George Gascoigne, and Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford. An ambitious and influential work was *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), a historical verse narrative by several poets that updated the medieval view of history and the morals to be drawn from it.

The poet who best synthesized the ideas and tendencies of the English Renaissance was Edmund Spenser. His unfinished epic poem *The Faerie Queen* (1596) is a treasure house of romance, allegory, adventure, Neoplatonic ideas, patriotism, and Protestant morality, all presented in a variety of literary styles. The ideal English Renaissance man was Sir Philip Sidney—scholar, poet, critic, courtier, diplomat, and soldier—who died in battle at the age of 32. His best poetry is contained in the sonnet sequence *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) and his *Defence of Poesie* is among the most important works of literary criticism in the tradition.

Many others in a historical era when poetic talents were highly valued, were skilled poets. Important late Tudor sonneteers include Spenser and Shakespeare, Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel, and Fulke Greville. More versatile even than Sidney was Sir Walter Raleigh—poet, historian, courtier, explorer, and soldier—who wrote strong, spare poetry.

Early Tudor drama owed much to both medieval morality plays and classical models. *Ralph Roister Doister* (c.1545) by Nicholas Udall and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (c.1552) are considered the first English comedies, combining elements of classical Roman comedy with native burlesque. During the late 16th and early 17th cent., drama flourished in England as never before or since. It came of age with the work of the University Wits, whose sophisticated plays set the course of Renaissance drama and paved the way for Shakespeare.

The Wits included John Lyly, famed for the highly artificial and much imitated prose work *Euphues* (1578); Robert Greene, the first to write romantic comedy; the versatile Thomas Lodge and Thomas Nashe; Thomas Kyd, who popularized neo-Senecan tragedy; and Christopher Marlowe, the greatest dramatist of the group. Focusing on heroes whose very greatness leads to their downfall, Marlowe wrote in blank verse with a rhetorical brilliance and eloquence superbly equal to the demands of high drama. William Shakespeare, of course, fulfilled the promise of the Elizabethan age. His history plays, comedies, and tragedies set a standard never again equaled, and he is universally regarded as the greatest dramatist and one of the greatest poets of all time.

Elizabethan literature generally reflects the exuberant self-confidence of a nation expanding its powers, increasing its wealth, and thus keeping at bay its serious social and religious problems. Disillusion and pessimism followed, however, during the unstable reign of James I (1603–25). The 17th cent. was to be a time of great upheaval—

revolution and regicide, restoration of the monarchy, and, finally, the victory of Parliament, landed Protestantism, and the moneyed interests.

2.2 Age & Author

2.2.1 About the Age

The **Elizabethan Era** is the period associated with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) and is often considered to be a golden age in English history. It was the height of the English Renaissance, and saw the flowering of English literature and poetry. This was also the time during which Elizabethan theatre flourished and William Shakespeare, among others, composed plays that broke away from England's past style of plays and theatre. It was an age of expansion and exploration abroad, while at home the Protestant Reformation became entrenched in the national mindset.

The Elizabethan Age is viewed so highly because of the contrasts with the periods before and after. It was a brief period of largely internal peace between the English Reformation and the battles between Protestants and Catholics and the battles between parliament and the monarchy that would engulf the seventeenth century. The Protestant/Catholic divide was settled, for a time, by the Elizabethan Religious Settlement and parliament was still not strong enough to challenge royal absolutism.

England was also well-off compared to the other nations of Europe. The Italian Renaissance had come to an end under the weight of foreign domination of the peninsula. France was embroiled in its own religious battles that would only be settled in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes. In part because of this, but also because the English had been expelled from their last outposts on the continent, the centuries long conflict between France and England was largely suspended for most of Elizabeth's reign

It was the height of the English Renaissance, and saw the flowering of English literature and poetry. This was also the time during which Elizabethan theatre flourished and William Shakespeare, among others, composed plays that broke away from England's past style of plays and theatre. It was an age of expansion and exploration abroad, while at home the Protestant Reformation became entrenched in the national mindset.The Elizabethan Age is viewed so highly because of the contrasts with the periods before and after. It was a brief period of largely internal peace between the English Reformation and the battles between Protestants and Catholics and the battles between parliament and the monarchy that would engulf the seventeenth century. The Protestant/ Catholic divide was settled, for a time, by the Elizabethan Religious Settlement and parliament was still not strong enough to challenge royal absolutism.

England was also well-off compared to the other nations of Europe. The Italian Renaissance had come to an end under the weight of foreign domination of the peninsula. France was embroiled in its own religious battles that would only be settled in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes. In part because of this, but also because the English had been expelled from their last outposts on the continent, the centuries long conflict between France and England was largely suspended for most of Elizabeth's reign

2.2.2 About The Author

William Shakespeare (baptised 26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) was an English poet and playwright now widely regarded as the greatest writer of the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. His surviving works include at least 38 plays, two long narrative poems, 154 sonnets, and a variety of other poems. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" (or simply "The Bard"). He is the world's most performed playwright, and his works have been translated into every major living language.

Shakespeare was born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon, and at the age of 18 married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judith. Sometime between 1585 and 1592 Shakespeare moved to London, where he found success as an actor, writer, and part-owner of the playing company the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later known as the King's Men). Shakespeare appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613, and died there three years later. Few records survive concerning Shakespeare's private life, and considerable speculation has been poured into this void, including questions about his sexuality, religious beliefs, and whether the works attributed to him were actually written by others.

Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1590 and 1612. He is one of the few playwrights of the time considered to have excelled in both tragedy and comedy, and many of his dramas, including *Macbeth, Hamlet* and *King Lear*, are ranked among the greatest plays of Western literature. Shakespeare greatly influenced subsequent theatre and literature through his innovative use of plot, language, and genre. He ultimately influenced the English language itself, and many of his quotations and neologisms are in everyday use. Among literary and dramatic critics, Shakespeare is probably best known for creating realistic characters, capable of expressing the full range of human experience, in an era when dramatic characters were either flat or merely archetypes. Even villains such as Macbeth and Shylock could elicit understanding—if not sympathy—because they were portrayed as recognizably flawed human beings

2.3 Sonnets of Shakespeare

The Shakespeare of the sonnets is a very different person from the playwright who gave us King Lear, The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream. In the plays he is the consummate craftsman, entertaining audiences with masterpieces of dramatic effect while exploring human character to a degree seen never before or since. The sonnets, though,

reveal a more thoughtful, introspective writer, a philosopher-poet inquiring, especially, into the question of Time and its effect on human affairs. But he's never coldly intellectual; his sonnets burn with emotion and (unrequited?) love thus, Shakespeare's sonnets are the definitive statement of the metaphysical poet's art: he presages Donne and Marvell and their 'passionate intelligence' with remarkable accuracy.

Soon after the introduction of the Italian sonnet, English poets began to develop a fully native form. These poets included Sir Philip Sidney, Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel,

the Earl of Surrey's nephew Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford and William Shakespeare. The form is often named after Shakespeare, not because he was the first to write in this form but because he became its most famous practitioner. The form consists of three quatrains and a couplet. The couplet generally introduced an unexpected sharp thematic or imagistic "turn" called a volta. The usual rhyme scheme was *a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g*. In addition, sonnets are written in iambic pentameter, meaning that there are 10 syllables per line, and that every other syllable is naturally accented.

Shakespeare's Sonnets, is a collection of poems in sonnet form written by William Shakespeare that deal with such themes as love, beauty, politics, and mortality. They were probably written over a period of several years. All 154 poems appeared in a 1609 collection, comprising 152 previously unpublished sonnets and two poems, numbers 138 ("When my love swears that she is made of truth") and 144 ("Two loves have I, of comfort and despair"), that had previously been published in a 1599 miscellany entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

The Sonnets were published under conditions that have become unclear to history. For example, there is a mysterious dedication at the beginning of the text wherein a certain "Mr. W.H." is described as "the onlie begetter" of the poems by the publisher Thomas Thorpe, but it is not known who this man was. The dedication refers to the poet as "Ever-Living", a phrase which has fueled the Shakespearean authorship debate due to its use as an epithet for the deceased. Also, although the works were written by William Shakespeare, it is not known if the publisher used an authorized manuscript from him, or an unauthorized copy. Interestingly, the author's name is hyphenated on the title page and on the top of every other page in the book.

The first 17 sonnets are written to a young man, urging him to marry and have children, thereby passing down his beauty to the next generation. These are called the procreation sonnets. Most of them, however, 18-126, are addressed to a young man expressing the poet's love for him. Sonnets 127-152 are written to the poet's mistress expressing his love for her. The final two sonnets, 153-154, are allegorical. The final thirty or so sonnets are written about a number of issues, such as the young man's infidelity with the poet's mistress, self-resolution to control his own lust, beleaguered criticism of the world, etc.

Most of the sonnets are addressed to a beautiful young man, a rival poet, and a dark-haired lady. Readers of the sonnets today commonly refer to these characters as the Fair Youth, the Rival Poet, and the Dark Lady. The narrator expresses admiration for the Fair Youth's beauty, and later has an affair with the Dark Lady. It is not known whether the poems and their characters are fictional or autobiographical

2.4 Reading Text Shakespeare: Let Me Not To The Marriage Of True Minds

In this section we will give you practice to read, understand and analyse the sonnet of William Shakespeare. The sonnet number 116, *Let Me Not To The Marriage Of True Minds* is about the supremacy of love. After you have gone through the text, you can take the help of the glossary to understand any difficult word or phrase you find in the text. Critical analysis and prominent literary devices would also be explained to you, before giving you the questions to assess your own understanding of the text.

2.4.1 Text:

Given below is the original text of William Shakespeare's sonnet

LET ME NOT TO THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS

1 Let me not to the marriage of true minds
2 Admit impediments, love is not love
3 Which alters when it alteration finds,
4 Or bends with the remover to remove.
5 O' no! it is an ever fixed mark
6 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken,
7 It is the star to every wandering bark,
8 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
9 Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
10 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
11 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
12 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
13 If this be error, and upon me proved,
14 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

2.4.2 Glossary:

1-4	marriage	:	union
	true minds	:	true love
	love is not love	:	love which changes is not true love
	impediments	:	obstacles, hurdles
	alter	:	change
	alternation	:	change in attitude of the person who is loved
	bends	:	turns away from its course
	remover	:	one who breaks relations
5-8	fixed mark	:	constant, which does not change
	looks on	:	stands fixed with dignity
	tempests	:	sea storms
	shaken	:	to get harmed
	star	:	the guiding star, the pole star
	bark	:	ship, boat
9-12	time's fool	:	victim of time, be destroyed by time
	rosy lips and checks	:	physical beauty during youth
	compass	:	range, limit
	come	:	to be destroyed by time
	hours and week	:	duration of time
	bears it out	:	endures, continues, lasts
	edge of doom	:	death, end of life
	error	:	mistake, illusion

2.4.3 Important Explanations

Let me not: Whatever else I agree to, I will not concede that etc.; I will not be forced to admit that. The negative wish, if that is how it might be best described, almost reads like the poet's injunction against himself to prevent him from admitting something, which he was on the point of conceding. Perhaps he was being told frequently by others, and the beloved himself, that love could not last for ever, that there were impediments, that there was change and alteration, loss and physical decay, all of which militate against true love. And finally, as an act of defiance, he insists that it is not as others see it, that love can surmount all these obstacles, that although nothing can last forever, yet true love can last and hold out until the final reckoning. *The marriage of true minds*: this suggests a union that is non-physical, Platonic and idealistic.

Which alters when it alteration finds: which changes (ceases, becomes unfaithful, becomes less) when it finds a change in the beloved, or a change in circumstances.

Or bends with the remover to remove: bends - yields, changes direction, is untrue and inconstant towards a loved one, *the remover* - one who moves, one who shifts his ground, one who changes himself, *to remove* - to make oneself different in accordance with the changes in the other person.

O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark : a sea mark, a prominent navigational feature, a beacon, for guidance of shipping. In the days before lighthouses, mariners used well known and prominent features on the land as a guide to fix their position at sea.

That looks on tempests and is never shaken: That looks on tempests - because of their height, the seamarks would appear to be looking down on the world below, and almost riding above the tempests. Because of their solidity storms had no effect on them.

It is the star to every wandering bark: It - i.e. love, as in line 5. Love is both the ever-fixed mark and the Pole star to guide the lover through the stormy waters of life. *The star* - the most obvious reference is to the Pole or North star. In the Northern hemisphere it always appears to be unmoving in the Northern sky, while all the other stars circle around it.

Time's fool : In Shakespeare's day readers would probably understand this in terms of the fool employed in large establishments by the nobility, a favoured character whose wit enlivened many a dull day. But their position was probably precarious, and they were liable to physical punishment, or dismissal.

Within his bending sickle's compass come: bending sickle - the sickle had a curved blade, and several meanings of 'bending' are appropriate, as 1.) curved; 2.) causing the grass that it cuts to bend and bow; 3.) cutting a curved swathe in the grass, *compass* - scope, the arc of the circle created by the sweep of the sickle. Time, with his scythe, or sickle, sweeps down the mortal lovers.

But bears it out even to the edge of doom: bears *it out* - endures, continues faithful. *the edge of doom* - the last day, the day of judgment, the day of death.

I never writ: I have never written anything *nor no man ever loved*: and no man has ever loved (even though he believed himself to be in love).

2.4.4 Summary:

This sonnet is supposed to be addressed to Shakespeare's friend, the Earl of Southampton. He wrote this sonnet to emphasize the consistency of true love and friendship, when the Earl was presumably attracted towards the physical charms of a dark lady.

He begins by saying that true love or friendship never changes. If it happens to change or alter than it is not true love. If a lover leaves his beloved when she gets cold with the coming of age, then he is not a true lover. He compares love to the light house. The waves and sea storms come and strike against the light house but they fail to do any harm to it. It remains firm and continues to guide the ships. In the same way true friendship cannot be broken or shaken away by difficulties of life or other charming diversions. In the second metaphor Shakespeare compares true friendship to the polar star, which is unaffected by time and age and always guides the wandering sailors to come on the right path so that they reach at the desired place. In the same way true friendship remains constant and guides the loved one to come back to the right course of life, so as to be able to achieve happiness and the targets of life.

In the third quatrain, the poet hints to the attraction of his friend towards physical charm of a dark mistress. He speaks of the everlasting nature of true friendship which would not wither with time and age. Physical charms would go away with the age and thus the attraction would no longer remain in old age, but true love and friendship is immortal. It does not perish, time is personified here to show that it would easily cut the crop of physical beauty, but it cannot do any harm to true love or friendship, which have their basis in values and not charms. Thus it remains constant till the end of life.

In the concluding couplet, Shakespeare expresses his full faith in the philosophy of love stated in the three quatrains. He says that if his views on true love and friendship are proved wrong then he would conclude that no man ever loved in this world and he would give up all claims to be a poet. So he stresses that true love and friendship is forever.

2.4.5 Critical Analysis:

It is a typical English sonnet. It has three quatrains and a couplet. Its theme is permanence of love. The thought progresses step by step and concludes with the determined declaration in the couplet. This is the 116th sonnet of the 154 sonnets addressed to a young man, 'Let me not' is addressed to the Youngman, who is supposed to be the Earl of Southampton.

In the sonnet Shakespeare speaks about his philosophy of love. It does not depend on the reaction of the loved one or the external factors. Time, place and physical constraints cannot alter the path of true friendship or love. It is said that Shakespeare was in love with a charming widow, referred to as Dark Mistress. She was physically very beautiful. Shakespeare's friend and patron, the Earl of Southampton was also attracted towards her and turned away from the poet.

Through this sonnet, the poet assures his friend and patron of his constant friendship. He assures that his love is as fixed as a light house and as constant as the pole star and it would be so till his confirmed end. The poet is willing to stake the whole of his literary reputation if in any way his statement is proved wrong.

It is perhaps the most moving sonnet in English language. 'Impediments' recall Shakespeare's – knowledge of the Prayer Book. Lines 7 and 8 show his knowledge of astrology. The rhyme scheme is ab ab, cd cd, ef ef, g g.

2.4.6 Theme:

There are different shades of love. In this sonnet Shakespeare chooses philosophy and spiritual value of love to put forth his ideas. Time, place and human relations have their effect on every human activity. Shakespeare is of the opinion that time, place and other diversions like physical charms cannot change true love and friendship. True love triumphs over all hurdles and remains constant throughout life. Nothing can hamper the union of true lovers or friends. Although the body gets weak, is adversely affected by time and age, but love which is really true, remains constant and young as ever. This is an absolute truth.

2.4.7 Metaphor:

Shakespeare uses metaphors in this sonnet to illustrate and emphasise his point of view. He compares true love or friends to the light house. Sea waves and violent sea storms attack the lighthouse every time, but it remains unmoved and constantly stands fixed. Like wise true love also suffers the vagaries of time and place, but remains fixed. It remains devoted to his lover, as the light house remains faithful to its work of showing the right path to reach the target. In the same way true love guides a person to achieve target in life.

The second metaphor is of pole star. It shines the right path to those sailors who have caught the wrong path, so it brings them on the right path. In the same way love, brings a person on the right track of life.

2.4.8 Structural Analysis

Sonnet 116 is about love in its most ideal form. It is praising the glories of lovers who have come to each other freely, and enter into a relationship based on trust and understanding. The first four lines reveal the poet's pleasure in love that is constant and strong, and will not "alter when it alteration finds." The following lines proclaim that true love is indeed an "ever-fix'd mark" which will survive any crisis.

In lines 7-8, the poet claims that we may be able to measure love to some degree, but this does not mean we fully understand it. Love's actual worth cannot be known – it remains a mystery. The remaining lines of the third quatrain (9-12), reaffirm the perfect nature of love that is unshakeable throughout time and remains so "ev'n to the edge of doom", or death. In the final couplet, the poet declares that, if he is mistaken about the constant, unmovable nature of perfect love, then he must take back all his writings on love, truth, and faith. Moreover, he adds that, if he has in fact judged love inappropriately, no man has ever really loved, in the ideal sense that the poet

professes. The details of Sonnet 116 are best described by Tucker Brooke in his acclaimed edition of Shakespeare's poems:

[In Sonnet 116] the chief pause in sense is after the twelfth line. Seventy-five per cent of the words are monosyllables; only three contain more syllables than two; none belong in any degree to the vocabulary of 'poetic' diction. There is nothing recondite, exotic, or metaphysical in the thought. There are three run-on lines, one pair of double-endings. There is nothing to remark about the rhyming except the happy blending of open and closed vowels, and of liquids, nasals, and stops; nothing to say about the harmony except to point out how the fluttering accents in the quatrains give place in the couplet to the emphatic march of the almost unrelieved iambic feet. In short, the poet has employed one hundred and ten of the simplest words in the language and the two simplest rhyme-schemes to produce a poem which has about it no strangeness whatever except the strangeness of perfection.

2.4.9 Self Assessment Questions:

You have read and understood the sonnets of Shakespeare. You have also had knowledge of literary devices used by the poet. Now answer the following questions

Exercise – 1

Choose the correct answer from amongst the three alternatives given below each question:

1. The image of light house is used as a:
   (a) Style
   (b) Theme
   (c) Metaphor
2. Physical beauty refers to one time sweet heart of:
   (a) Shakespeare
   (b) Earl of Southampton
   (c) W.H.
3. If found wrong, the poet stakes his claim:
   (a) To be called a poet
   (b) To be a true lover
   (c) To be a true friend
4. In the second line there is a reference from:
   (a) The Bible
   (b) Sea metaphor
   (c) Prayer Book
5. The number of sonnets addressed to the young man were:
   (a) 154
   (b) 28
   (c) 126

Exercise – 2

1. What does the poet mean by 'the marriage of true minds'?
2. Why does Shakespeare refer to the 'ever fixed mark'?
3. How are the images of star and bark connected with love?
4. Discuss Love's not time's fool'.
5. What is the effect of time on beauty?

2.5 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have acquired knowledge and had practice:

(i) to understand the sonnet
(ii) to understand the Elizabethan age
(iii) to know about life of Shakespeare
(iv) to know and understand various literary trends of the Elizabethan age,
(v) to critically analyse Shakespeare's sonnet
(vi) to understand, analyse and appreciate the poem and answers the questions based on it in your own words.

2.6 Answers To The Exercises

Exercise – 1

1. (c) metaphor
2. (a) Shakespeare
3. (a) to be called a poet
4. (c) Prayer Book
5. (c) 126

Exercise – 2

1. According to the poet the marriage of true minds refers to the union or meeting of two souls who are faithful in love. By this the poet means eternal love which is not affected by circumstances or time but always remains constant. Thus the coming together of true minds unites the lovers forever.

2. The ever fixed mark is used for light house which stands in the sea. The light house guides ship to follow the correct path. It doesn't leave nor stops its work in spite of attack of sea waves and sea-storms. True love is compared to light house. It signifies love that is fixed or constant and does not change in adverse circumstances. Love which alters is not true love and such relationships developed with weak bonds of love are not pure and do not signify the real nature of love.

3. The Poet's use of metaphors is evident in the image of the star and the bark The star refers to the pole star which guides the ships at sea. It helps them to come to right path. It always gives them, whatever may be the conditions. In the same way true love guides lovers in their trials. It doesn't separate them. This comparison symbolizes true love which is firm.

4. The phrarse means that love is not a victim of time, and it cannot perish with time. Time destroys all nothing remains forever, as this is the law of nature. But true

love is timeless. Time, place and relations cannot destroy them. It is immortal. In contrast, beauty or physical attraction declines with the passage of time but true love and friendship support an individual irrespective of the age.

5. Physical beauty is very much short lined, within few years with increase in age, the physical charms fizzle out i.e. beauty is mortal. Beauty is dependent on age and wears away as time passes. Time has been personified in the sonnet and it is portrayed like an instrument which cuts the crop of physical beauty. Thus time affects appearance of living beings.

2.7 Books Suggested

1. Alexander, P.H., *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* S.Chand: New Delhi, 1976.
2. Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* Macmillan: Bombay, 1986.
3. Daiches, David, *A Critical History of English Literature* (Four Volumes) Allied: New Delhi, 1984.
4. Evans, Sir I., *English Literature: Values and Traditions* Unwin: London, 1962.

Unit - 3

John Donne: Death Be Not Proud

Structure

3.0 Objectives :

The object of this unit is to acquaint you with the Metaphysical School of Poetry and its pioneer poet John Donne by presenting an elaborate discussion on John Donne's representative poem - Death Be Not Proud, (a divine poem)

This unit will acquaint you with:

a) the age of John Donne
b) the life and works of Donne
c) the metaphysical school of poetry and Donne
d) the text and analysis of the poem - Death Be Not Proud
e) the literary techniques

3.1 Introduction :

Donne wrote in a period, which was midway between the age of Shakespeare and the Jacobean Age (1572-1631). It was a period of remarkable literary activity, and was a sort for extension of the Elizabethan age, the revival of learning had a great influence on England and the classics were studies minutely and from a new angle. The re-discovery of the literature and culture of the past, known as humanism, gave the writers a new outlook on life. The age of Donne was a period of transition. Many changes in the political, social and economic domains were being effected. Colonial expansion and increase in industry and trade made people materialistic. The study of medieval literature developed the mind of the readers. Though education was not so widespread, the common man spared no opportunity of obtaining knowledge from any source. Medieval beliefs held their ground both in Donne and his contemporaries. The reformations was a direct challenge to Rome. Nationalism in its wider connotation was responsible not only for a new literature but also a new faith. The abuses and weaknesses of the Catholic religion were laid bare. The new Church of England came into being. Donne like some of his contemporaries felt within himself the conflict of

faith. His skepticism, his humanism and his learning made him challenge the faith of his ancestors.

3.2 About the Age

The seventeenth century brought about a change in the intellectual world and a change in the political, social and economic affairs. There was, however, little change in the method of agriculture. Little was no wow heard of the anti enclosure movement. Social changes seemed to be little more significant. Aristocracy seemed to be losing its ground. Acquisition of land created the Neo-rich class; they were absorbed into the 'gentry' and not the aristocracy. The remarkable feature of the social structure of this period was 'the rise of the gentry'. The phrase summarizes the multiple movements of society over several generations, whereby many members of the gentry were gaining economically at 'the expense of the peerage'. Corresponding to this notable change was the increasing dominance that the House of Commons began to acquire, climaxed in the Civil War.

These changes had a great impact on literature. Empirical science was a new development of the times. Medieval scholasticism was being replace by free exercise of reason and judgment. Copernicus's hypothesis was to change the whole mental horizon in Europe; its immediate effect is not reflected in the literature of the day, for we find Milton building the scheme of **Paradise Lost** on the old Ptolemaic cosmology, nor do we find Donne discarding it. What is more interesting is to note the emergence of serious religious issues.

University education die not change much. At the undergraduate level, the major subjects of study were rhetoric, logic and metaphysics; and the teaching was conducted according to the traditional scholastic pattern. Theology received major attention. Theological controversy divided the students, and Cambridge became the centre of such controversy. Puritan influence did not penetrate Oxford. Donne was both at Oxford and Cambridge, and nurtured as he was on the principles of Roman Catholicism, he went through a spiritual crisis. At Oxford, he remained little perturbed, feeding his innate mysticism there. But, at Cambridge, his close and ingenious logic, which his early Jesuitical leaning had developed proved the undoing of his old faith. He was determined to renounce Catholicism. And the revolt turned into a fact when he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn. The immediate reaction was violent. He broke all bound, and led a dissipated life in London.

In the words of John Donne himself "his age was an age of rusty iron." The period saw colonial expansion. The price-rise continued. Society did not change much. City men invested in land and landowners took to industrial and commercial enterprise. In polities, the climax was the Civil War, followed by the restoration of a monarchy. London was expanding westwards. Humanism was the most important movement in this period. Besides Humanism, Platonism, Stoicism and Protestant Christianity constituted the basic elements of the intellectual life.

Science began its career in the early 17th century. Medieval scholasticism was being replaced by the exercise of reason. A new p philosophy was emerging Rational spirit was getting stronger. New Philosophy was trying to bring a cultural and intellectual revolution. Out of this medley of scholasticism and the New Philosophy of religious controversies emerged a peculiar metaphysical world.

3.2 Donne and the Metaphysical School of Poetry

John Donne (1573-1631), a devout churchman and a great preacher of sermons rose to be the Dean of St. Paul's. His early poems are outspokenly erotic and sensual and were published only after his death. His divine poems are equally passionate in expressing his complex and deep religious emotion. Donne is generally considered a rebel in poetry. Impatient of conventions, Donne revolted against the Spenserian tradition both in matter and manner. He did not like its allegory, pastoralism, romantic, chivalric over-rich style and smooth versification. He regarded Spenser's Platonic love a humbug and decided to treat love as a physical appetite honestly and realistically. Against Spenser's "heavily brocaded language and the monotonous music of his stanza", Donne deliberately adopted a colloquial language.

Donne's habit of philosophizing, of leading a subject into strange, dim and unexpected vistas of though earned him the tile of 'metaphysical poetry. The ecstasy of union of two souls in love is a simple idea but it is treated in such a way that only a reader gifted with a special sixth sense can grasp it.

Donne was intensely, even violently passionate, and at the same time given to intensive and melancholy meditation. This blend of passion and thought, this integrated sensibility is the distinguishing quality of Donne's poems in which he shows real tenderness are those addressed to his wife. He employs hyperboles, fanaticism, transition from one extreme to the other, juxtaposition of the trivial and the sublime, of the colloquial and the grandiloquent to arrest attention. His divine poems show his religious exaltation.

The newness of Donne's poetry had a strong appeal to the test of the time, and was widely practiced from 1630 to 1660. Besides Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan and Traherne were the important Metaphysical poets. Before taking our leave of the Metaphysical school of poetry, a word must be said about the term itself. The term 'metaphysical' was first used for Donne by Dryden and was later applied to him and his school by Dr. Johnson in his discussion of Cowley. The term refers to the hair splitting subtlety of Donne's philosophical reasoning. Explaining the term metaphysical, Dr. Johnson writes "The Metaphysical poets were men of learning and to show their learning was their whole endeavour ... They copied neither nature nor life. Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural, they he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perversity of industry they were ever found."

Donne's numerous illnesses, financial strain, and the deaths of his friends all contributed to the development of a more somber and pious tone in his later poems. The change can be clearly seen in 'an Anatomy of the World," (1611), poem that Donne wrote in memory of Elizabeth Drury, daughter of his patron, Sir Robert Drury. This poem treats the death of the girl in an extremely morose mood, expanding her death to the Fall of Man and the destruction of the universe.

This change may also be observed in the religious works that Donne began writing during the same period. His early belief in the value of skepticism now gave way to a firm faith in the traditional teachings of the Bible. Having converted to the Anglican Church, Donne focused his literary career on religious poems. The passionate lines of these sermons would come to influence future works of English literature, such as Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* which took its title from a passage in

Meditation XVII, and Thomas Merton's *No man is an Island,* which took its title from the same source.

Towards the end of his life Donne wrote works that challenged death, and the fear that it inspired in many men, on the grounds of his belief that those who die are sent to Heaven to live eternally. One example of this challenge is his Holy Sonnet X, from which come the famous lines "Death, be not proud, though some have called thee mightily and dreadful, for thou art not so." Even as he lay dying on Lent in 1631, he rose from his sickbed and delivered the Death's Duel sermon, which was later described as his own funeral sermon. Death's Duel portrays life as a steady descent to suffering and death, yet sees hope in salvation and immortality through an embrace of God, Christ and the Resurrection.

Some characteristics of metaphysical poetry include:

- a tendency to psychological analysis of emotion of love and religion
- a penchant for imagery that is novel, "unpoetical" and sometimes shocking, drawn from the commonplace (actual life) or remote (erudite sources), including the extended metaphor of the life "metaphysical conceit"
- simple diction (compared to Elizabethan poetry) which echoes the cadences of everyday speech
- from: frequently an argument (with the poet's lover; with God; with oneself)
- meter: often rugged, not "sweet" or smooth like Elizabethan verse. This ruggedness goes naturally with the Metaphysical poets' attitude and purpose: a belief in the perplexity of life, spirit of revolt, and the putting of an argument in speech rather than song.
- The best metaphysical poetry is honest, unconventional, and reveals the poet's sense of the complexities and contradictions of life. It is intellectual, analytical, psychological, and bold; frequently it is absorbed in thoughts of death, physical love, and religious devotion.

3.4 Text & Explanations

Death Be Not Proud :

Death has no terror for John Done; bring a devout and Christian he believes in final resurrection from the state of death. Death consequently is no more than a sleep, a long sleep, no doubt, but a sleep from which there is always a waking. Moreover, while it lasts, it is a restful sleep. The poem is written in the form of a Petrarchan sonnet. It is the tenth of Donne's Holy Sonnets

3.4.1 Text

Death Be Not Proud

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not, sue,
For, those, whom thou thinks, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me;
From rest and sleeps, which but thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee doe goes,

Rest of their bones, and souls deliveries.
Thou art slave to Fate, chance kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, ware, and sicknesses dwell,
And poppies, or charms can make us sleeps as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell's thou then?
One short sleep past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be not more, Death thou salt die.

3.4.2 Annotations

(a) Death Be Not Proud

1. Mighty and dreadful : Powerful and terrible
2. Which but thy pictures be : which are only copies and pale imitations of death
3. The lien refers to the belief that those whom the god loves die young
4. Death is much more pleasant than sleep, for it gives rest to our bodies and releases to our soul
5. The poet calls death a slave because it can come only when were are consigned to death by our fellow human beings or fall victim to accident or sickness.
6. Puppy : i.e. opium, which is prepared from the juice of poppies
7. Why swell's thou - "why are you puffed up with pride?"
8. We wake eternally - Christians believe that at the end of the world, i.e. on Doom's Day all the death will rise from their graves and appear before God for final judgment.

3.4.3 Textual Analysis

Death Be Not Proud

Explanation

(i) Death be not ..... souls deliveries

The given lines are form the Octave of the Petrarchan Sonnet 'Death Be Not Proud' written by John Donne, the pioneer poet of metaphysical School. In this sonnet, Donne reflects upon the nature of death.

Addressing death, the poet says it that it is not mighty and dreadful. It is not powerful because it does not kill the poet. Rest and sleep are the pictures of death and therefore much pleasure must inevitably flow from it. When the best of the human beings are said to go with death, it is only because that brings rest for their weary bones and relieve their souls from the sufferings of the earth.

Explanation

(ii) Thou art slave to ..... thou shall die,

The given lives form the Sestet of the Petrarchan sonnet 'Death Be Not Proud' written by John Donne, the pioneer poet of Metaphysical school. In this poem, John Donne says that Death has no terror for him.

Addressing Death, the poet says that it is no more than a slave to fate, kings and desperate men, for it acts at their command. It resides with poison, war and sickness. Poppies and Charms can also put men to as deep sleep as death can. This sleep is better than the sleep induced by death. Why, then ask the poet, does death feel so proud of itself? Death can bring short interval of sleep, after which the soul wakes for eternity. Thus, with the soul's awakening, death itself dies. It ceases to exist.

3.5 Literary Devices :

The poem discussed in the unit relates to three important Literary terms : (a) Petrarchan Sonnet (b) Lyric (c) Metaphysical conceit. Here we intend to acquaint you in brief with all the three.

3.5.1 Petrachan Sonnet :

The term "sonnet" derives from the Provencal word "sonnet" and the Italian word "sonetto," both meaning "little song." By the thirteenth century, it had come to signify a poem of fourteen lines that follows a strict rhyme scheme and logical structure. The conventions associated with the sonnet have evolved over its history. The writers of sonnets are known as "sonneteers. "Traditionally, when writing sonnets, English poets usually employ iambic pentameter. In the Romance languages, the hendecasyllable and Alexandrine are the most widely used

The Italian sonnet (or Petrarchan, named after Petrarch, the Italian poet) was probably invented by Giacomo da Lentini, head of the Sicilian School under Frederick II. Guittone d'Arezzo rediscovered it and brought it to Tuscany where he adapted it to his language when he founded the Neo-Sicilian School (1235-1294). He wrote almost 300 sonnets. Other Italian poets of the time, including Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) and Guido Cavalcanti (c. 1250-1300) wrote sonnets, but the most famous early sonneteer was Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) The Italian sonnet was dividend into an octave (resp. two tercets), which provided a resolution, with a clear break between the two sections. Typically, the ninth line created a "turn" or volta, which signaled the move from propositions to resolution. Even in sonnets that don't strictly follow the problem/resolution structure, the ninth line still often marks a "turn" by signaling a change the in the tone, mood, or stance of the poem.

A sonnet is a short poem of fourteen lines, expressing one single idea or feeling. It consists of two parts - the Octave, a stanza of eight lines and the Sestet, a stanza of six. The Octave has the rhyme scheme ab, ba, ab, ba, and the Sestet cde, cde (and sometimes cdc, dce; or cde, dce). At the ed of the Octave, there is a well marked pause which is known as Casura. It is followed by Volta which means turn in the thought. This turn in though implies that the thought has been given a new applications. From its brilliant use by Petrarch, the sonnet is known as Petrarchan sonnet. Besides, it is also known as Italian sonnet and classical sonnet; it is known Italian sonnet because it flourished in Italy, and classical sonnet for its being the model which other countries followed later. 'Death Be Not Proud' is a Petrarchan sonnet.

3.5.2 Lyric :

In classical literature, a lyric meant a song that was sung to the accompaniment of the lyre, a musical instrument. Now-a-days, it means any short musical poems dealing with a single emotion. It is a subjective poem, expressing the varying moods of the author. It has a definite structure.

3.5.2 Metaphysical conceit :

The metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, Donne, Marvell, Herbert, and others often use an extreme from of logical paradox or apparent self-contradiction. This figure is a kind of conceit. The term conceit is used for any extensive and witty comparison or bringing together of dissimilar things. A 'metaphysical conceit" is a far-fetched and ingenious extended comparison (or "conceit" used by metaphysical poets to explore all areas of knowledge. It finds telling and unusual analogies for the poet's ideas in the startlingly esoteric or the shockingly commonplace — not the usual stuff of poetic metaphor. John Donne is considered a master of the conceit, an extended metaphor that combines two vastly unlike ideas into a single ideas into a single idea, often using imagery. Unlike the conceits found in other Elizabethan poetry, most notably Petrarchan conceits, which formed cliched comparisons between more closely related objects (such as a rose and love), Metaphysicl conceits go to a greater depth in comparing two completely unlike objects, although sometimes in the mode of Shakespeare's radical paradoxes and imploded contraries. One of the most famous of Donne's conceits is found in *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* where he compares two lovers who are separated to the two legs of a compass. In *The Good Morrow* John Donne says that love transforms into a completer world by focusing the lover's attention on each other; this is a conceit. In brief, in a conceit, a comparison is often instituted between objects that have ostensibly little in common with each other.

3.6 Sample Questions

Q.1 Critically appreciate the poem 'Death Be Not Proud'.

Q.2 Describe the theme of the poem 'Death Be Not Proud'.

3.7 Let us Sum Up

In this unit, we have dealt with the main features of the age of John Donne and his contribution to the Metaphysical School of poetry. besides, we have discussed one of the representative poem of John Donne :- 'Death Be Not Proud' (a divine poem).

The unit enables you:

a) to understand the text of the poem and its theme and style

b) to understand the literary terms like, the Petrarchan Sonnet, Lyrics and Metaphysical conceits.

c) to critically analyse the poem.

d) to answer the questions

3.8 Suggested Answers

Ans.1 The poem 'Death Be Not Proud' is one of John Donne's holy sonnets, in which he seems to hurl a defiance to Death. The poet's own conviction of life eternal to follow upon death is at the basis of it. As a matter of fact, the poet as a staunch Christina has brooded long over death. It has been like an obsession with him. In the poem The Anniversary, the death image haunts the poet's imagination, and he is unable to get away from the thought of death. It is being said about him that he his own figure, wrapped in a winding sheet, placed by his bedside. It means that he could never put away the thought of death from his mind. It reveals the morbid state of the poet's mind. The poem is not simply an abstract contemplation of death. In 1608, he was so depressed that he ever entertained the idea of suicide.

A new chapter began in the life of John Donne when he was ordained in January 1615. The poet, thereafter, threw himself heart and soul, into his spiritual activity. Now, his own spiritual redemption was also an issue with him. As a result Death, image alike of spiritual emancipation and physical bondage, is the central theme. Death is an image of spiritual emancipation in the poem, as he himself writes :

"Rest of their bones, and soul's deliveries .....

One short sleep past, we wake eternally."

John Donne, as a devout Christian, thinks that Death is the gateway to life eternal. However, a minute analysis of the poem reveals that he can never walk away from the shadow of death. He speaks of "rest and sleep which but thy pictures be." The keynote of the poem is, thus, the longing for rest and sleep :

"And sonnets our best men with thee do goes,

Rest of their bones and soul's deliveries."

The poem emphasizes the Christina belief in Resurrection. Death seems to John Donne a golden key that opens the palace of eternity; Death is not the last sleep, but the last and final awakening. Those upon whom death lays his icy cold hand, die but to live again. Death cannot be final. Donne, thus, confirms the Christian idea of immortality.

The poem is written in the form of a Petrarchan sonnet. Accordingly, in the octave the poet expresses the thought that death is not powerful because it does not kill those whom it overthrows. Volta initiates a turn in the idea by stating that death can bring only a short interval of sleep is ab, ba, ab, ba, cdd, cee.

The diction is straightforward and appealing. The use of cohesive devices such as repetition ('and' is repeated several times in the poem), alliterative and internal rhymes add to the artistic beauty of the poem.

Ans.2 The theme of the poem is about overcoming the seemingly inseparable barriers of life, death, and after-life. Death is nothing but a breath. Nothing but a breath

separates life and after-life. Life, death, soul, God, past, and the present are not inseparable barriers but just a comma or a pause which is portrayed in the last line of the sonnet.

This poem is an attempt of John Donne to show his contempt for death. "Death"-that dwells all around him. Surroundings his life, killing his own family within years, and filling his own heart with fear, to this extent that that fear longs no more. When death chase some one to the extent of making one fear free, in the next step comes contempt. According to the poet death of no special strength or force. If death means sleep, other things, like charms, and anesthetic medicines can better give us sound sleep, though for a shorter period than death can what if death effects our families and good men of the world, death is nothing more, but a way that lead us towards a better life-i-e eternal life. Where death will die and it will be no more.

Ending lines of the poem "death thou shalt die" shows poets hate and disgust for death and somewhat the satisfaction of his heart and mind. Through logic and reason he show his future victory over death.

The title is the main theme of the poem: that while death may "win the battle" so to speak it will ultimately lose the war. It is powerless to prevent a human memory from living on. In a broader context, the sin and death of humanity as a whole is powerless to prevent resurrection and redemption provided through Jesus Christ.

3.9 Books Recommended

1. B. Prasad : A Background to the Study of English Literature, New Delhi: Macmillan; 1990
2. W.H. Hudson : Outline History of English Literature, B.I. Publications
3. R.D. Trivedi : A Compendious History of English Literature, New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House: 1990

Unit - 4

John Donne: The Good Morrow

Structure

4.0 Objectives :

The object of this unit is to acquaint you with the Metaphysical School of Poetry and its pioneer poet John Donne by presenting an elaborate discussion on John Donne's representative poem - The Good Morrow (a love poem)

4.1 Introduction :

Jacobean literature begins with the drama, including some of Shakespear's greatest, and darkest, plays. The dominant literary figure of James's reign was Ben Jonson, whose varied and dramatic works followed classical models and were enriched by his worldly, peculiarly English wit. His satiric dramas, notably the great Volpone (1606), all take a cynical view of human nature. Also cynical were the horrific revenge tragedies of John Ford, Thomas Middleton, Cyril Tourneour, and John Webster (the best poet of this grim genre). Novelty was in great demand, and the possibilities of plot and genre were exploited almost to exhaustion. Still, many excellent plays were written by men such as George Chapman, the masters of comedy Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger, and the team of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. Drama continued to flourish until the closing of the theaters at the onset of the English Revolution in 1642.

The foremost poets of the Jacobean era, Ben Jonson and John Donne, are regarded as the originators of two diverse poetic traditions - the Cavalier and the metaphysical. Jonson and Donne shared not only a common fund of literary resources, but also a dryness of wit and precision of expression. Donne's poetry is distinctive for its passionate intellection, Jonson's for its classicism and urbane guidance of passion.

Although George Herbert and Donne were the principal metaphysical poets, the meditative religious poets Henry Vaughan and Thomas Traherne were also influenced

by Donne, as were Abraham Cowley and Richard Crashaw. The greatest of the Cavalier poets was the sensuously lyrical Robert Herrick. Such other Cavaliers as Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, and Richard Lovelace were lyricists in the elegant Jonsonian tradition, though their lyricism turned political during the English Revolution. Although ranked with the metaphysical poets, the highly individual Andrew Marvell partook of the traditions of both Donne and Jonson.

Amont the leading prose writers of the Jacobean period were the translators who produced the classic King James Version of the Bible (1611) and the divines Lancelot Andrewes, Jeremy Taylor, and John Donne. The work if Francis Bacon helped shape philosophical and scientific method. Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy (1621) offers a varied, virtually encyclopedic view of the moral and intellectual preoccupations of the 17th cent. Like Burton, Sir Thomas Browne sought to reconcile the mysteries of religion with the newer mysteries of science. Izaak Walton, author of The compleat Angler (1653), produced a number of graceful biographies of prominent writers. Thomas Hobbes wrote the most influential political treatise of the age, Leviathan (1651).

The Jacobean era's most fiery and eloquent author of political tracts (many in defense of Cromwell's government, of which he was a member) was also one of the greatest of all English poets, John Milton. His Paradise Lost (1667) is a Christian epic of encompassing scope. In Milton the literary and philosophical heritage of the Renaissance merged with Protestant political and moral conviction.

4.2 About the Age

With the restoration of the English monarchy in the person of Charles II, literary tastes widened. The lifting of Puritan restrictions and the reassembling of the court led to a relaxation of restraints, both moral and stylistic, embodied in such figures as the Earl of Rochester. Restoration comedy reveals both the influence of French farce (the English court spent its exile in France) and of Jacobean comedy. It generously fed the public's appetite for broad satire, high style, and a licentiousness that justified the worst Puritan imaginings. Such dramatists as Sir George Etherege, William Wycherley, and William Congreve created superbly polished high comedy. Sparkling but not quite so brilliant were the plays of George Farquhar, Thomas Shadwell, and Sir John Vanbrugh.

John Dryden began as a playwright but became the foremost poet and critic of his time. His greatest works are satirical narrative poems, notably Absalom and Achitophel (1681), in which prominent contemporary figures are unmistakably and devastatingly portrayed. Another satiric poet of the period was Samuel Butler, whose Hudibras (1663) satirizes Puritanism together with all the intellectual pretensions of the time. During the Restoration Puritanism or, more generally, the Dissenting tradition, remained vital. The most important Dissenting literary work was John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (1675), an allegorical prose narrative that is considered a forerunner of the novel. Lively and illuminating glimpses of Restoration manners and mores are provided by the diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.

John Donne (1572 - March 31, 1631) was a Jacobean poet and preacher, representative of the metaphysical poets of the period. His works, notable for their realistic and sensual style include sonnets, love poetry, religious poems, Latin translations, epigrams,

elegies, songs, satires and sermons. His poetry is noted for its vibrancy of language and immediacy of metaphor, compared with that of his contemporaries.

4.3 About the Author

John Donne (1572-1631), came from a Loyalist family, and so he experienced persecution until his conversion to the Anglican Church. Despite his great education and poetic talents, he lived in poverty for several years, relying heavily on wealthy friends. In 1615 he became an Anglican priest and in 1621 DEan of St Paul's. Some scholars believe his literary works reflect these trends, with love poetry and satires from his youth, and religious sermons during his later years. Other scholars, such as Helen Gardner, question the valigious sermons during his later years. Other scholars, such as Helen Gardner, question the validity of dating when most of his poems were published posthumously (1633). The exception to these is his Anniversaries which were published in 1612 and Devotions upon Emergent Occasions published in 1623. His sermons are also dated, sometimes quite specifically, by year and date given.

John Donne was born in Bread Street, London, England, sometime between January 23 and June 19 in 1572. His Welsh descended father, also called John Donne, was a warden of the Ironmongers Company is the City of London and a respected Roman Catholic who avoided unwelcome government attention, out of fear of being persecuted for his Catholicism. John Donne Sr. died in 1576, leaving his wife, Elizabeth Heywood, the responsibility of raising their son. Elizabeth Heywood, also from a noted Catholic family, was the daughter of John Heywood, the playwright, and sister of Jasper Heywood, the translator and Jesuit. She was also distantly related to the Catholic martyr Thomas More. This tradition of martyrdom would continue among Donne's Closer relatives, many of whom were executed or exiled for religious reasons. Despite the obvious dangers, Donne's family arranged for his education by the Jesuits, which gave him a deep knowledge of his religion that equipped him for the ideological religious conflicts of his time.

Donne was a student at Hart Hall, now Hertford College, Oxford, from the age of 11. After three years at Oxford he was admitted to the University of Cambridge, where he studied for another three years. During and after his education, Donne spent much of his considerable inheritance on women, literature, pastimes, and travel.

By the age of 25 he was well prepared for the diplomatic carreer he appeared to be seeking. He was appointed chief secretary to the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Sir Thomas Egerton, and was established at Egerton's London home, York House, Strand close to the Palace of Whitehall, then the most influential social centre in England. During the next four years he fell in love with Egerton's 17 (some say 14 or 16) year old niece, Anne More, and they were secretly married in 1601 against the wishes of both Egerton and her father, George More, Lieutenant of the Tower. This ruined his carreer and earned him a short stay in Fleet Prison along with the priest who married them and the man who acted as a witness to the wedding. Donne was released when the marriage was proved valid, and soon secured the release of the other two. Walton tells us that when he wrote to his wife to tell her about losing his post, he wrote after his name: *John Donne, Anne Donne, Un-done*. It was not until 1609 that Donne was reconciled with his father-in-law and received his wife's dowry.

Though he practiced law and worked as an assistant pamphleteer to Thomas Morton, he was in a state of constant financial insecurity, with a growing family to provide for. During this time Donne wrote, but did not publish, *Biathanatos*, his daring defense of suicide. Donne's earliest poems showed a brilliant knowledge of English society coupled with sharp criticism of its problems. His satires dealt with common Elizabethan topics, such as corruption in the legal system, mediocre poets, and pompous courtiers, yet stand out due to their intellectual sophistication and striking imagery. His images of sickness, vomit, manure, and plague assisted in the creation of a strongly satiric world populated by all the fools and knaves of England. His third satire, however, deals with the problem of true religion, a matter of great importance to Donne. Donne argued that it was better to carefully examine one's religious convictions than to blindly follow and established tradition. Donne's early career was also notable for his erotic poetry, especially his elegies, in which he employed unconventional metaphors, such as a flea biting two lovers being equated to marriage.

Because love-poetry was very fashionable at that time, there are different opinions about whether the passionate love poems Donne wrote are addressed to his wife Anne, but it seems likely. She spent most of her married life either pregnant or nursing, so they evidently had a strong physical relationship. In 1617 his wife died shortly after giving birth to a still-born baby, their twelfth child in sixteen years of marriage. Donne mourned her deeply and never remarried. This was quite unusual for the time, especially as he had a large family to bring up.

Donne was elected as Member of Parliament for the constituency of Brackley in 1602, but this was not a paid position and Donne struggtled to provide for his family, relying heavily upon rich friends. The fashion for coterie poetry of the period gave him a means to seek patronage and many of his poems were written for wealthy friends or patrons, especially Sir Robert Drury, who came to be Donne's chief patron in 1610. It was for Sir Robert that Donne wrote the two *Anniversaries, An Anatomy of the World* (1611) and Of the Progress of the Soul, (1612). While historians are not certain as to the precise reasons for which Donne left the Catholic Church, he was certainly in communication with the King, James I of England, and in 1610 and 1611 he wrote two anti-Catholic polemics: *Pseudo-Martyr* and *Ignatius his Conclave*. Although Donne was at first reluctant due to feeling unworthy of a clerical career, Donne finally acceded to the King's wishes and was ordained into the Church of England in 1615.

Donne became a Royal Chaplain in late 1615, Reader of Divinity at Lincoln's Inn in 1616, and received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Cambridge in 1618. Later in 1618 Donne became the chaplain for the Viscount of Doncaster, who was on an embassy to the princes of Germany. Donne did not return to England until 1620. In 1621 Donne was made Dean of St Paul's, a leading (and well-paid) position in the Church of England and one he held until his death in 1631. In 1624 he became vicar of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, and 1625 a Royal Chaplain to Charles I. He earned a reputation as an impressive, eloquent preacher and 160 of his sermons have survived, including the famous Death's Duel sermon d elivered at the Palace of Whitehall before King Charles I in February 1631. He died on March 31, 1631 having never published a poem in his lifetime but having left a body of work fiercely engaged with the emotional and intellectual conflicts of his age.

4.4 Donne as a Poet of Love

Born at a time when the writing of love poems was both a fashionable and literary exercise, Donne showed his talent in this genre. His poems are entirely different from the Elizabethan love lyrics. They are remarkable and unique due to their fascination, charm and depth of feeling. Donne follows the convention of Petrarch partly, whereas his contemporaries wrote love lyrics after the manner of Petrarch and Ronsard. His love songs are unconventional and original, both in form and content. Another peculiar quality of Donne's love poems is its metaphysical strain. Donne does not lay stress on beauty or rather the aesthetic element in passion. His poems are sensuous and fantastic. His metaphysical wit makes his readers doubt his sincerity and earnestness. Dryden comments that Donne affects the metaphysics not only in his satires but in his amorous verses where only nature should reign. He perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts and entertain them with the softness of love. Thus, tenderness and softness are not the qualities to be found in Donne's poetry.

There are mainly three strands in his love poems. Firstly there is the cynical which is anti-woman and hostile to the fair sex. The theme is the frailty of man. Secondly there is the strand of happy maried life, the joy of conjugal love. Thirdly there is the Platonic strand, in which love is regarded as a holy emotion like a worship by the devotee of God. There are, however poems where the sentiment oscillates between the first and the third strands, where sexual love is treated as holy love and vice versa.

4.5 Text & Explanations

The Good Morrow or good morning is a common salutation, which is usually exchanged when we awaken in the morning. Here it refers to spiritual awakening, an awakening to a new life. The poem explores essentially the nature of complex love experience. Two kinds of experiences are involved - the first kind is dubbed as childish and is therefore rejected. The second kind, which has come as a revelation to him, is passionate love. The poem illustrates all the attributes which, according to Prof. Grierson have earned the epithet of Metaphysical Poet for John Donne.

4.5.1 Text

The Good Morrow

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?
But suck'd on countrey pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we i'the seven sleepers den?
Twas so; But this, all pleasures fancies bee.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desir'd, and got, 'twas but a dreame of thee.
And now good morrow to our waking soules,
Which watch not one another out of feare;
for love, all love of other sights controules,
And makes one little roome, an every where.
Let sea-discoverers tonew worlds have gone,
Let Maps to others, worlds on worlds have showne,

Let us possesse our world, each hath one, and is one.
My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plaine hearts doe in the faces rest,
Where can we finde two better hemispheres
Without sharpe North, without declining West?
Whatever dyes, was not mixt equally;
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.

4.5.2 Annotations :

Stanza I

the Good Morrow	:	good morning, a common salutation
troth	:	truth
qean'd	:	Separated from their mother's breast
sucked on	:	fed on
country pleasures	:	childish pleasures
Childishly	:	like children at play
snorted	:	slept
or snorted we ... Den	:	The line is an allusion to theseven Christian young men, who, because of the fear of persecution, took refuge in a cavern where they fell asleep and woke up about two centuries later.
'twas so	:	the two lovers had really been sleeping till they began to love
fancies	:	unreal things
beauty	:	beautiful women

Stanza II

for love ... an everywhere	:	It is a beautiful conceit. It means that love transforms a room into a complete world by focusing the lover's attention on each other.
fear	:	Jealousy
each hath one	:	Each of the lovers has a separate world of his/her own.

Stanza III

appears	:	is reflected
do in the faces rest	:	the faces reflecttheir simple hearts
hemispheres	:	Half of the Earth, especially, the orthern or southern halves above and below the Equator, or the Eastern or Western half.

sharp North ... declining West	:	Sharp North means sharp cold at the North. The West is said to be declining because the Sun goes down there. Here 'Sharp North' and 'declining West' symbolize corruption and decay.
where can we find. ... West	:	The line suggests that polarity and therefore separation is an important feature of the globe but such polarity does not exist in lovers' fancies.
If our ... can die	:	reciprocity makes love immortal.

4.5.3 Textual Analysis

Explanation

(i) I wonder by ..... dream of thee

The lines form the opening stanza of John Donne's love lyric 'The Good Morrow'. The poem refers to spiritual awakening which constitutes an all absorbing nature of love. It is an awakening to a new wife.

The lover expresses his surprise as to what he and his beloved did before they fell in love with each other. He regards their former pleasures as childish and their former life as a long sleep in which they were as oblivious of the reality of life as the Seven Sleepers were during their long sleep of a duration of two centuries. In comparison to their present pleasure in love of each other, all their former pleasures seem unsubstantial and unreal. Other beautiful women whom he courted, and whose love he could get, now seem to him only the reflections of his present beloved.

(ii) And now good ..... one, and is one

The given lines form the second stanza of John Donne's love lyric 'The Good Morrow'. The lines give expression to the idea that love transforms a room into a complete world by focusing the lover's attention on each other.

The poet (lover also) bids good morning to their waking souls, souls which have waken from a long sleep devoid of love. Their souls are now walking into a world of love and watching each other, bewitched by love force. Fear is gone from their soul. Love is an emotion powerful enough to control and channelize the individual's perception; it compels an individual to observe nothing but love. Love can transform a room into a complete world, for the lover can cease to think of anything except his beloved. The poet says that the discoveries may go and search fornew lands, map makers may chart new areas, but for the lovers, there is no world other than their world of love, which they are eager to possess. For the lovers, the world is delimited to each other's personality, and even the world of the over and that of the beloved coalesce and merge into each other.

(iii) My Face ..... none can die.

The lines have been extracted from the concluding stanza of the poem 'The Good Morrow' one of the famous love lyrics written by John Donne, a Metaphysical poet.

The lover can see his own face reflected in his beloved's eyes, she can also see her own face reflected in her lover's eyes. Their hearts replete with love for each other, are reflected in their faces. The poet then emphasizes the idea (by making use of a rhetorical question) that there cannot be two better globes elsewhere. In their faces, there are no sharp northern or southern declinations. In their globes, i.e. their faces, there exists no polarity or differentiation. The poet is of the view that whatever dies is made up of unequal compounds. If their love for each other is equally intense, neither of the two (lover and beloved) can die, for it is only the mixture of unequal elements which is subject to decay.

4.6 Literary Devices

4.6.1 Petrarchan Traditions

While the Flizabethan love lyrics are, by and large, imitations of Petrarchan traditions, Donne's love poems stand in a class by themselves. Donne's love poems are entirely unconventional except when he chose to adopt the conventions of the Petrarchan traditions. Donne is fully acquainted with the Petrarchan model where woman is an object of beauty, love and perfection. The lover's entreaties to his lady, his courtly wooing, the beloved's indifference and they self-pity of the lover are common themes of Petrarchan sonnets. Such set themes are treated differently by Donne, because he has no personal intimate experience to guide him. His utter realism makes him debunk the idea of a woman as a personification of virtue and chastity. Undoubtedly Donne adopted the important characteristics of Petrarch namely his use of images and conceits, and his dramatic approach. He however transformed them so rigorously by his intellect that they appear to be quite original.

4.6.2 Realism

Donne's treatment is realistic not idealistic. He knows the weaknesses of the flesh, the pleasure of sex, and the joy of secret meetings. However he tries to establish the relationship between the body and the soul. True love does not pertain to the body; it is the relationship of one soul to the other. Inspite of the realistic touches and descriptions in the love poems, Donne does not take pains to give the details of the physical beauty or the nature of fascination. Rather he describes its effect on the lover's heart.

4.6.3 Sample Questions

Q.1 How does the poet portray the dawn of true love in 'The Good Morrrow'?

Q.2 What does the poet mean by 'the two hemispheres' in the poem?

Q.3 What is meant by a conceit?

Q.4 Discuss the wit of John Donne as evident in 'the Good Morrow'.

Q.5 Write a critical appreciation of 'The Good Morrow'.

4.7 Let us Sum Up

In this unit, we have dealt with the main features of the age ofJohn Donne and his contribution to the Metaphysical School of poetry. Besides, we have discussed the representative poem of John Donne, 'The GoodMorrow' (a love poem) in detail. The unit also carries a description of the literary terms - Petrarchan Traditions and Realism. At the end of the unit have been discussed some major questions related to the two poems.

4.8 Suggested Answers

Ans.1 The poet reveals that the initiation of love was a sort of dream. The first set of experiences were childish and related to the physical aspect of love. He feels that the night of unreality is about to end and the dawn of true love is imminent. It awakens the soul of lovers and they open their hearts to each other without inhibitions. Their love for each other is all absorbing and satisfying. Their world of love is everywhere. The poet draws a comparison between lovers and sailors at sea to prove his point. He feels that sailors discover new worlds and make charts and maps of the lands discovered, whereas lovers are contented in their own world of love when the true meaning of love dawns on them.

Ans.2 While describing the harmonious relationship between the two souls whose love has matured, the poet brings forth the concept of the two geographical hemispheres. According to him, the image of one lover is revealed in the eye of the other. Their looks reflect the simplicity purity and honesty of their hearts. Their two faces are like hemispheres which together make up a whole world. the two hemispheres of their faces are better than the geographical hemispheres because they do not have the 'sharp north' signifying coldness and indifference or the 'declining west', symbolizing death and decay. Thus love is free from such imagery as it is harmonious and immortal.

Ans.3 A conceit is basically a simile or a comparison between two dissimilar things. In a conceit the dissimilarity between the things compared is so great that the reader always is fully conscious of it even while having to concede the likeness implied by the poet. Far fetched images, departing from the conventional Elizabethan type, mark Donne's poems.

Metaphysical conceit are drawn from a wide range of subjects. Indeed, nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons and allusions. The images are not conventional. The conceits employed by Donne are learned - they display the poet's thorough knowledge of a wide range of subjects, such as science, mathematics, astronomy and several others. The conceits thus give the poetry an intellectual tone. In a single poem there are images drawn from cartography, geography, myth and natural science eg. *A Valediction: of Weeping. In The Canonization,* the lover and beloved are flies and tapers in themselves.

In the poem *The Good Morow*, there is reference to sea discoveries, new worlds and the hemispression of the earch, reflecting contemporary explorations. There are images of sea discoveries travelling to new worlds, maps showing world on worlds, and the two hemispheres.

Ans.4 Wit is the perception and clever apt expression of amusing words and ideas which awaken amusement and pleasure. Wit is revealed in the unusual or ingenious use of words rather than in the subject matter. Donne is remarkable for his use of wit. His wit is deliberate and particular. it impresses the readers with its intellectual vigour and force and does not merely lie in the dexterous and ingenious use of words. Secondly it comes naturally from the author's expansive knowledge and deep scholarship. Donne's wit has been described by Dr. Johnson as a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike.

His wit is evident in the conceits which are original and startling, but ultimately just. The poet often proves their truth. The ability to elaborate a conceipt to its farthest possibility without losing the sense of its appropriateness speaks for a high intellectual caliber. In *The Good Morrow*, the poet compares himself and his beloved to two hemispheres which form the whole earth - which is even better than the actual earth, as it does not have the sharp north and the declining west. It is a complex image conveying the exclusive world of lovers and the warmth of passion in this world on which the sun never sets.

Ans.5 The poem opens in an abrupt colloquial manner, as is usual with Donne's openings. The first stanza presents the contrast between a life without love and life consisting of all absorbing, passionate love. The subsequent stanzas specifythat the world of love is as spacious and as good as the materialistic world. the poem is remarkable for its logic and argument, concentration and the poet's advocacy. On the lines of the typical features of Metaphysical school of petry, the readers are held to a line of reasoning and analysis, till the validity of the point of view has been established.

The poem is a salutation to the awakening that constitutes an absorbing love. The souls of the lovers have awakened to a new day, and a new life. So love, not fear, restricts their attention to each other and transforms their little room into a world. No voyager can find a world more wonderful than the one they find in each other.

The poem furnishes a good example of Donne's wit. This wit lies in the contrast between the two worlds - the world of lovers and the geographical world. It is also not merely a verbal wit, for each world represents an attitude - the materialistic attitude and the lover's attitude. There is then a complexity of attitudes in the poem. But lover (i.e. the poet) gives not hint of his involvement. He dismisses the geographical world and affirms the world of love.

The imagery of the poem has been drawn from a variety of sources - myth, the geographical world and the scholastic philosophy. The images related to myth include 'the seven sleepers den', 'everyday life suck'd on country pleasures'; and from that of the grographical world are sea discoveres, 'maps', 'hemispheres'. The image of scholastic philosophy lies in 'whatever dies was not mixed

equally'. the relations between one object and the other are made intellectually rather than verbally. These varied images have been fused into an organic whole by the alchemy of Donne's wit.

Throughout the poem, the reader feels the directness of impact which is a unique quality of the poet's phrasing. Temperamentally averse to the sweetness and artificiality of the contemporary love poetry, Donne attempts for the worn out cnventions of classical imagery, and his interest in the contemporary life. In brief, the poem is a fine piece of Metaphysical poetry.

4.9 Books Recommended

1. B. Prasad : *A Background to the Study of English Literature*, New Delhi : Macmillan; 1990
2. W.H. Hudson : *Outline History of English Literature*, B.I. Publications
3. R.D. Trivedi : *A Compendious History of English Literature*, New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House: 1990
4. Mundra & Mundra : *A History of English Literature*, Prakash Publications, 2004.

Unit – 5

John Milton : On His Blindness

Structure

5.0 Objectives

In this unit we will make you familiar with the poetry of seventeenth century. We will try to give you practice in understanding poetry with the help of a prominent poem of John Milton, 'On His Blindness' by :

(a) giving you the text of these poem composed by John Milton,
(b) giving you glossary of difficult words and phrases for the poem,
(c) discussing critical analysis of the poem
(d) discussing various literary devices used by Milton in the poem,
(e) giving you practice for self assessment by trying to make you answer the questions in your own language.

In first section we will introduce you with the world of poetry and special place of poetry of seventeenth century and historical background. In the section on Age and Author, we will give you detailed information on the development of poetry in the Caroline Age with special reference to Metaphysical, Cavalior and Puritan poets. We will also give you detailed information about life, poetical works & achievements as a poet of John Milton (1608-1674).

In the third section on reading text, we will give you full text of the sonnet and explain difficult phrases and words in very simple English, we will also give a detailed summary of the sonnet.

In the next section we will critically analyse the Miltonic sonnet. Various literary devices used by Milton will also be discussed after the critical analysis of the sonnets.

To make you understand the sonnet in a better way, short objective type and descriptive type questions are being asked. You will be able to have your self assessment through these.

After reading and understanding various sections of this unit, you will be fully capable to :

(i) understand the sonnet in its totality,
(ii) develop capability to understand hidden meanings of the sonnet.
(iii) appreciate and critically analyse the sonnet,
(iv) evaluate thought process of John Milton,
(v) acquire knowledge about the Age to which Milton belonged, and
(vi) answer the questions given at the end of each section.

5.1 Introduction

In this age the writers could continue with their works and their subsequent publication in peace and happiness. They had support of the royalty and the state. Inspite of many difficulties English writers were helped both by the nature of their language and by the way that from the seventeenth century onwards for political and other reasons it has spread from one country to another.

English had readily adopted the vocabulary from other languages and on the basis of old English, Latin, French and Italian forms, as well as others, have been generously assimilated. This wealth of vocabulary may have led sometimes to a lack of absolute precision, or to those logical qualities which some French prose and even French verse have so admirably possessed. But for the imaginative writer the profusion of the vocabulary, the multitudinous cohorts of words have been a stimulus, though of course, also a temptation.

It is the nature of the sentence in the uninflected language which can give to a poet and a prose writer alike the possibility of creating endless variety, from plain statement that could be vigorous and forceful, thought unadorned, to complex sentences that sustained their clarity not with the precise sign-posts of an inflected language but by a pattern more individually controlled and often dependent on a rhythmical structure.

The Elizabethan age is popularly regarded as the great age of the singing lyric, the mellifluous poem which enchants the car even before it appeals to the mind or the emotions.

But by the end of sixteenth century the exercising of the English language in a variety of lyric measures produced a spate of finely controlled, musically sounding lyrics, more than enough to justify the view that the Elizabethan age is the age par excellence of that kind of poetry. These lyrics are found in songbooks, in plays and in collections of various kinds.

The Elizabethan age of poetry flowed naturally into the Jacobean and 1603, the year in which King James VI of Scotland became also King James I of England. There were important changes which followed James's accession. Changes in the atmosphere of the Court and in Court patronage were significant in an age when the arts still looked to the Court and where poets hoped for appointments that depended on royal favour.

The poetic map of England immediately after Spenser (1552-1599) is most clearly described in terms of the ways in which Spenserian tradition was continued and ways of revolting against it. No single poet was able to continue Spenserian tradition. The various elements, pastoral, patriotic, allegorical and topographical were handled separately.

There were also other and stronger, elements at work in English poetry of the early seventeenth century. Ben Jonson and John Donne, each in his own way, represented in some degree a revolt against Spenserian tradition.

There is a relaxed, personal note in Jonson's longer verse epistles which, however, never threatens his sense of form. And always there is a sense of the essential strength and vigour of English language; there is virility about all Jonson's verse, but again it is a virility which often coexists with the utmost delicacy and grace. This is to use the English language in poetry, very differently from the way Spenser employed it.

5.2 Age and Author

5.2.1 About the Age

The reign of Charles I was made illustrious by an outburst of gallant and devoted songs Lyric poetry was indeed no new thing in English Literature. But though the Caroline lyric continued in form the national habit of song which had long been practised and which had passed from privacy to publicity, the note of Cavalier poetry is new. The fantastic idealism of Petrarch vanishes and their is a return to the franker emotions Anacreon, Catullus and Horace.

The sonnet, in particular disappears, Elizabethan conventionalism had killed it, and it had to be born again in a new age with a new inspiration. Donne fashioned a kind of song for himself. Jonson sought inspiration in classical models, going to the heart of classical poetry and not bothering as some of his misguided predecessors had done, about the quantitative skeleton and the sin of rhyming. The influence of Jonson on the younger generation of poets was powerful.

First important poet of the Caroline Age was Robert Herrick (1591-1674). His poems were circulated in manuscript and a few came separately into print in various publications; but the main collection appeared in 1648. Herrick is often spoken of as a Cavalier lyrist; but he was much more than this. He even accepted the metaphysic with ease and remained faithful to the great lyrists of classical antiquity.

Thomas Carew (1598-1638), Richard Lovelace (1618-1658), George Herbert (1593-1633), Richard Crashaw (1612-1649), Henry Vaughan (1622-1695), Thomas Traherne (1620-1674), William Habington (1605-1654) and Francis Quarles (1592-1644) are the other important poets of this Age. Of all these writers it may be said that they and the secular lyrists trod the same paths. They never walked the smooth and facile way of later hymn writings. They were sacred poets, not from fashion or interest but from choice and conviction.

The chief characteristics of the poetry of this period are :

(a) Fantastic conceits : their poetry is seldom an expression of 'what oft was thought'. It abounds rather in thoughts brought 'from a far' – from the innermost recesses of their own mind. Donne, thus, speaks of a wreath of his mistress's hair as capable of holding his decaying body together in the grave as his soul did in life, calling it, therefore, his soul in death.

(b) Treatment of the Inward : the poetry of this period deals not so much with the outer world – man, nature, society, as with what passes in their minds. The Elizabethans even when personal, dealt with what was but common experience. But these poets lived in a world of their own fancy and spoke of that only. This makes their thoughts novel and starting.

(c) Far-fetched Images : The images suggested by the poets of this period are often strange. They are usually the product of an unnatural combination of dissimilar ideas. There is, thus, no obvious connection between love and geographical zone.

Thomas Carew in his poem "Mediocrity in Love Rejected", compares the warmth of love to the torrid zone, its lack to the frigid zone and its normal proportion to the temperate zone.

(d) Hyperboles : the poetry of this period abounds in hyperboles that could be imagined. In Donne's "Sweetest love, I do not go", when the lady sighs, she exhales not breath but his soul; and when she weeps, she sheds not tears but his blood.

(e) Scholarly Devices : The poets of this periods were mostly scholars. They used such scholarly devices that sometimes common couldn't follow them. Their comparisons, allusions and illustrations completely mystified the readers.

(f) Subtle Thoughts : The words and phrases used in writings of this period are highly intellectual due to this the poetry is not easily intelligible. The poet used to find words for their subtle thoughts and feelings.

5.2.2 About the Author

The life and works of John Milton are very much interrelated with a closeness that makes some biographical details a necessary prelude to an account of his writings. He lived his books and wrote himself into them.

His own life was not very eventful, but the times of his life were ; and of those times Milton made himself intensely a part. John Milton (1608-1674) was born in London, from his childhood he showed signs to be a great son of a great father. His father after being disinherited by his father for abandoning Roman Catholicism and conforming to the Church of England. He joined law business and also carried on his interest in music. This compositions entitled him to a respectful mention in musical history.

The boy John was unusually studious and passed from St. Paul's School to Christ's College at Cambridge. He possessed the character of adamant. He was soon at war with the authorities, though he lived down the hostility. The young Milton at Cambridge is the essential Milton, studious, unique and un-submissive to arbitrary authority, expecting more from humanity than common humanity could ever give, yet, ardent, emotional, impressionable.

After leaving Cambridge he lived at Horton, near Windsor, where his father had settled with a moderate fortune. The period of solitary study and preparation for life work at Horton succeeded the tour which took him to Italy in the spring of 1638 and plunged him literally and figuratively into the vivid life and

sunshine of an Italian summer. From Italy, he went to Florence and there he met the legendary Galileo. He came back to England in 1639.

He became what we call a publicist, and his written work was journalism of a kind, an attempt to give the largest number of persons certain convictions about public affairs. But journalism is literally a matter for a day and the journalism of Milton is not exempt from that objection. Inevitably a man of Milton's temper was anti-Royalist, and anti-Episcopalian. After coming back from his tour, he set up house in London and started teaching. He married Mary Powell, a girl of seventeen years of age, half his own age, belonging to a family of Oxford Royalists. Mary soon returned back to her parents. But after two years, his wife returned to him, but the year being 1645, fatal to the royal cause, Milton took the responsibility of his in-laws as well.

Mary bore him three daughters and died in 1652 at the birth of a fourth. This long period of reconciliation and re-establishment is usually not given any importance but in fact it is very important because the foundations of all his great achievements was laid during this period. He was appointed Latin Secretary to the newly formed Council of State. Continuous strain on his eyes congenitally disordered and produced blindness in 1652. But he continued his secretarial work with assistants and held his post till restoration in 1660.

In 1656 he married a second wife, Catherine woodcock, who died in childbirth in 1658. He, with all his vigour, continued his anti Royalist writings till 1660. When the King Charles II took the reigns, and discreditable vengeance was taken on the regicides, dead or alive. Milton underwent some ill-treatment, he was removed from his post, but not much.

He was spared, not in the least because he was unimportant. But he lost a large part of his property. The Great Fire destroyed the old family house at Bread Street and the Plague drove Milton to Chalfont St. Giles. But he returned to London and the last years of his life were serene.

In 1662 he married a third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, who survived him for half-a-century. His reputation as a poet and writer of repute was on the increase. Milton was, in his own way, a simple and sociable person. He had his books, tobacco and wine. He had numerous friends and visitors, English and foreign not the least important being Andrew Marvell and John Dryden. Milton lived on amicable terms with his wife's Royalist relations, with his own Royalist nephews and with his Catholic brother's family. He suffered in his later years from gout and died of it. He was buried in an unidentified spot in St. Giles's, Cripple gate.

Such was the life of this celebrated man. The young Milton during his days at Christ's College, began his poetic career with verse paraphrases of Psalms and Ovidian Latin elegies, the Christian and the Humanist each producing his own kind of verse. The Latin verses show a luxuriance a relish of nature and a little later of female beauty which find no place in his early English verse.

His first formal poem of any length in English, is probably the "Ode on the Death of a fair infant dying of a Cough", which appears to have been written in 1628. Prior to this he wrote a sonnet in Latin in 1625. It was addressed to Diodati. He wrote a number of elegies in Latin from 1625 to 1629. He was

also an accomplished writer of Italian verse and he wrote a number of Italian Sonnets in 1628.

In 1629, while still at Cambridge Milton wrote his first successful English poem – "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" Of the three periods into which John Milton's life could be divided, only the first and third were devoted to poetry. During the intervening twenty years, he turned to prose to ventilate his views on varied topics of contemporary interest.

Milton wrote as a scholar and for the scholars. He was deeply read in the holy scriptures, the classics and the Italian language and literature. He was a poet of man. Politics, religion and morality, the three things that interested him most, are viewed in his works from this stand point. Nature was for him a replica of God, was for delight and improvement of people. He described the nature as created by God and as read and understood by him through books.

Milton is a master of rhyme in poems, odes and sonnets and showed a complete command over blank verse in his epics and other longer poems. He expressed the loftiest thoughts in the loftiest manner. It is achieved by a preference for the uncommon in word and phrase, conciseness, suggestiveness, lesser use of ornament and use of biblical and classical allusions.

Milton belongs to no School. He is a school by himself. In his own age he has little common either with the Metaphysicals or with the Cavaliers. Nor is he a thorough-going Puritan. He was basically a humanist. While all the forms of his writings are classical, the spirit and message of all his works is preaching liberty from all bondages. Milton is class apart, he stands alone and must be judged alone.

5.2.3 Self Assessment Questions

We have given you detailed information and knowledgeable material on the Augustan Age. We have discussed in detail the socio-literary situations and different to trends and movements. After discussing the restoration period, we have given you information about life and times of Milton. We have also discussed qualities of Milton's writings. Now answer the questions given in the following exercises :

Exercise-1

Select the right answer from amongst the three alternatives given below each question:

1. The writers had support of :
   (a) state and royalty
   (b) people and state
   (c) God and nature
2. The nature of the sentence develops the possibility of creating :
   (a) adequate prose
   (b) vigorous verse
   (c) endless variety

3. The legendry person whom Milton met in Italy was :
   (a) Sir King John
   (b) Charles II
   (c) Galileo
4. In 1656, John Milton married :
   (a) Catherine Woodcock
   (b) Elizabeth Minshull
   (c) Mary Powell

Exercise-2

Read the passages above in section 6.2 and answer the following questions in sentences of your own.

1. Discuss chief characteristics of seventeenth century poetry.
2. How was Milton as a child?
3. How did John Milton begin his career?
4. What do you know about Milton's first marriage ?
5. What was Milton's first Royal appointment?
6. Why was Milton spared of Royal wrath?
7. How did Milton begin his poetic career?

5.3 Reading Text (Milton : On His Blindness)

In this section we will give you Milton's sonnet entitled "On His Blindness". A brief summary of the sonnet will be given to make you understand the contents in a better way. Difficult words and phrases will be explained in simply and easy English. A critical analysis will be given to give you practice in poetic appreciation. Various literary devices will also be explained.

In this sonnet, the speaker meditates on the fact that he has become blind (Milton himself was blind when he wrote this). He expresses his frustration at being prevented by his disability from serving God as well as he desires to. He is answered by "Patience," who tells him that God has many who hurry to do his bidding, and does not really need man's work. Rather, what is valued is the ability to bear God's "mild yoke," to tolerate whatever God asks faithfully and without complaint. As the famous last line sums it up, "They also serve who only stand and wait."

5.3.1 Text

Given below is the text of John Milton's sonnet entitled **On His Blindness**.

When I consider how my light is spent, 1
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide, 2
and that one telent which is death to hide, 3
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent 4
To serve therewith my Maker, and present 5
My true account,lest He returning chide, 6
"Doth God exact day-labour, light deni'd?" 7
I foundly ask; but Patience, to prevent 8
that murmur, soon replies, God doth not need 9

Either man's work, or His own gifts, Who best *10*
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best, His state *11*
is kindly; thousands at His bidding speed. *12*
And post O'er ladn and ocean without rest; *13*
They also serve who only stand and wait.' 14

5.3.2 Glossary

1-4	I	:	John Milton
	consider	:	to think
	light	:	eye sight
	spent	:	to finish, here means to become blind
	ere	:	before
	half my days	:	half of life
	dark world	:	full of darkness
	wide	:	big
	that	:	refers to power of writing poetry
	talent	:	capability, skill
	hide	:	to finish
	Lodg'd	:	kept, to be in possession
	useless	:	not being in use
	soul	:	conscious, heart
	more bent	:	to become more humble
5-8	serve	:	to work
	Maker	:	the God
	present	:	to lay before God
	true account	:	the actual work carried out so far
	lest	:	so that
	He	:	the God
	account	:	works done
	returning	:	on my return after death
	chide	:	to reproach
	exact	:	take away
	day labour	:	hard work to be carried out during day
	light	:	eye sight
	deni'd	:	taken away
	prevent	:	to void
9-11	murmur	:	complaint
	doth	:	does
	need	:	to take back
	who	:	man
	bear	:	to accept
	mild	:	of low intensity
	yoke	:	suffering
	they	:	man, the people
	serve	:	render service
	Him	:	the God
	best	:	better way
	state	:	kingdom
12-14	kingly	:	very big and affluent

thousands	:	uncountable in numbers
bidding	:	command
speed	:	to work swiftly
post over	:	pass over
rest	:	to stop
stand	:	pray to the God
wait	:	to have patience for God's mercy

5.3.3 Summary

The poem is about the poet himself. He became blind at an early age, which he calls as half of his life. Due to blindness, the whole world is dark and gloomy. The gift of being a creative writer and poet, which has been accorded to him by the God is now useless for him. Though the gift or skill given to him by the God would remain with him till death, but he will not be able to use it.

As God has taken away his eye sight, he has become more submissive and wants to serve God with his poetic power. He was greatly inclined to write poetry in praise of God and present to him a true account of his writings. He wants to do this so that God may not snub him after his death.

He mildly wants to ask God that how can be required to do work equal to any normal person inspite of his total blindness. In the answer to this heart felt feeling of the poet, his conscience comes to his rescue to tell that he must keep patience as God does not want anything from man. God's Kingdom is very rich and splendid. Thousands of angels are everytime ready to act on God's command. They carry out God's wishes on land and sea without rest. The mortals on Earth cannot serve God at this speed, so they must wait in silence for his mercy. Milton says that those who are not able to serve God should simple stand in service of God and wait for their chance to receive mercy of God.

5.3.4 Critical Analysis

"On His Blindness" is one of the finest sonnets in English poetry. It is an autobiographical sonnet and brings before us the personality and character of the blind poet John Milton. Milton became blind in 1652 when he was 44 years of age. Milton's life was full of gloom and despair and he was overcome by sadness and grief.

At this time his learning of religious and biblical literature came to his rescue. His faith in God and religion comes forth in this sonnet. His strong faith in God and belief in the benignity come to help him. The God always shows mercy on everyone.

This philosophy is very near to Indian philosophy of the Veds and the Bhagwat which teach man to do his duty towards God and Society and have faith in the deeds of God. Everything done by God is essential and is being done for ultimate good of mankind.

Milton is also conscious about his life after death. Inspite of being blind, he wants to make use of his poetic power so thus after death when he is presented before God, the God may not reproach him. When his innerself tries to make

a complaint against God, as to how he could be able to do full work when he is blind, he is shown the right path by patience. Patience if being personified in the poem.

Patience tells him that God would not make query about his work, as God has thousands of very efficient angels, who work to carry out commands of God all the time over land and sea without taking any rest. Patience advises that a man should accept all the pleasures and pain afflicted by God and inspite of being in pain, one should not complain and bear them in spirit of calmness.The last line of the sonnet explains the purpose of the poet. One should have devotion and faith in God and work with all his capacity and wait patiently for mercy of God. There are the true devotees of God, who do not complain and silently wait for their turn to have mercy of God.

5.3.5 Theme

The supremacy of God and complete faith in God is the basic theme of this sonnet. This is one of the noblest poems in English language. This autobiographical poem raises the complaint of engraved person against God and then gives the solution also.

It is a complete poem in this sense. It raises a genuine complaint and the provided the solution for accepting the afflictions of God with calmness and faith. These two, are the qualities which one must have towards the maker.

The sonnet tells us that faith and confidence in God should not be shaken in anyway. As only such persons are loved by God and are amply rewarded, we find that this has been prove in the life of Milton as well. His major and legendary compositions were written by him when he was blind. Milton will always be remembered and praised for 'Paradise Lost', 'Paradise Regained', and 'Samson Agonistes', the masterpieces which he wrote when he was blind.

5.3.6 Style

Milton is the supreme master of grand style. We find glimpses of this in the present sonnet as well. The language used is learned and remote from familiar associations. It is a mixture of Latinism and archaism with a small sparkling of Italian phraseology.

His sonnet is highly allusive and bookish and has the stamp of a mind not only replete with a wide, various and even obscure learning. The sonnet is a continuous reverberation of echoes and suggestions. Its effect is produced not by means of what it expresses but what it suggests. Milton adopted Petrarchan style in writing this sonnet. He brought back the sonnet to its original and strict type, the type which Petrarch had fixed. The first eight lines are called Octave while the last six lines are sestet. His octave has run into the sestet. The rhyming scheme is : abba, cddc, ffg ffg

5.3.7 Self Assessment Questions

Exercise – 3

Answer the following questions. Choose the correct answer from the three alternatives given below each question.

1. Milton uses 'light' in the sense of :
   (i) light of truth
   (ii) power of God
   (iii) capacity to see
2. Milton meant by
   (i) labour of the day
   (ii) work to be done in the light of the Sun
   (iii) work which could be done during the day
3. Milton in this sonnet personifies :
   (i) Blindness
   (ii) Patience
   (iii) Mercy
4. The God does not need :
   (i) service
   (ii) man's work
   (iii) gifts
5. The word 'chide' means in this sonnet :
   (i) reproach
   (ii) child
   (iii) Children of God
6. When in pain, Milton advises to have :
   (i) patience
   (ii) mercy
   (iii) prayer
7. The style of this sonnet is :
   (i) Miltonic
   (ii) Petrarchan
   (iii) Puritan
8. This sonnet has :
   (i) two parts
   (ii) one part
   (iii) four parts
9. 'Talent' in this sonnet means :
   (i) capacity
   (ii) power to write poetry
   (iii) skill
10. The word 'thousands' refers to :
   (i) persons
   (ii) people who suffer
   (iii) angels

Exercise – 4

Answer the following questions on the basis of your study of section 5.3.

1. What does Milton want to do after being blind ?
2. What Milton thought to be useless?
3. Discuss 'That murmur'
4. What was the solution of Milton's complaint?

5. Discuss the 'Kingdom of God.'
6. Comment on theme of this sonnet.
7. What does 'patience' tell Milton?
8. What kind of language is used by Milton?
9. Who are considered true devotees of God?
10. What a man must do?

5.4 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have acquired knowledge and have been given practice :

- to understand the seventeenth century English poetry,
- to know about life, works and poetic genius of John Milton,
- to know and understand literary trends of seventeenth century English literature,
- to read and understand the sonnet of Milton,
- to critically analyse a poem,
- to answer the questions.

5.5 Answers To The Exercises

Exercise : 1

1. (a) state and royalty
2. (c) endless variety
3. (c) singing lyric
4. (c) Galileo
5. (a) Catherine Woodcock

Exercise-2

1. This period had in its writings fantastic conceits, treatment of the inward, for fetched images, hyperboles, and high learning.
2. He was devoted to learning.
3. He began his career as a teacher at his own house in London.
4. Milton married Mary Powell in 1643. She belonged to a family of Oxford Royalists. Very soon she went back to her parents. After two years she came back to Milton. She bore him three daughters and died in 1652 at the birth of a fourth.
5. He began as Latin Secretary to the royal government.
6. Milton was thought as an unimportant person and hence no strict action was taken against him.
7. Milton began to write Latin poems of great personal interest and naive poetical charm from the age of sixteen.

Exercise-3

1. (iii) capacity to see
2. (iii) work which could be done during the day
3. (ii) patience
4. (ii) man's work
5. (i) reproach

6. (i) patience.
7. (ii) Petrarchan
8. (i) two parts
9. (ii) power to write poetry
10. (iii) angels

Exercise-4

1. Milton wanted to write good poetry in praise of the Almighty and thereby present to him a true account of the poetic gift which he had bestowed on him. The poem presents a carefully reasoned argument, on the basis of Christian faith, for the acceptance of physical impairment.

2. Milton expresses his frustration at being prevented by his disability from serving God as well as he desires in this sonnet. He thought that the gift of poetry which had been conferred upon him by God was almost useless after loosing his eye sight.

3. The poet was very sad on loosing his eye sight. The murmur refers to the poet asking himself in a complaining mood, whether God required full work from a blind man.

4. The speaker learns that, rather than being an obstacle to his fulfillment of God's work for him, his blindness is a part of that work, and that his achievement lies in living patiently with it. The solution was to be in service of God and wait for his mercy.

5. Milton's faith in God and religion is portrayed in this sonnet. According to him, God's Kingdom is very wide, splendid and rich. There are thousands of angels to carry out his wishes like faithful servants.

6. At the prime of his life, Milton was struck with blindness. As a result of this tragedy, Milton created a sonnet about his blindness. He questioned the meaning of this tragedy, of the future, and God for his blindness within the sonnet. And the truth soon dawns on him that the true meaning of life is to be in service of God, not to have any complaint and have full faith in God's mercy is the basic

7. Patience consoles Milton and tells that God doesn't require man's labour and gifts. Patience is personified in this poem which conveys the objective of his life, it tells him that he should accept the pleasures and pains bestowed upon him by God and lead a calm life dedicated to the service of the divine power.

8. Milton uses figurative language to express his grievances and discontent. For e.g. He reflects upon his life and says "how my light is spent," or the time he had his sight. The language is highly scholarly and Latin words are also used.

9. The true devotees of God are those who have faith in God and devote their life in his service. Those who pray to God in silence and wait for his mercy are the real followers and thus lead a peaceful life.

10. A man should have faith and be in the service of God without any complaint. They carry out the works destined for them with dedication and perseverance and are always ready to follow the wishes of God .

5.6 Books Suggested

1. Bradley, A.C., *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, Macmillan & Co.: London, 1959
2. Bush, Douglas, *Milton : Poetical Works,* OUP: *New York,* 1983
3. Ford, Boris, *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature,* Penguin: London, 1982
4. George, A.G., *Makers of Literary Criticism,* Asia: Bombay, 1966
5. Hayward, John, *The Penguin Book of English Verse,* Penguin: New York, 1983
6. Leavis, F.R., *New Bearings in English Poetry,* Chatto & Windus: London, 1982
7. Richards, I.A., *Practical Criticism,* Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1982
8. Shawcross, John T., *Milton : The Critical Heritage,* Vikas: New Delhi, 1970
9. Wilson A.N., *The Life of John Milton,* OUP: New York, 1986

Unit – 6

John Milton : On His Twenty Third Birthday

Structure

6.0 Objectives

In this unit we will make you familiar with the poetry of seventeenth century. We will try to give you practice in understanding poetry with the help of two prominent poems of John Milton, 'On His Twenty Third Birthday' by :

(a) giving you the text of these two poems composed by John Milton,
(b) giving you glossary of difficult words and phrases for the poems,
(c) discussing critical analysis of the poems
(d) discussing various literary devices used by Milton in the poems,
(e) giving you practice for self assessment by trying to make you answer the questions in your own language.

In first section we will introduce you with the world of poetry and special place of poetry of seventeenth century and historical background.

In the third section on reading text, we will give you full text of the sonnet and explain difficult phrases and words in very simple English, we will also give a detailed summary of the sonnet.

In the next section we will critically analyse the Miltonic sonnet. Various literary devices used by Milton will also be discussed after the critical analysis of the sonnet.

After reading and understanding various sections of this unit, you will be fully capable to :

(i) understand the sonnet in their totality,
(ii) develop capability to understand hidden meanings of these two sonnet.
(iii) appreciate and critically analyse these sonnet,
(iv) evaluate thought process of John Milton,
(v) acquire knowledge about the Age to which Milton belonged, and
(vi) answer the questions given at the end.

6.1 Introduction

The Literature of the age of Milton presents a marked difference from the literature of the Age of Elizabeth. During this period there was a decline in literary production. The great conceptions, philosophical, political and social, that had marked the preceding, age, gave way and disappeared. One of these was that of an ideal union between the interest of the Renaissance and those of the Reformation, between the claims of this world and those of the other which, in the case of Spenser and Sidney, made for a complex though spiritualized humanism. Instead we have in the seventeenth century, on the one hand, the gallent but light hearted Cavaliers, and on the other the earnest but narrow minded Puritans - followers of two utterly opposed views of life. In the absence of great conceptions, human ambition and human character became less splendid and unified. In place of Marlowe, Shakespeare and Raleigh, we have Johnson, Bacon and Donne. Milton and the great Puritans are obvious exceptions, but Milton illustrates the falling off from Spenser's generous views of life and character. Above all the imaginative appeal of the new world beyond the sea had become dulled. If human character was less grandiose than among the Elizabethans it was much more self conscious and curious. If the world was less spacious and less inviting to bold exploration and speculation, it was, on the other hand a tempting field for exploitation and patient investigation.

The deterioration in Literature during this period was mainly due to the influence of Puritanism. The output specially of poems, was much smaller, and the fashion was towards shorter poems, especially lyrics of a particular type. There is a marked decay in the exalted poetic fervor of the previous age. In the new poetry there is more of the intellectual play of fancy than of and profundity. In the prose there is a marked increase in activity, which is an invariable accompaniment of decline in poetry.

6.2 Age and Author

6.2.1 About the Age

The Elizabethan church settlement had been a cautious compromise in which Calvinist and Catholic elements were blended. The queen had been made the Supreme Governor of the Church, an act of Uniformity had been passed and a Common Prayer Book was introduced. In spite of this Elizabethan settlement the Calvinistic system had penetrated with more or less with completeness into the minds of the great majority of English Protestants. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there was no Puritan Party. The Puritan attack on Elizabeth took form in 1579. After the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, James VI of Scotland became James I, the king of England. As King James I found his way from Edinburgh to London in 1603, he met with a group of Puritan clergy who presented him with petition in which he was asked to redress various abuses in the Church of England. The petitioners asked that certain ceremonies, be left out of the Church services, that only educated man competent to preach should henceforth be made ministers, and that bishops not be allowed to be 'Pluralists', holding benefices which they did not administer. The king feared that the granting of more rise to the Puritans would be dangerous to him. Surely he was anti-Puritan and favoured the Roman Catholics.

While the uncompromising sprit of the Puritan party spread steadily among the English classes during the reign of James I, it was not till the time of his successor, Charles I, that Puritanism emerged as a great national power. Puritanism became a political as well as moral and religious force and at a very critical time the great custodian and defender of the jeopardized liberties. After a stormy period of civil war it triumphed with the triumph of Oliver Cromwell, and during the few years ofthe Commonwealth it was supreme. Within its range, the influence of Puritanism upon the tone and temper of English and thought was profound. In literature the Puritan Age was one of confusion due to the breaking up of accepted standards in government and religion. It was an age of spiritual gloom which sooner or later fastens upon all the writers of the age. This so - called gloomy age produced some minor poems of exquisite workmanship and one great master of verse - John Milton.

6.2.2 About the Author and his Works

John Milton 1608-1674 was an English poet, prose polemicist, and civil servant for the English Commonwealth. Most famed for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, Milton is celebrated the supreme English poet, Milton experienced a dip in popularity after attacks by T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis in the mid 20th century; but with multiple societies and scholarly journals devoted to his study, Milton's reputation remains as strong as ever in the 21st century.

John Milton was a descendant of a family of substantial yeomen long settled inn Oxfordshire. His father, John Milton, having been disinherited as a Protestant, came to London and established himself as a scrivener in Bread Street, Cheapside. There the poet was born, December 9, 1608, ten years after the death of Spenser, and eight years before the death of Shakespeare. He received a most careful education, being from early boyhood an impetuous devourer of books. Hw was a scholar of St. Paul's School at the age of 10, and entered at 16 as a pensioner at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he remained seven years, taking his degree of M.A. at the age of 24. At school and at college he was distinguished by his passion for classical poetry, by independence and reserve of spirit, a pure and simple life, and strong love for one or two chosen friends. He left Cambridge in 1632, eight years before the Long Parliament met, a master of Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Hebrew, skilled in fencing and other exercises of a gentleman. He then retired to his father's rural retreat at Horton, near Windsor, resolved to devote his whole life to poetry, and filled with the grand projects and ideals which he rehearses in his noble second sonnet. It was the peculiar fortune of Milton to find in his excellent father a man of rare sense and much culture, a parent who was quite willing to aid the aspirations of his son towards a life of self-training for high art. For six years the poet remained in profound retirement, absorbed in study, meditation, and poetry.

It has been well said by Mark Pattison that "Milton's life is a drama in three acts. The first discovers him in the calm and peaceful retirement of Horton, of which *L'Allegro, 11 Penseroso,* and *Lycidas* are the expression. In the second act he is breathing the foul and heated atmosphere of party passion and religious hate, generating the lurid fires which glare in the battalious canticles

of his prose pamphlets. The three great poems, *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samon Agonistes*, are the utterance of his final period of solitary and Promethean grandeur, when, blind, destitute, friendless he testified of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come, alone before a fallen world. "His six years at Horton were spent, as he tells us, in "turning over the Latin and Greek authors," in systematic study of poetry, history, Hebrew and modern languages, the cultivation of music, and in writing the exquisite lyrics. These in Lycidas touch the highest point of lyrical perfection that the English language has ever reached, so that therein the spiritual passion of Puritanism seems transposed into the melancholy music of Petrarch.

For twenty years (1640-16660), from the opening of the Long Parliament until the restoration of the monarchy, the poet was absorbed in the advocate and then in the servant of the Commonwealth. First, he dedicated his time to education and political pamphleteering; in 1649 he was made "Secretary for Foreign Tongues" under the Commonwealth government, a post in which he laboured regularly for ten years till the downfall of the Protectorate. He was there in close relation with Cromwell and other leaders of the Republic; but his services were purely literary, and nothing is known of any closer intercourse.

It is the last fourteen years of his life, when the republican poet, blind, deserted, ruined, and broken-hearted, had withdrawn into austere retirement, that we owe the two great epics and *Samson*. Since the age of 43, the insatiable student of books had been totally without sight. He had buried his first wife, Mary Powell, an uncongenial spouse, in 1652; his second wife, Katherine Woodcock, died after a short term of married life in 1658; and the poet in 1663, then 55, with three little girls, married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, a very worthy woman, who survived him. The last thirty years of his life were passed in London, except for a visit, during the plague, to Chalfont St. Giles, where the only house which he inhabited that remains is still to be seen unaltered. Here partly, and in his residences in the city, in Bunhill Fields, the later poems were composed.

Paradise Lost was published in 1667, but it had been completed some years earlier; it was seriously begun nearly ten years before, and it had haunted the mind of the poet for at least thirty years. *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were published together in 1670, and were completed in the five years preceding. The poet lived four years more; but he wrote no more verse. He died in 1674, at the age of nearly 66, and was buried in St. Giles, Cripplegate, revered by his intimates, and even already famous, in the spot where his grave-long (alas!) desecrated-is still marked and often visited. With all his sorrow, afflictions, and disappointments, both public and private, his life was one of absolute dedication to his great purpose and high calling. This great citizen and heroic soul, being forced back upon his own heart for his ideal of Man in presence of Nature and its Creator, produced from the depths of his pure and rich imagination a marvellous picture of Humanity in all its naked essentials, before History had loaded its memories, or civilization had clothed its life with conventions. The aim of Milton is thus analogous to Dante; and, in simple majesty and unity of scheme, for a time it seems even superior; until the rigid limits of Scripture and inevitable want of varied human interest compel

us to admit that the close of the *Paradise Lost* is hardly equal to its sublime exordium and the earlier acts in the great drama of Man's Creation, Fall, and Salvation. Yet the originality, power, and eternal meaning of Milton's poem gain fresh significance as civilization advances; and we see that since the work of Dante there has been no such approach to the ideal epic of Humanity. Like Dante, like Homer, Milton has given us a *living*, and not a *literary,* Epic. It is Dante amongst the moderns, and Virgil amongst the ancients, whom, in sustained moral purpose and in religious consciousness of being the inspired voice of his age, Milton most nearly resembles, as also he resembles these in lifelong dedication to his task as prophet of a social regeneration to be. It is the lasting glory of English Puritanism that it could join in one work such a creative statesman as Cromwell with so supreme a poet as Milton.

6.2.3 Milton's Sonnets

Sonnets are poems that have fourteen lines that usually have a recognized rhyming scheme. A sonnet generally has two section; with the first section normally having eight lines and the second section hvaing six. The rhythm in each line of the sonnet can also apply with sonnet traditions and the syllables (which is counted in feet) can define which tradition it is - French, Italian or English. Sonnets were commonly written in the sixteenth to eighteenth century and often written to express emotions of happiness, sadness, and love or written for someone in particular by request.

Milton's sonnets (he only wrote a few, but they are so well-known that his variation is called the Miltonic sonnet) retain the original rhyme scheme of the Petrarchian or Italian sonnet, but completely get rid of the "volte", or change or perspective between the octet and sestet. The result is that the 14-line stanza becomes a monolith. An astounding thing is that it turns out to be just the right length, even for wide-minded (and occasionally long-winded) Milton.

The major sonnets have much poetical as well as autobiographical interest, and as a group they illustrate (with "Lycidas") both in texture and rhythm the beginnings of the grand style (i.e., a literary style marked by a sustained and lofty dignity and sublimity) that was to have full scope in Paradise Lost. One is less conscious of sonnet structure and of rhymes than of a single massive unit that approaches.

6.3 Reading Text (Milton : On His Birthday)

In this section we will give you Milton's of John Milton entitled "On this Twenty Third Birthday". This was composed at the time of his leaving Cambridge. A brief summary will help you understand the contents of the poem in a better way. Difficult words and phrases have been explained in simple English to make the meaning clear while reading the text. Critical analysis is given to you to help you develop practice in poetic appreciation. We have also explained theme, style and imagery of this sonnet before giving you questions to answer.

6.3.1 Text

Given below is the text of John Milton's sonnet entitled **On His Birthday**.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth, 1

Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year ! 2
My hasting days fly on with full career, 3
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th, 4
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth, 5
That I to manhood am arrived so near, 6
And inward ripeness doth much less appear, 7
That some more timely-happy sprits indu'th. 8
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow, 9
It shall be still in strictest measure even 10
To the same lot, however mean, or high, 11
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven. 12
All is, if I have grace to use it so, 13
As ever in my great Task - Master's eye. 14

6.3.2 Glossary

1-4	soon	:	early, quickly
	hath	:	has
	time	:	if refers to years
	subtle	:	difficult to describe
	youth	:	youthful years
	stolen	:	to take away
	his wing	:	the age has carried his years
	hasting	:	passing away quickly
	days	:	refers to years of his youth
	late spring	:	mature age
	bud or blossom	:	refers to creative writing
	shew'th	:	to show to be in existence
	useless	:	not being in use
	soul	:	conscious, heart
	more bent	:	to become more humble
5-8	semblance	:	outer physical appearance
	deceive	:	to hide, to disguise
	the truth	:	the truth about his passing years
	I	:	Milton, the poet
	manhood	:	mature age
	arrived	:	to reach
	inward ripeness	:	maturity of thought
	doth	:	does
	appear	:	to be visible outwardly
	timely	:	produced at proper time
	spirits	:	poetic works
	indu'th	:	produced
9-11	it	:	refers to poetic composition
	soon	:	to be composed quickly
	slow	:	at a slow speed
	it	:	poetic writing
	still	:	in the present
	mean	:	disappoint

	high	:	success
12-14	leads	:	gives me, brings me to
	will	:	wish, desire
	Heaven	:	the God
	all is	:	every quality or skill
	grace	:	ability
	Task-master	:	the God
	use it	:	to practice it
	eye	:	control

6.3.3 Summary

The sonnet was written when Milton was twenty three years old. It expresses his disappointment at his non achievement. He is painted to realise that he has not achieved anything and not composed any poem of good worth.

Milton feels that twenty three years have passed very quickly. Time has stolen his youth. Now his youth age is almost over. In his mature age he has no poetic output worth mentioning. He says that his physical appearance is quite youthful. By looking at him people may not judge that he has reached manhood. His mental faculties have not fully developed and thus the poetic talents have yet not begun to reveal themselves. In this respect he is less fortunate then those whose natural gifts bear fruits in proper course of time in their life.

The mood of the poet changes in sestet of this sonnet. He says that he is under the will of God and the time will give him success and opportunity. Milton says that everything in his life is under the supervision and care of God, if only he has grace to use it. As a true devotee and servant to his great Task Master, the God, he is waiting for God's will to grant him success.

6.3.4 Critical Analysis

This sonnet is about Milton himself. It is described as an inseparable part of Milton's autobiography. This sonnet is titled as "On being arrived at twenty-three years of age". It has been published under this title in "The English Poems of John Milton" by Oxford University Press, London in 1931.

Milton was determined to be a great poet and from his childhood he was seriously involved in his preparation to achieve his goal. Though he had shown adequate proof of his poetic genius while at Cambridge but he himself was not fully satisfied with all that.

In the octave of this sonet the poet expresses his disppointment on not achieving his high ambitions in poetic field. He is sad that his youthful years have gone astray without any big achievement.

In the sestet, his mood appears to be changed. He says that all his life is under the eye of God, his great Task-Master. It appears that the poet is no longer disappointed. He has full faith in God's supervision. He has dedicated his abilities to God as a faithful servant God will choose the appropriate time to make him successful with his poetic powers. And we know that God gave him power to compose his masterpieces when he was blind. Milton proved to be the greatest poet of his times.

6.3.5 Theme

It is an autobiographical sonnet. It is first, a consideration of Milton's little achievement to date, and secondly, a renewed and more decisive dedication of himself to God's will and be at his mercy. Dedication has the effect of resolving his doubts and fears about not being successful.

The sonnet opens on a note of self-distrust. He is pained to realise that while others have attained success, he has failed to do so, inspite of being fully capable.

In the sestet, the poet, shows the spark of faith and dedication to God. He expresses his belief that sooner or later, God will choose the appropriate time to make him successful with his poetic powers and thus fulfil his wish.

6.3.6 Style & Structure

The style is grand. Its lofty religious passion is like the passion of the Habrew psalms. The thought and problem is presented in the octave. The solution of this problem is presented int he sestet. As in his other sonnets, here also the solution is in the form of having complete faith in God and waiting for the appropriate time when God would fulfil his wish. It is written in Petrarchean style. In its form, "On His Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty - Three" is an Italian sonnet (also known as a Petrarchan sonnet), written, like most sonnets, in iambic pentameter.

Its thematic organization closely follows the structure of the form, with two well-developed movements corresponding to the eight-line octave and the six-line sestet. The octave follows the conventional Petrarchan rhyme scheme of *abbaabba*, while the sestet rhymes *cdcdee*, one of several conventional patterns. The octave breaks conventionally into two shorter movements, each consisting of a quatrain rhyming *abba*. The beginning of the sestet, where the rhyme scheme changes, is known as the turn of the sonnet because at this point an Italian sonnet's theme or tone usually shifts. In the case of "On His Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty - Three" the transitional "But" signals a change from the impatient arrogance of the octave into the humbler prayer of the sestet.

Imagery

It is very interesting to note that the imagery of the sonnet has nothing biblical about it. The imagery of the octave is that of time, as a thief and the garden of youth. The texture of the sestet is abstract. This sonnet is not scriptural like "On His Blindess". Apart from 'Great TAsk-Master' this sonnet does not refer directly to any biblical reference. In the sestet 'Time' is personified and poet expresses his deep faith in time for attaining his success.

6.3.7 Self Assessment Questions

Exercise : 1

Answer the following questions by choosing the correct answer from the three alternatives given below each question:

1. Milton in this sonnet has personified :
   A. Youth
   B. Time
   C. Mercy
2. This sonnet has 14 lines divided into :
   A. four parts
   B. two parts
   C. six parts.
3. According to Milton, his semblance deceives:
   A. truth
   B. age
   C. youth
4. After 23 years, the poet has acquired :
   A. manhood
   B. mercy of God
   C. poetic gift
5. The poet believes that God will grant him :
   A. mercy
   B. truth
   C. success
6. The 'Will of Heaven' is :
   A. Will of God
   B. pure
   C. final
7. The poet considers himself to be :
   A. less fortunate
   B. powerful
   C. poetic genius
8. Milton had shown proof of his poetic genius at :
   A. London
   B. Cambridge
   C. God's mercy
9. This sonnet is :
   A. pestoral
   B. religious
   C. auto biographical
10. The biblical reference is:
   A. subtle thief
   B. timely happy
   C. great Task Master

Exercise : 2

Answer the following questions in your own words :

1. Who has stolen the youth ?
2. Why did Milton feel unhappy?
3. What did appear 'less' according to Milton?
4. Discuss the structure of this poem.
5. What is the theme of this sonnet?

6. What kind of style does this sonnet have?
7. How does the mood of the poet change?
8. What is the poet's attitude towards God?
9. What did Milton conceive about his life?
10. Comment on Milton's faith in God.

6.4 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have acquired knowledge and have been given practice :

- to understand the seventeenth century English poetry,
- to know about life, works and poetic genius of John Milton,
- to know and understand literary trends of seventeenth century English literature,
- to read and understand sonnet of Milton,
- to critically analyse poems,
- to answer the questions.

6.5 Answers To The Exercises

Exercise : 1

1. (b) time
2. (b) two parts
3. (b) age
4. (a) manhood
5. (a) mercy
6. (a) Will of God
7. (a) less fortunate
8. (b) Cambridge
9. (c) autobiographical
10. (c) great Task Master

Exercise-2

1. The crisis created by Milton's awareness of the passage of time is one that can be resolved by the poet's choice to put his future in God's hands. Inthe first eight lines of the poem, Milton worries that time has passed too quickly. He has been at Cambridge studying, but has had little time to fulfil what he sees as his destiny. Time in the form of a cunning thief, has stolen away Milton's youth. He feels that the youthful period of his life is almost over.

2. Milton's ambition was to be a great great poet but when he analyses his capability at the age of twenty three he feels unhappy because he has not composed any poem of great merit and that his youthful years have passed without any remarkable achievement in the poetic field.

3. Milton feels that although he had matured in age yet his poetic talents had not flowered in his poetic works. Thus he feels that he is less privileged in comparison to others whose talents had been apparent at the appropriate age. Thus according to him the development of his mental faculties has been less in comparison to others.

4. The sonnet displays a perfect regular Petrarchain pattern with a strong break at the turn. It consists of an eight-line octave and the six-line sestet. The octave

follows the conventional Petrarchan rhyme scheme of abbaabba, while the sestet rhymes cdcdee,

5. It is first, a consideration of Milton's little achievement to date and secondly, a renewed dedication of himself to God's service.

6. It is an Italian sonnet, written, like most sonnets, in iambic pentameter. The grand style is Petrarchian with lofty religious passion. The problem is presented in the octave and the solution is in the sestet. The solution is the developing immense faith in God.

7. The mood of the poet changes when he realises that he is wholly under the care of God and his life's activities are being supervised by God. In the final six lines of the sonnet, Milton acknowledges that time, whether "soon or slow," will still inevitably lead him to God.

8. Milton regards God as kind and merciful. He thinks that God is every watchful. He has faith in the power of God and feels that God will make him capable to compose poetry.

6.6 Books Suggested

1. Bradley, A.C., *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, Macmillan & Co.: London, 1959
2. Bush, Douglas, *Milton : Poetical Works,* OUP: *New York,* 1983
3. Ford, Boris, *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature,* Penguin: London, 1982
4. George, A.G., *Makers of Literary Criticism,* Asia: Bombay, 1966
5. Hayward, John, *The Penguin Book of English Verse,* Penguin: New York, 1983
6. Leavis, F.R., *New Bearings in English Poetry,* Chatto & Windus: London, 1982
7. Richards, I.A., *Practical Criticism,* Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1982
8. Shawcross, John T., *Milton : The Critical Heritage,* Vikas: New Delhi, 1970
9. Wilson A.N., *The Life of John Milton,* OUP: New York, 1986

Unit – 7

John Dryden : A Song For St. Cecilia's Day

Structure

7.0 Objectives

In this unit we propose to acquaint you with seventeenth century poetry. We will give you practice in understanding poetry with the help of Dryden's poem 'A Song for St. Cecilia Day' by :

(a) giving you the text of the poem,
(b) giving you a glossary of difficult words and phrases from the poem,
(c) discussing various literary devices used by John Dryden in this poem, and
(d) giving you questions based on the poem.

In the section on Age and Author, we will give you detailed information on poetry and its development in seventeenth century. Special trends and devices used by poets of this period would be discussed in detail.

We will also give you information about John Dryden as a man and as a poet. Dryden's contribution to the world of poetry would also be evaluated.

In the section of reading text we will provide you detailed summary of the poetry and meanings of difficult words and phrases of the poem. We will give you critical analysis of the poem and literary devices used by Dryden.

To make you understand the poem in a better way, short and objective type questions are being asked to enable you to have your self assessment.

After reading and understanding various sections of this unit, you will be capable to

(i) understand the text in its totality,
(ii) develop ability to understand the hidden meanings of the poem,
(iii) appreciate and critically evaluate the poem,
(iv) evaluate the thought process of the poet,
(v) have knowledge about the age of the poet,
(vi) answer the questions based on the text, poet and the poet's age.

7.1 Introduction

Literature is the art in which the English have most greatly excelled within this art of literature they have been much engaged mainly in the study of human nature, of personality and individuals and in verse over centuries and in many different ways with forms of romanticism that seem remote from the commercial instincts and pursuits with which in other countries they are so often associated.

In the Elizabethan Age, the art of words in England flourished without the sustaining influence of the other arts, or if this is too absolute a statement, with the other arts in subsidiary forms, such as decoration. Costume and the tapestries of the great houses. Further the art of words, which is the art of literature, gained, as has been suggested, great encouragement from the court and from the Queen herself.

Yet in Elizabethan times when the literature seems to be so much at the centre of national life, it failed to command the attention of the nation as the whole. In later times the court has not often been as genial and as helpful as it was under Elizabeth.

From the seventeenth century onwards certain writers have continued to develop the elaborate possibilities of English writings and for them even upto eighteenth century the pattern of the Latin sentence continued to serve as a model.

Samuel Johnson, particularly in his essays in "The Rambler", sues the balance and amplitude of the Latin sentence and when he is hurried or wearied their employment becomes more absolute. It was almost as if the shape of the Latin sentence was more natural to him than the idiom of his own language. Johnson at the same time realised that the genius of the English language was capable of supreme simplicity without any diminution of force and although this was not the manner which he himself practiced, he was capable of admitting it in others. In his "Life of Dryden" he pays tribute to Dryden's prose in such a way that he would seem to criticse his own style in admiring Dryden's easy manner.

Though Dryden's style was simpler than that of Samuel Johnson and did not attempt the splendour of Milton or Browne he yet had many vestiges of antique elaboration. Among Dryden's contemporaries there had developed a style of writing which was for more simple than his own and which consciously aimed at clarity than elegance.

As a reinforcement of these considerations the simpler forms of writings in English were coming into use. It is fortunate that in this period there did develop some men of understanding genius whose talent gave to these simpler forms of power and effectiveness.

7.2 Age And Author

In this section we will discuss the trends and movements of seventeenth century. Restoration played a vital role in this period and influenced the writings in the language

of English. We will also acquaint you with the life, poetic words and position and status of John Dryden.

7.2.1 About the Age

In the forty years of English literary production between the restoration and the beginning of the eighteenth century, Dryden is the most conspicuous personality and the leader of every movement; yet of all great English poets he is the most restrained, the least enkindling.

The monarchy was restored in England in 1660 with Charles II. The period known as restoration includes also the reigns of James II, William III and Mary II. The notable events that influenced the writers of the age include the wars against Holland from 1664 to 1674; the Great Plaque that ravaged London in 1665; the Great Fire that destroyed five-sixths of London a year later; the rise of the two great political parties, Whigs (Liberals) and Tories (Conservatives) ; the consequent increase in the power of the Parliament; and the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth, a natural son of Charles II for succession to the English throne, which was suppressed by James II, the younger brother of Charles II.

Poetry, which with the exception of Ben Jonson and his tribe had so far been following the native English tradition of freedom from the rules of the ancient Greek and Latin classics, now underwent a change. The danger of this unbridled liberty, already foreseen by Ben Jonson, came to light when the metaphysical poetry in its decay, broke through all bounds of forms and matter. It was faulty in rhyme and metre.

If poetry was to survive, a change was called for. It must confirm to some accepted standards of excellence, so that lowlessness in writing might be avoided. These were found only in the ancient Greek and Latin classics which French writers had already adopted as models. For court reasons France exerted a powerful influence on England at this time.

Charles II, who was now on the throne had since his father's defeat passed all his time in France. With him had gone many a writers of royalist sympathies. At the restoration they all returned to England, imbued with French culture. In poetry it signified the observance of the rules of the ancient Greek and Latin classics as expounded by the French critic Boileau in his *Art Poetique* in 1674.

They made a special appeal to the English poets for the promise they held of combating lawlessness in poetry and of judging it by accepted standards of excellence. But as Boileau's exposition of the classical rules was but a modified version of them rather than the original ones *in toto*, the school of writing they gave rise to, whether in France or in England, came to be called the neo classical or a new form of the original classical.

The Neo-classical School was thus developed. The main characteristics of this School were respect for classical rules, stress on reason or good sense, set poetic style, didacticism and treatment of town life.

The age marks a reaction from the metaphysical 'abuse' of poetry. Poets, it was felt, must write well, not instinctively as only the greatest had been doing

so far, but knowingly as others could do too. It was therefore necessary for them to know that best that had been written in the world to be able to write well themselves.

Of this best, by common consent, the ancient Greek and Latin classics were the highest models. To copy these models now became the poets' chief endeavour. And to the able to do so, the poet must adhere to the principles on which they were written. In this way each kind of poetry came to have rules of its own.

Together with the clear enunciation of form, the new writers insisted on clarity of thoughts and feelings. They discouraged sheer emotionalism which suggests more than it says, and gave an intellectual turn to poetry. Clarity was the object and to achieve it the plain statement – 'a close, naked, natural way of speaking'. With every poet doing so, a set style was developed.

With the intellectual turn now given to poetry, its teaching function came to be emphasised no less than the pleasure giving. Every kind attempted, the lyric, the ode, the satire, the epic – was valued for the lesson it conveyed or the virtue it extolled. If it happened to be a verse tale, there must be poetic justice in it, vice punished and virtue rewarded.

The foundation of this new movement was laid by Edmund Waller (1606-87) and Sir John Denham (1615-68) who, discarding the current metaphysical fashion of novelty in thought and expression, wrote plain poetry in the closed couplets. They were followed by Pope and Dryden, who both learnt their art from them.

The kind of poetry most attempted in this age was the lyric, the ode, and the satire. The lyric, as in the Caroline age, was written by the court poets and had the same charm. It more or less continued in the old tradition. The ode and satire broke fresh ground and followed the pattern now laid down for poetry. In spite, however, of the title Augustan applied to it the age produced but little great poetry, the rules which it wanted its poets to follow made rather for great writings in which indeed, it is one of the richest in English Literature.

7.2.2 About the Author

John Dryden was born in the small village of Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire in 1631. His father was the village rector. Both of his parents had strong puritan tendencies. By the age of ten, young John had read and understood an English translation of the works of Greek historian Polybius. He was sent to a famous school at Westminster at an early age.

At school Dryden was able to appreciate and benefit by the excellent classical education, which formed the base for his use of classical literature in future. We find the benefit of that basic education in his poetic works. At the school, young John made his first attempt at poetry by writing an elegy in the memory of his school-fellow, Lord Hastings, and he translated the third satire of Persius as part of his school assignment.

In 1655, he got admission to Trinity College at Cambridge. He was keenly interested in studies and became one of the best educated man of his age. He is known to be the foremost literary figure of the Augustan Age. At Cambridge,

just as at Westminster school, John tried his hand at poetry. He most successfully completed his degree at Cambridge.

On leaving Cambridge in 1657, he went to London as Secretary to Sir Gilbert Pickering and Chamberlain to Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector. Being allied to the Puritan party, he wrote some verses on the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1659. These were the first verses which made him famous all over the country. Dryden entitled these verses as "Heroic Stanzas".

The restoration brought about a complete change in him. He put himself immediately on the winner's side and wrote "Astrae Redux", a poem of welcome to King Charles II, followed by the "Panegyric to his Sacred Majesty". In 1664, he married Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. The marriage brought him a hundred pounds a year, but little happiness.

For some twenty years after the restoration, Dryden's main output consisted of plays, together with panegyrics, prefaces, prologues, and epilogues. The exposure of the style of his heroic play entitled "Troilus and Cressida" (1679) preceded his turning to those great satirical narrative poems in which he first revealed his full stature as a poet.

From 1663 to 1681, Dryden chiefly wrote plays. He knew he had no genius for Drama but it was the most profitable branch of literature at that time and he experimented upon it, not always with success. about twenty plays came from his pen, all more or less coarse. The stage demanded vulgar stuff and he satisfied the taste and demand of his audience.

Dryden's place as a prose writer and a critic is at least as important as his position as a poet. "Dryden may be properly considered as father of English criticism", wrote Dr. Johnson with perfect justice. As a practicing poet who was interested in his craft, he punctuated his poetic career with frequent essays discussing questions on technique, structure, characterisation, diction and literary taste and fashion.

Dryden's first important critical work was his "Essay of Dramatic Poesie" (1668), a dialogue on the nature of poetic drama and the respective merits of classical, modern French, Elizabethan, and Restoration plays.

In 1665, while plague was raging in London, Dryden retired to his father in-law's house at Charlton, with his wife. Here he wrote his first great poem, "Annus Mirabilis" (1667). It was written in stanzas of four lines in alternate rhyme. In 1670, he was appointed Poet-Laureate and Historiographer Royal. This placed Dryden in prosperous circumstances.

Dryden, like Bacon, spent his last years in total devotion to creative writings. He went on to work with courage and energy, writing plays, poems and translations. "The Fables" his last work consisted of a collection adopted from the works of Chaucer and Boccaccio. Dryden died in 1700, the year of the publication of his "The Fables". He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

7.2.3 Self Assessment Questions

After going through the introduction and knowing about the Age, you have also learnt about the life, achievements and major works of John Dryden. Try to answer the questions given under the following exercises.

Exercise-1

Choose the correct answer from the three alternatives given below each question:

1. In the Elizabethan Age, literature flourished :
   (a) without sustaining influence of other arts,
   (b) with combination of other arts
   (c) in association with finer arts
2. When in England literature was at the centre of national life, the literature:
   (a) was aloof from people
   (b) failed to command the attention of people
   (c) attracted attention of people
3. The balance and amplitude of the Latin sentences was used by :
   (a) John Dryden
   (b) Samuel Johnson
   (c) Ben Jonson
4. John Dryden's contemporary writers developed a style which was simpler than Dryden and had more :
   (a) power
   (b) elegance
   (c) clarity
5. Wars against Holland took place from :
   (a) 1660-1664
   (b) 1664-1674
   (c) 1660-1668
6. Neo-classical School was established
   (a) after restoration
   (b) after reformation
   (c) after renaissance
7. The neo-classical poetry is particularly rich in :
   (a) wit
   (b) imagery
   (c) plain statement
8. John Dryden remained Poet-Laureate for
   (a) sixteen years
   (b) ten years
   (c) twenty years
9. Dryden wrote plays for :
   (a) twenty years
   (b) before restoration
   (c) eight years
10. Dryden is considered as the father of :
   (a) English Criticism
   (b) translations
   (c) historical plays

Exercise-2

Try to answer the following question in your own sentences

1. What did Dryden do during the plague in England?

_____

_____

_____

2. Why did Dryden change his religion ?

_____

_____

_____

3. What did Dryden do as a practicing poet?

_____

_____

_____

4. What did Dryden do with the restoration?

_____

_____

_____

5. Whom did Dryden follow as a poet?

_____

_____

_____

6. Discuss Neo-classical school.

_____

_____

_____

7. Where did Charles II go after his father's death?

_____

_____

_____

8. Which husband-wife team ruled over England?

_____

_____

_____

9. Comment on the literature during the Elizabethan period?

_____

_____

_____

10. Discuss the events of Restoration period.

_____

_____

_____

7.3 Reading Text

In this section you will study John Dryden's ode entitled "A Song For St. Cecilia's Day." We will give you meanings of difficult words and phrases of the ode. A critical summary of this ode will also be given to make you understand this most powerful poem of John Dryden.

7.3.1 Text

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

From Harmony, from Heavnly Harmony
This Universal Frame began.
When Nature underneath a heap.
Of jarring Atmos lay.
And could not heave her Head,
The tuneful Voice was heard from high,
Arise ye more than dead.
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry
In order to their stations leap.

And Musick's Pow's obey.
From Harmony, from Heav'nly Harmony
This Universal Frame began:
From Harmony to Harmony
Through all the compass of the Notes it ran.

The Diapason closing full in Man
What Passion cannot Musick raise and quell !
When Jubal struck the corded Shell,
His list'ning Brethren stood around
And wond'ring, on their Faces fell

To worship that Celestial Sound:
Less than a God they thought there cou'd not dwell
Within the hollow of that Shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What Passion cannot Musick raise and quell!

The Trumpets loud Clangour
Excites us to Arms
With shrill Notes of Anger
And mortal Alarms.
The double double double beat

Of the thundering Drum
Cries, heark the Foes come;
Charge Charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

The soft complaining Flute
In dying Notes discovers 30

The Woes of hopeless Lovers,
Whose Dirge whisper'd by the Warbling Lute.
Sharp Violins proclaim
Their jealous Pangs, and Desperation,
Fury, frantic Indignation, 35

Depth of Pains and height of Passion,
For the fair, disdainful Dame.
But ho ! what Art can teach
What human Voice can reach
The sacred ORGAN'S praise? 40

Notes that wing their Heavnly ways
To mend the Choires above.
Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And Trees uprooted left their place, 45

Sequacious of the Lyre,
But bright CECILIA rais'd the wonder high'r.
When to her ORGAN, vocal breath was giv'n
An Angel heard, and straight appear'd.
Mistaking Earth for Heav'n. 50

GRAND CHORUS

As from the pow'r of Sacred Lays
The Spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise.
To all the bless'd above;
So when the last and dreadful hour 55

This crumbling Pageant shall devour,
The TRUMPET shall be heard on high,
The Dead shall live, the living die
And MUSICK shall untune the sky. 60

7.3.2 Glossary

1-5	harmony	:	music
	universal	:	the total world
	frame	:	conversation and discussion
	jarring	:	out of harmony
	heave	:	lift up
6-10	tuneful	:	musical, pleasing to ears
	high	:	heaven
	arise	:	get up, command to get up
	musick's	:	the musical voice of God
	power	:	strength
11-15	heav'nly harmony	:	the music created by God
	universal frame	:	the body of the universe

	compass	:	range of voice
	notes	:	sound
	diapason	:	harmony of music
	closing full	:	to capture under one's impact
16-20	raise	:	produce
	quell	:	calm down
	Jubal	:	the God of music
	brethren	:	colleagues
	celestial sound	:	heavenly music
21-25	dwell	:	to be, to live
	hollow	:	empty space
	spoke	:	the sound of music
26-30	trumpet	:	an instrument made of brass which produces made of brass
	clangour	:	harsh sound, sound which is not pleasant to ears
	shrill	:	harsh
	mortal alarms	:	fear of life
	thundering	:	sound produced by clouds
31-35	charge	:	to attack
	retreat	:	to go back
	complaining	:	voice expressing discontent
	flute	:	a musical instrument operated through pressure of air from lips
	woes	:	miseries
	hark	:	to listen carefully
36-40	dirge	:	a song sung on the death of a person
	warbling	:	sound produced at a high pitch
	lute	:	a musical instrument which produces high notes when its strings are played
	proclaim	:	declare, produce their sound
	pangs	:	sounds associated with pain
	height	:	high status
41-45	disdainful	:	scornful
	dame	:	lady love, charming lady
	sacred	:	holy, related to the God
	organ	:	an heavenly instrument
	holy love	:	love for God, love for God's creations
46-50	wing	:	to have flight
	ways	:	the path which leads one to the heaven.
	mend	:	to repair
	Orpheus	:	a great singer of Greek mythology
	savage	:	not attracted to finer arts
	race	:	people
	straight	:	immediately
	mistaking	:	to have wrong judgment by mistake
	appeared	:	to come down, to arrive

55-63	chorus	:	a group of singers
	sacred lays	:	holy songs
	spheres	:	planets, heavenly bodies
	move	:	to be attracted towards music praised
	sung	:	praised
	bless'd	:	angels, the favourites of God
	dreadful hour	:	doom's day, day of final judgement
	trumpet	:	the musical instrument of Gabriel
	dead shall line	:	the dead would become alive on final day of judgment

7.3.3 Summary

John Dryden wrote his ode entitled "A Song for St. Cecilia's Doy" to celebrate the memory of St. Cecila, a pious Christian lady who sacrificed her life in Rome in the year 230 AD. She is adored as a saint and great patron of music. Her music had divine qualities.

The poet explains the genesis or creation of this universe by the power of divine music. The poet imagines that the frame of this universe evolved through the power of music. The power or harmony of heavenly music brought together various elements of the universe to make it a compact whole. Nature lay under a heap of discordant atoms, scattered away from one another.

The power of nature, which was responsible for the creation of life, could not function, as the planets were in a disorderly position. The atoms of the universe were disorderly. Order comes from harmony and harmony is created with the power of music.

God commanded all the disorderly atoms through the sound or symphony of his music. On the command received through musical sound, all the atoms sprang up at once. They occupied their proper positions in accordance with divine orders conveyed through music.

The poet believed that the universe came into existence because of this divine music. Music was in orderly form and it brought the elements of the universe in harmony with one another. The music created by the almighty ran through all the length and breath of the musical scale. Every note of the musical scale was sounded in the creation of all sorts of living objects.

Creatures from the smallest size to the biggest were created by the initiative power of different musical notes. In the end God created man.

Then Dryden points at the importance of music. He says that music can generate and also calm down the feelings which man's passion cannot do. When Jubal the father of music, sounded the strings of his stringed musical instrument and produced music, his brothers and sisters were captivated on hearing that sweet music and stood around him to listen to that music. They thought that instrument to be something divine, which could produce music of divine quality.

Then all fell on their faces to praise and worship that instrument. That instrument was made from a big shell. They imagined that there must be some God inside the shell, because such a music could only be created or produced by the God.

Dryden goes on to explains the effect of the tunes of different musical instruments on the psyche of man. The sound of the trumpet and the drum is loud and harsh. The notes or rhythm of these instruments raise the feeling of anger and fear. These encourage man to take up arms to fight or wage war against their enemy. The repeated sound produced through the beating of drums attract attention of people. This boosts up people to face the attack of their enemies in defence and also to make attack on their enemies. This sound encourages people to make use of weapons.

The poet then describes the effect and quality of flute's is sound or its music. Flute can captivate any person who listens to the music produced by it. Its music has a melancholy effect. Dryden is of the opinion that its music seems to be the complaint made by a lover, who is not able to meet his beloved.

Music produced by lute is used for songs sung at the time of funeral. Its tune is like the songs of birds. Similarly violin reveals the great pain of the hopes that are being lost. The notes produced by the violin express great pain and anger of heart for the lady love who has deserted her lover.

After describing the power of music, the creation of universe through the music and then explaining the arousal of different passions and feelings of love, anger, attack, hated, fear, support and longing for oneness, the poet comes to the music of St. Cecilia.

The poet tells the reader about the music instrument, which he calls 'Organ'. This Organ was invented by St. Cecilia. It is beyond the powers and capacity of man to fully praise the Organ. No man and man made instrument can produce music which could match the music produced by the Organ.

When St. Cecilia struck the notes on her Organ it produced heavenly music. It produced feelings of love and praise for God. When the sound of the Organ’s music was heard by an Angel, he came down on earth mistaking it for heaven. He listened to St. Cecilia’s song.

The poet also tells about the music produced on the Lyre of Orpheus. Orpheus is the Greek God of music. His song had such power that even lifeless objects were imbibed with life on hearing it and followed him. Even trees uprooted themselves and followed Orpheus under the impact of his music.

The concluding lines of this ode from the Chorus. The chorus tells us that the music which created the universe, would also cause the end of the universe.

When the angles began to sing their holy songs, the power of music set the heavenly bodies into motion. That produced the harmony of the spheres because they began to sing the praise of God to all the God’s angles living in heaven.

On the final doom’s day of judgment, Gabriel will appear and blow his trumpet aloud. With the effect of this sound the dead would be filled with life and raise from their graves to hear the judgment.

The living persons would die. God would pronounce his find judgment according to the good and bad deeds of people. Thus the same power of music which made order from disorder would produce disorder from order.

7.3.4 Self Assessment Questions

In this section you have read "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day." 22nd November is celebrated at St. Cecilia's Day. Dryden wrote this ode in honour of St. Cecilla and her music to celebrate St. Cecilia's Day.

The difficult meanings have been explained and a detailed summary is given. Now try to answer the questions given in the following exercises.

Exercise – 3

Answer the following questions by choosing correct from the three alternatives given below each question :

1. This universe was created by:
   (i) heaven
   (ii) power of music
   (iii) God
2. Under the heap was :
   (i) atoms
   (ii) nature
   (iii) music
3. The command of music was obeyed by :
   (i) nature
   (ii) atoms
   (iii) universe
4. What excites us to Arms ?
   (i) music of organ
   (ii) sound of trumpets
   (iii) music of shell
5. The world would come to an end through :
   (i) disaster
   (ii) music
   (iii) God
6. St. Cecilia died in :
   (i) 230 A.D.
   (ii) Greek
   (iii) Monestry
7. God created man :
   (i) in the end
   (ii) first of all
   (iii) with animals
8. St. Cecilia invented the :
   (i) Flute
   (ii) Lyre
   (iii) Organ
9. Orpheus was :
   (i) a great musician
   (ii) Greek God of music
   (iii) a singer

10. The universe is described as having begun from :
    (i) music
    (ii) harmony
    (iii) song

Exercise – 4

1. How did the universe come into being?

_____

_____

_____

2. Who was St. Cecilia?

_____

_____

_____

3. How did life begin on this universe?

_____

_____

_____

4. What did Jubal do?

_____

_____

_____

5. Discuss the impact of the trumpet's sound.

_____

_____

_____

6. What does the repeated beating of drums do?

_____

_____

_____

7. Discuss the human feelings aroused by music.

_____

_____

_____

8. What do you know about Orpheus?

_____

_____

_____

9. Why did the Angel come to Earth?

_____

_____

_____

10. What does Dryden mean by harmony?

_____

_____

_____

7.4 Analysis

In this section we will discuss the Ode, which you have studied in the preceding section, with a critical outlook. We will also discuss the theme, structure and style of this ode.

7.4.1 Critical Analysis

John Dryden wrote this ode entitled "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day" to describe the power of music. Poems in praise for music of St. Cecilia had become the fashion in the 17th century. In writing this ode. Dryden was in a way just following a common practice of his time.

This ode was designed for performance on the festival in 1687 by a newly formed musical society in London. The 22nd of November is celebrated as St. Cecilia's Day in her memory. St. Cecilia was a pious Christian lady who sacrificed her life in Rome in the year 230 A.D. She is adored as a saint and patron of music.

Dryden signifies the importance of music for the formation of the universe and the existence of life on universe. When nature lay under a heap of disordered atoms, God's musical voice commanded them to arise on listening to the command, all the cold, hot, moist and dry atoms arose and occupied their proper positions. They obeyed the power of the divine music. Divine music created the harmony of the spheres.

The cosmos is called "this universal frame" at the beginning of the poem. Gradually the heavenly music passed through the whole range of the universal frame and created all living and non-living objects. Man was created in the end after all the smallest and biggest animals were created.

Music which created this universe, has the power of destroying it too. In the scheme of creation, this universe is merely a passing shadow. Music will one day end this passing shadow, this pageant. This is the reason that at the end of the poem, the poet calls the universe as the crumbling pageant. This would happen on the day of final judgment or the Doom's day.

It is written in the Bible that Angel Gabriel, will appear with his trumpet on the final day of judgment and blow his trumpet. Gabriel conveys his message through his music that all living beings shall die and that the dead shall come out of their graves and stand before God, who will pronounce his judgment according to the record of good and bad deeds performed by each one of us during our life time.

The orderly position of the atoms of the universe would be scattered by the effect of the music created by The trumpet and as a result the universe will crumble down. Thus the music which made this universal frame shall create confusion and disorder. At the end of the ode the poet describes the end of the universe, so he calls the cosmos as 'the crumbling pageant.'

Dryden discusses the effect of music produced by different instruments. But the instrument invented by St. Cecilia is best amongst all instruments of music. This instrument is divine. When St. Cecilia produced music on this organ, an angel came down to Earth, mistaking it for heaven.

Dryden means music by harmony. He tells us the process of harmony and its effect. Harmony is the basic thing for formation and then development of the universe. This also hints towards the harmony amongst people and harmony between nature and man.

7.4.2 Theme

As a lyric poet, Dryden's fame rests on his three odes, and 'A Song for St. Cecilia's Day' is prominent amongst them. Here the poet illustrates his skill in making the lines march to the major theme of his thought. Harmony emerges to be the basic idea in this ode.

When harmony and order is being established, the world is created. The world would be disrupted and crumble down when harmony would be untuned.

7.4.3 Structure

It is a lyric poem of elaborate metrical structure solemn in tune and in the form of address. The theme is grave and universal and the presentation is dignified. Dryden attempts to imitate the effects of music in language which reach their height in this ode. It is Pindaric in its structure and thus consists of a number of short stanzas, similar in length and arrangement.

Dryden introduces the chorus to adopt the true Stophic structure. In ancient drama Strophe was the song sung in the chorus while dancing towards one side of the orchestra. The cadence of one line is carried to the next, and the sound of the former glides gently into that which follows without leaping from one extreme to another.

7.4.4 Style

Dryden has maintained strict uniformity. His heroic couplet shows uniformity, precision and regularity. His diction is in tune with his ideas; he disciplines himself to use the precise word rather than the word with a vogue area of association, endeavouring always to express as clearly and firmly as possible what he means to say. But words, he held were only the colouring of the poem-picture; what was important was the idea, though the colouring was what first struck the eye. So whatever words he uses he is still uses language that might be spoken by man to man. It is never mere poetic. That is one of his great triumphs.

7.4.5 Self Assessment Questions

We have critically discussed the subject matter, idea, theme and structure of this.

Exercise-5

Answer the following questions. You have to choose the correct answer from the alternatives given below each question.

1. 'A Song for St. Cecilia's Day' was designed to be performed in :
   A. 1631
   B. 230 A.D.
   C. 1687
2. What according to Dryden would be responsible for making this cosmos a crumblig pageant ?
   A. music of organ
   B. divine music
   C. music of trumpet
3. The heavenly music gradually passed through
   A. the whole range of the universal frame
   B. the crumbling pageant
   C. heavenly bodies
4. The world was created when :
   A. harmony and order was being established
   B. Gabriel sings
   C. sound of chorus is heard
5. The structure of this ode is :
   A. Pindaric
   B. Strophic
   C. Musical
6. The record of good and bad deeds of human being is presented on :
   A. the dias
   B. the Dooms day
   C. musical instruments
7. In this ode Dryden discusses the effect produced by :
   A. different musical instruments
   B. intensity of music
   C. heavenly bodies
8. 'A Song for St. Cecilia's Day' has a chorus attached to it in order to adopt to :
   A. order on universe
   B. musical qualities
   C. the true stophic structure
9. Dryden's diction is in tune with
   A. his ideas
   B. musical instruments
   C. structure of the poem
10. Dryden makes use in this ode of
   A. precise words
   B. words at random
   C. classical words

7.5 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have gained knowledge and have been given practice

- to understand the Age of Restoration
- to gain acquaintance about literature of seventeenth century.
- to know about life and works of John Dryden.
- to know and understand trends and literary movements of seventeenth century.
- to read and understand poetry of restoration period.
- to critically examine a given poem.
- to answer the questions on restoration period, ode, literary trends and movements.

7.6 Answers To The Exercises

Exercise : 1

1. (i) without sustaining influence of other arts
2. (ii) failed to command the attention of people
3. (i) John Dryden
4. (i) power
5. (ii) 1664-1674
6. (i) after restoration
7. (i) wit
8. (i) sixteen years
9. (i) twenty years
10. (i) English criticism

Exercise-2

1. Dryden went to live at his father-in-laws house at Charlton with his wife. Here he wrote his first great poem. 'Annus Mirabilis' (1667).
2. In 1686 Dryden became a Roman Catholic, whether from inner conviction or time-serving motives. Some soy that he did so because King Charles II was a Roman Catholic.
3. Dryden wrote essays on literary techniques, structure, characterisation, diction and literary taste as a practicing poet.
4. Dryden changed sides with the restoration. He immediately put himself on the winner's side and wrote 'Astrae Redux', a poem of welcome to King Charles II.
5. As a young poet Dryden followed Cowley.
6. With the accession of Charles II, there was return of old way of life in England. In the field of literature neo-classical school developed. This school brought back respect for classical rules, stress on reason and good sense.
7. Charles II went to France, where he was granted asylum, after his father's death.
8. Mary II and her husband William III ascended to the throne of England in 1687.
9. In Elizabethan age, the art of words in England flourished without the sustaining influence of the other arts.

10. The notable events that influenced the writers of the age include the wars against Holland from 1664 to 1674, the Great Plague of London, The Great Fire of London and the rise of the two political parties, Whigs (Libera's) and Tories (Conservatives) on England's political scene.

Exercise-3

1. (ii) power of music
2. (ii) nature
3. (iii) universe
4. (ii) sound of trumpets
5. (ii) music
6. (i) 230 A.D.
7. (i) in the end
8. (iii) Organ
9. (ii) Greek God of music
10. (ii) harmony

Exercise-4

1. The nature lay under the heap of atoms. God's music commanded them to arise. On hearing the command. All the cold, moist, hot and dry atoms arose and occupied their proper positions. Thus universe was created.
2. St. Cecilia was a pious Christian lady who was martyed at Rome in 230 A.D. Afterwards she was canonized as the patron saint of music. She is said to have invented the Organ and to have drawn an angel from heaven through her music.
3. When the universe was formed through the power of music, the heavenly music passed through the whole range of universe and created first the little and then the big creatures. In the end man was created.
4. When Jubal, the father of music, sounded strings of his instrument, a very sweet music was at once produced. His brothers and sisters stood around him wondering at the sweet music.
5. The sound of sound would disrupt the orderly positions of atoms and thus crumble down the universe.
6. The repeated beating of drum raises the feeling of anger and fear.
7. All types of feelings like happiness, love, anger, pain, fear and hope are aroused through music.
8. In Greek mythology Orpheus was a very great singer. The trees and rocks followed his lyre.
9. On listening the sound of music produced by St. Cecilia an angel came down to earth mistaking it for heaven.
10. Dryden means orderly arrangement through music by the word harmony.

Exercise-5

1. (c) 1687
2. (c) music of trumpet
3. (a) the whole range of the universal frame.
4. (a) harmony and order was being established.
5. (a) Pindaric

6. (b) the Doom's day
7. (a) different musical instruments.
8. (c) the true stophic structure
9. (a) his ideas
10. (a) precise words

7.7 Books Suggested

1. Ford, Boris, *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature,* Penguin: London, 1982
2. Grant, Douglas, *Dryden* Penguin Books: New York, 1988
3. Kinsley, James, *The Poems and Fables of John Dryden* OUP: London, 1967
4. Lamborn, Grening, *The Rudiments of Criticism* Reliance Books: New Delhi, 1986
5. Turner, John, *Poetry for Overseas Students* George G. Harrup: London, 1965

Unit -8

Alexander Pope: An Essay On Man

Structure

8.0 Objectives:

The purpose of this Unit is to give an idea about how the poet expresses his thoughts and philosophy in an artistic and compelling style. In order to help you understand how good poetry is a powerful combination of matter and manner, an extract from Alexander Pope's best-known *Essay on Man* is chosen for detailed discussion. The text of the poem is followed by a critical analysis of the theme and style of the poem. After reading and understanding the poem thus, you are required to answer the questions, which will test you on your reading comprehension skills. A section has been designed to help you understand and use new words, phrases and expression that you may come across in this poem. A few words are given for the purpose of giving you practice in correct pronunciation and stress patterns in the language.

Now read the poem carefully. Pay attention to the theme and also try to find out the salient features of the style in which the poet expresses ideas and vision. Read this poem for the beautiful couplets for which Pope is known and admired all over the world. Also try to appreciate the depth in thought and expression which makes this poem so meaningful and thoughts provoking. In order to help you analyze the poem better, notes are provided in the "About the Poem" section which follows immediately the text.

8.1 Introduction: The Classical Movement

The period in which this movement flourished is known by at least three titles: the Classical Age, with reference to the standards it preached; the Augustan Age, because it resembled that of the Emperor Augustus in the splendour of its literature (Dr. Johnson also said that Dryden did for English letters what Augustus did for the City of Rome, which he" found brick and left marble"); and the Age of Reason and Good Sense, based as it was on the "Good Sense" ideal of the French critic Boileau, formulated in 1673.

Factors Responsible for the Changed Outlook

About the middle of the 17th century a change came over the English prophetic temperament. The Metaphysical wave had exhausted itself, and had left literary standards and values confused. Ben Jonson, with prophetic vision, had seen this danger and also shown a way out. While the older Elizabethans were drawing their inspiration from the matter of the Greek and Latin classics made available to them by the Renaissance,

he found his own sustenance in their form. In other words he preferred literary order and discipline to lawless impulse and unbridled fancy. His example was ignored for a time, but it was effective later when the Metaphysical method, in its decay, began to produce more weeds than flowers. The return to a greater restraint and more rigid framework was accelerated by the powerful influence of French literary tastes, themselves derived from classical literature, on the English court as a result of Charles II's long stay in France after the execution of his father. Very soon the new, or rather ancient, spirit made itself felt in all branches of literary activity. Seneca provided the model for tragedy. Plautus and Terence for comedy, Virgil for epic and pastoral, Juvenal for satire, and Horace, with his *Ars Poetica* for literary taste and criticism. The change involved the substitution of training for instinct, of conscious craftsmanship for erratic self-expression.

The Precursors Edmund Waller and Sir John Denham were the pioneers of the new movement. They led the reaction against Metaphysical excesses by writing charming verses on the classical model. They were not great in their own right, but as the forerunners of Dryden and Pope, who both drew inspiration from these lesser poets. Among the comparatively small company of writers and readers in those days, a new fashion spread quickly, and the classical soon became the accepted mode. Its reign was long and remarkable.

Characteristics of the New School

a) *Respect for Rules*

'The literary transition from the Renascence to the Restoration is nothing more or less than the progressive movement of a spirit of liberty, at once fanciful, brilliant, and adventurous, towards a rule and a discipline both in inspiration and in form. This rule and discipline were accepted and practiced with enthusiasm by the new school. Classical conventions governed every variety of verse-drama, epic, satire, ode or pastoral Nothing that violated the law of its particular kind was good art. Perfect form was the ideal: the substance was of minor importance. The contrast between this cool control and the warmth and passion of the Elizabethans was indeed extreme.

b) *Intellectual Quality*

The leading writers of this period shrank from all extravagance and emotionalism. They were governed by a spirit of reason and "good sense," and were, above all things, correct. Their poetry was bred more in the head than in the heart, and was addressed to the intellect, not to the feelings. Though Dryden and Pope, the masters of the school, often wrote on matters that roused deep emotions, they never burst through the bonds of their form. The drama of the day dealt with high passions, but with a chilly classicism that gave it no appeal to later generations.

The classical model does not attract the modern reader, and what keeps the works of these writers alive is the quality in which they themselves delighted – wit. They had a gift for pregnant and memorable phrase, descriptive, philosophical, malicious, critical, or even pathetic. Pope is more often quoted than any other English poet but Shakespeare, and many of his sayings are so familiar that we never think of their authorship.

c) *Insistence on a Set Poetic Style*

The preoccupation with form encouraged an artificial style. The vocabulary must be neither colloquial nor technical. It had to be selected from what Dr. Johnson called "a system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts." Everyday turns of speech were unacceptable, and so were noel expressions. The result was that, in the work of all but the greatest masters, the language tended to be stilted and standardized.

d) *Emergence of the Heroic Couplet*

As we have already seen, the best medium for realizing the poetic ideals of the time proved to be the heroic couplet. It was suitable for drama, epic, and satire, the three most widely practiced literary forms of the age. It had rules of its own, initiated by Waller and Denham and systematized by Dryden and Pope. It not only ousted lyrical measures for the time being but even disputed the sway of blank verse for dramatic purposes. Precise and unimpassioned, it came to seem the natural expression of the intellectual mood of the age.

e) *Treatment of Town Life*

London was a magnet for writers, each of whom hoped to find a patron to help him with money and influence in his career. The coffee-house was the place where men of different professions, including authors, usually met to discuss the topics of the day. A one time there were no fewer than 3,000 coffee-houses in London, each with a flourishing trade. They served to establish contact not only between author and reader but between author and author, sometimes to the lasting benefit of mankind. Dryden and Pope, for example, first met at a coffee-house. All this had its influence on literature, which came to draw many of its subjects from town life rather than nature and the countryside. Satire came to be practiced more and more as London life and current fashions and controversies offered it almost unlimited scope. Classical and French satirical masterpieces supplied the necessary model.

About the Author:

Alexander Pope is possibly the greatest English poet of the eighteenth century. Born in 1688, Pope was dwarfed and sickly. Because of his deformed figure, many harshly mocked him at, including most of the women whom Pope met or had something to do with in his life. He also received very little formal education. As he was widely discarded in the initial stages of his life, he grew into a peevish, jealous and waspish little man who always bitterly reacted to most of the shortcomings of man and of woman of his times. Pope is one of the few poets of his age who had no other profession except writing for their livelihood. He also is one of the early poets who set themselves the task of reforming the society by severely criticizing the ways and manners of the people of his age. In this sense Pope is considered to be a critic of his society who attached the practices of his age in pungent satire. Because of his gifted perception, there is hardly an ideal, a belief, a fashion or a whim of Queen Anne's time that is no neatly expressed in his poetry.

Thought as a man he lacked grace and grandeur, his poetry abundantly expresses both because of the richness of diction and correctness of observation. Besides *An Essay*

on Man, Pope's other outstanding works are *The Rape of the Lock, The Essay on Criticism and The Dunciad.* In all his works Pope uses verse in a masterly manner using heroic couplets full of satire, wit and humour. *The Rape of the Lock* is best known for its mockepic style and his wonderful depiction of woman's vanity and vulnerability for petty things. In his *Essay on Man* however, Pope rises above these petty issues and writes in an ironical style about the complexity of man's nature and his inherent contradictions.

8.2 SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

The *Essay on Man* (1734) is considered to be Pope's most meaningful poem. However, it would be wrong to suggest that it is just a poem. It is in fact a combination of an essay and a poem. It is a poem as far as its form and style is concerned however, when we focus on the gravity of thought and the depth of philosophical ideas, it looks much like a literary essay which is more universal in appeal and approach. That is why it is rightly termed as an essay in poetic form.

The purpose of this essay in Pope's own words is to "vindicate the ways of God to Man" Clearly, Pope's idea is lofty and hence a sublime poem for all of us to read and learn much from. This unique blending of essay and form is actually expressed in four poetical epistles. This epistle addressed to Henry St. John talks about man's relations to God and makes an objective and interesting analysis of the complex nature of man.

The poem starts abruptly. It straightaway challenges man's ego which he exhibits in displaying his knowledge of God. It is obvious that all of us feel that we are the chosen creatures of God. We also assume that we have been formed after God and know fully well what He is and what He wants from us. The poet however, does not believe in any such assumptions. He feels that it is beyond man to understand the ways of God. Therefore, it is more appropriate for him to concentrate on himself, that is, Pope wants man to observe his own complexities, confusions and contradictions rather than talking about God and His ways.

After giving this strong message to us, Pope gives a very appropriate description of man's complex nature, desires and actions. He finds man to be wise and great. But he is only "darkly wise" and "rudely great" Now Pope is known for his epigrams the purpose of which is to highlight the paradoxes in man's nature. Pope looks at man's nature with admirable clarity and feels that all the greatness that man possesses is ruined because he is rude and unaware of his own pursuits in life. That is why though man may be wise; his wisdom is of no use because of his inner darkness. Moreover, a great man can never be rude and since Pope calls man great and rude together, he suggests that man cannot be great because he is by nature rude.

Continuing his precise observation of man's complex nature, Pope feels that man always tries to do things beyond his capacities. He finds him full of knowledge which does not help him. Moreover, he also finds him too weak to be successful as a stoic. Pope then concentrates on the dilemma that man experiences as because of his complex and contradictory drives, man lives in doubt for ever. He does not know whether to act or rest. He also is always in doubt whether to see himself as a God or a beast, because he is a combination of the both. It is in this sense that Pope finds man to be dangling in between God and beast.

The poet further highlights man's sense of confusion, as he always seems to be torn between the desires of his body and instructions of his mind. Caught between these two extremes, man cannot decide what to prefer – his body or his mind. Hence though man applies reason before taking action, he fails and errs because his reasoning also his faulty and awkward. The poet further looks a man's situation with sympathetic irony. He finds man to be ignorant even if he thinks too much or too little. Obviously, Pope does not believe that those who think too much can reach a level of understanding as to what they are and what they are supposed to be doing in life.

Pope finds man to be created with such complexities that he can rise but only to fall. Because of his inner contradictions man becomes a curious combination of weakness and strengths. Due to his strengths, he aspires to rise above his nature. But because of his weakness, he fails to do so. Therefore, man appears to be a lord of all things, but still he is a victim. Thus, in spite of all his greatness, he is only a riddle for he is a curious blending of difference traits, virtues and shortcomings. Because of all the confusion mixture, man is both the glory as well as the joker of the world.

8.3 Extract From The Poem

AN ESSAY ON MAN

A. POPE

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
the proper study of mankind is Man.
Placed on his isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the skeptic 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 reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all thinks, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

8.4 Let Us Sum Up

Pope's poetry is a remarkable, clear and adequate reflection of the spirit of the age in which he lived. There is hardly an ideal, a belief, a doubt, a fashion, a whim of female that is not neatly expressed in his poetry. All the merits and demerits of the Age, which was an era of prose are faithfully represented by the writings of Pope. It was an "Age of Prose and Reason" and even the poetry of the age was prosaic. Pope is the spokesman of a hard intellectuality and rationality, qualities proper to prose. His themes too are prosaic – criticism, moral philosophy and satire. He is the most correct of English poets.

GLOSSARY

Presume	:	Assume with Pride; infer, deduce, impose.
Scan	:	Examine, study, scrutinize
Isthmus	:	A narrow piece of land that joins two larger areas and has water on both sides; in the poem it stands for man's complex nature as he has traits of both the beast as well as god.
Skeptic	:	One who doubts religious practices; agnostic; non-believer; the one who questions the accepted norms and beliefs
Stoic	:	One who imposes strict rules on himself, self-controlled, unfeeling, ascetic
Deem	:	Consider, regard, judge, assess
Reasoning	:	Logic, argument
Alike	:	Similar, like, resembling, akin
Ignorance	:	Darkness, blindness, lack of knowledge, unawareness
Chaos	:	Confusion, disorder, jumble, disorganization
Passion	:	Strong emotion, desire, love, fervor
Abused	:	Scolded, mistreated, berated, cursed
Disabused	:	Pope wants his readers to understand that man is wrong to believe in his reasoning, thought and strength for he is likely to fail despite all these attributes
Prey	:	Victim, One who falls because of some weakness
Hurled	:	Thrown, projected, pitched, flung, cast
Glory	:	Honour, beauty, light, pride in the poem
Jest	:	Joke, one who jests is a joker, clown, fool
Riddle	:	Puzzle, enigma, Mystery

8.5 Books Suggested:

1. B. Prasad : *A Background to the Study of English Literature*, New Delhi: Macmillan; 1990
2. W.H. Hudson : *Outline History of English Literature*, B.I. Publications
3. R.D. Trivedi : *A Compendious History of English Literature*, New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House: 1990

8.6 Please Anser The Following Questions:

1. Why does Pope advise man to study himself and not God?

2. How does the poet find man being on a middle state?

3. What the poet thinks are the basic contradictions in man?

4. Does Pope find man's knowledge and reason to be of use? If not, why?

5. What according to the poet is man's main dilemma or confusion?

6. What does the poet say when he suggests that man is created half to rise and half to fall?

7. What are man's chief strengths and major weaknesses? Give your answer on the basis of the your comprehension of the poet's view on man.

8. Alexander Pope belongs to which age?

9. What are the main features of the classical Age?

10. What are the other names addressed to the Classical Age?

11. What was the Intellectual Quality amongst the Classicist?

12. Did the Classical Age writers write about "Nature"? If yes, what kind of "Nature" was it?

13. Do you find Pope an intellectual Personality? If yes, how.

14. After reading Pope, do you think Art can be bounded by the set conventions of rules"?

15. What is the message that Pope wants to convey?

16. Write a few words about Pope's Poem "Essay on Man"?

17. What does the I & II Epistles deal with?

18. Epistles III and IV of "Essay On Man" deals with what?

19. Is there any object of the poet Alexander Pope?

20. Write a critical analysis of the poem "Essay On Man".?

ANSWERS:

1. Pope feels that it is beyond humans and man to understand the ways of God. Therefore it is more appropriate for him to concentrate on himself that is, Pope

wants man to observe his own complexities confusions and contradictions rather than talking about god and his ways.

2. Pope finds man in a middle state because man does not know whether to act or rest. He also is always in doubt whether to see himself as a God or a beast, because he is a combination of the both. It is in this sense that Pope finds man to be dangling in between god and beast.

3. The basic contradictions in Man are his complex mind and confused State of mind along with contradictory desires of the body he is wise as well as selfish and in doubt forever. He can rise only to fall. Ell there we inner contradiction a curious combination between action and reaction or weaknesses and strengths.

4. No, Pope does not find man's knowledge and reason to be of use, because man has knowledge but is his basic nature is full of complexities and confusion and he is in the state of being in between doubts. He has the power of reason, but his complex structure of mind fails and while in action which is improper. Thus man fails always.

5. According to Pope, man's main dilemmas or confusion is his lack of perfect capacities. Pope feels than man has no inner and outer reason and that results in his state of being in capable to determine whether what to do and what not to do.

6. Well, Pope finds that man is created with such complexities that he can rise but only to fall, because a curious combination of weakness and strength. Due to his strengths, he aspires to rise above his nature. But because of his weakness, he fails to do so. Therefore man appears to be a lord of all things, but still he is a victim.

7. Man's chief strengths ad weaknesses are his incompatibility to do things that are beyond his capacities. His knowledge is restricted and his dilemmas which is contradictory and complex leads him towards a life of doubts and unsuccess. His reasoning is faulty, his mind and body are on two sides. Man is only a riddle, a blending of traits, virtues and shortcomings. He is a glory as well as a joker of the world.

8. Pope belongs to the neo-classical age, the eighteenth century, or the Augustan Age or the Age of Reason.

9. The main features of the classical age are :
   (a) Respect for rules and convention
   (b) Intellectual Quality
   (c) Insistence on self Poetic style
   (d) Emergence of Heroic Couplet
   (e) Treatment of Town life

10. The other names addressed to the classical age are : Neo-classical Age, Age of Reason, A and the Augustan Age.

11. The writers of the classical Age were full of learning and they wrote with a spirit of intellect wrote with a spirit of intellect and reason and "good sense"

and had a great sense of with". Their writings are full of memorable phrases, descriptive, philosophical malicious, critical and even pathetic.

12. yes the classical age writers wrote about "artificial Nature". It means that they wrote about the nature and quality of the people of the high class society and their manners. Their literature was restricted to the readers of the aristocrate people in the aristocrat society. They never talked of common men.

13. Yes Pope was an intellectual man with inbuilt knowledge and greatness in the sense of a literary artist. He was an angry wisdom with pregnant lines of meaning and literature Pope is the most quoted writer of the 18th Century, Classical Age.

14. Here I would say like Romantics, that Art cannot bounded by the set conventions of rules, because art is for art sake. It needs to be performed in the open space and depends upon the skill of creativity of depends upon the skill of creativity of an artist. It is a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions.

15. The message that Pope wanted to convey through this essay is to "Vindicate the ways of God to Man."

16. Pope's final didactic poem is "Essay on Man". It is a philosophical poem written in heroic couplet. There are four epistles which make up the "Essay On Many". This work is dedicated to Bolingbroke, whom he addresses as his "guide, Philosopher and friend".

17. The 1st Epistle deals with the "nature and state of man with respect to the Universe." The post thinks that man is not an imperfect being. His happiness in the present depends partly upon his ignorance of the future and partly upon his hope of a happier state. The cause of his most of the misery is pride, which blinds him to his limitations. Epistle II deals of man with respect to himself as an individual.

18. Epistles III deals of man with respect to society and Epistle IV deals of man with respect to happiness.

19. The Object of Alexander Pope's Essay on Man" is to indicate the ways of God to man to prove that the scheme of the universe is the best inspite of appearances of evil, and that our failure to see the perfection of the whole is due to our limited vision.

20. For free composition.

Unit – 9

Gray : Elegy Written In A Country Churchyard

Structure

9.0 Objectives

In this unit our aim is to initiate you to read and understand poetry. You should practice to read between the lines and be able to reach to the thought which the poet wishes to convey. You may attain this ability by :

(i) reading and understanding Gray's poem entitled An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.

(ii) understanding the words and phrases in simple English as given for you in glossary.

(iii) understanding about the age and distinct qualities of Thomas Gray.

(iv) learning about the metrical devices used by the poet in this long poem.

(v) practicing a critical analysis of the given text, and

(vi) answering the questions given to you in this unit.

A detailed summary and critical analysis given to you in section 3.4 would help you develop the ability to appreciate a poem. Some of the main literary devices used by Grey have been dealt in detail to make you aware about the quality of this poem and enable you to appreciate it in a better way.

To enable you to check your progress in reading and understanding, we have given you self assessment questions in major sections. After reading and understanding various sections of this unit you will be able to :

(a) understand the text in its totality.

(b) develop ability to read between the lines and understand the real motive of the poet behind writing the poem,

(c) appreciate and evaluate the given text.

9.1 Introduction

Literature was completely integrated with the society. Society had an upper hand under the impact of Augustans. All Augustan classicists invariably wrote within the social context of the age. Creative writers could not tolerate this situation with equanimity for long. So a reaction was inevitable for the liberation of the human spirit from this dominance of the super ego. This is what is meant by Romantic reaction led by those pre-Romantics headed by Thomson, Gray and Collins. Though the Augustan poets believed that the proper study of mankind was man, they were far from indifferent to the beauties of Nature, and throughout the eighteenth century is found a strain of descriptive and meditative poetry in which natural description prompts moral reflections on the human situation.

The pioneer here was James Thomson (1700-1748), whose four long poems on the seasons, Winter (1726), Summer (1727), Spring (1728), and Autumn (1730) employ a quasi-Miltonic blank verse in describing the countryside at different times of the year. Poets of this period seem to have been fascinated by the half burlesque, half serious effects, produced by applying elevated periphrastic poetic language to rustic or familiar things. The classical tradition was divided with the publication of Thomson's seasons as early as 1726. Thenceforward there were to be two parallel currents of the town and rustic poetry.

By the middle of the country the revolt against the classical school both in form and subject-matter had become more clearly marked in the words of other Pre-Romantics in whom the poetry of rural meditation became the characteristics of the age. Blair's blank verse poem, 'The Grave', was a meditation on scenes of desolation and horrors of the tomb. Edward Young (1683-1765) impelled by private grief, produced in his 'The Complaint' an account of broodings over his sorrow, his thoughts on mortality and immortality in a carefully wrought gloomy context of night, and having set the scene he proceeds for his meditations. Young's vocabulary while consistently dignified, is not Miltonic or Pseudo-Miltonic.

While Young followed specific traditions of Christian meditation, Robert Blair (1699-1746) draw on his reading of English poets and dramatists to produce poetry written in blank verse quite un-Miltonic and suggesting rather the verse of Jocobean drama and sometimes of Restoration tragedy.

Thus the Age of Reason modulated gradually into the Age of Sensibility, with no contradiction discernible to contemporaries. In Thomson's works sensibility is related to admiration of Nature's order, rationally explained by Newton, so that reason and sensibility are dependent on each other. By the middle of the century the influence of Thomson was strongly felt by the younger generation of poets. William Collins (1721-1779) was one of them, who dedicated a beautiful Ode to his memory. He published his Odes with all the characteristics of the new poetry of the Pre Romantics, viz., subjectivity. Melancholy, lyricism, love of nature etc. It was the varied inspiration from all the above pre-Romantics,. joined with a fine lyricism and a delicate feeling for Nature. In 1750, William Shenstone (1714-1763), another characteristic poet of the transitional period, broke away in certain directions from eighteenth century poetic

conventions and struck a really original line in his 'Rural Elegance" which marks another step forward in the direction of the march of sensibility.

In 1751 was published Thomas Gray's 'Elegy' which definitely rejected the traditions of the classical school, both in meter and subject matter, probably under the influence of Collins. In this way, we see in the forties of the Augustan age which was pre-eminently the age of town poetry, satire on public affairs being the most typical literature, begins the age of private meditation not on contemporary man and events but on universal themes of life and death, which ultimately brought about a revolution and ushered in an age of very different pre-occupations in poetry.

9.2 Age And Author

In this section we will discuss the poetry of the eighteenth century. This age has some special trends and the age has been divided in parts due to these. We will discuss these in detail in this section alongwith the prominent work of major writers of this period. Gray was one of the major poet of this age. His life and works alongwith his major contribution to the field of poetry would be discussed here in this section.

9.2.1 About the Age

The period intervening 1660, the year of the restoration of King Charles II marking the decisive birth of a new literary order and 1798, the date of the publication of 'Lyrical Ballads' roughly corresponds to what is known as the Age of Classicism. During this period English writers affected in varying degrees in their works, admiration of the literary fashion of the ancient classical writers of Greece and Rome. It is also alternatively called the Augustan Age, a term originally derived from the prestige of Latin literature in the time of Emperor Augustus, as applied in the history of English literature to the period of Dryden, Pope and Johnson.

It is customary to make a rough tripartite division of the classical or Augustan age in English literature into three stages viz., the Age of Dryden (1660-1700); the Age of Pope (1700-1740) and the Age of Dr. Johnson (1740-1798) according to the dominant literary figures crystallising in themselves the emotional and intellectual attitudes of their respective age.

The Age of Johnson (1740-1798) was an age of transition occasioned by the invasion of sentimentalism into English poetry, i.e. to say the style of English poetry shifted from 'classic' to the 'romantic', fitfully perhaps, in the twenties at first but more consciously and prominently, after the middle of the century, resulting in the final triumph of 'romanticism'. The transition period means one in which the characteristics of the two schools exist side by side in a progressive series of mixed personalities which form the transition from one to another.

From mid eighteenth century there was an increase in the tendency amongst writers to abandon the literary practices following the schools of Pope and Johnson, and of responding more and more to a different set of influences which led them to seek fresh subjects, fresh modes of feeling. expression and form. Dr. Johnson tried hard to counter the new social forces coming in the realm of poetry. His efforts did not succeed for long.

This period was one of transition. Two dominant characteristics co-exist in the poetry of the age of transition viz., persistence of some of the conventions and

traditions of classical poetry. e.g., the artificial poetic diction etc., and (b) the stirrings of a new spirit, a new mode of thought or subject matter or form of expression.

The revolt in the form, idiom and style of poetry was not however, so complete as the subject matter. Thomson was no doubt bold enough to compose in blank verse in place of the heroic couplet, an example which was also followed by a few minor writers. But the artificial classical elements still persisted in the writings of most of the poets of the transition period including Gray and Collins.

Perhaps what really happened was that after Pope, there was no one who felt nearly enough to be able to use his form and style so successfully on the new subject matter. They were perhaps unaware of the fact that the charge of sensibility for beauty in life and nature also demanded a change in idiom and style. The originality of Gray and Collins consisted therefore, in the adaptation of an Augustan Style to an eighteenth century sensibility or feeling for naturalism and the common emotions which form the stuff of human life. To be original with minimum alteration is somewhat more distinguished then to be original with maximum alterations.

It will thus be seen that the early Romantics discussed above were each helping in his own way to introduce into English Poetry new elements in subject matter and style by the middle of the eighteenth century which ultimately in later years, underminded the stronghold of classicism, held by the Dr. Johnson and his fast dwindling group of classicists and formed the psychological substance of the incipient Romanticism.

9.2.2 About the Author

Thomas Gray (1716-1771) occupies a distinctive place among the transitional poets of England during the eighteenth century. He was born on December 26, 1716 in London. His father Philip Grey had a peculiar temper. He was a selfish, despotic and violent ;man of business in London. He grew into a sensitive boy, frightened by his father, adorned by his mother and petted by his childless aunts. He had no friends, no company in his early life. He had to rely upon himself and his books.

Gray first went to Eton and then to Cambridge for study. At Eton his two chief friends were Horace Walpole, son of the Prime Minister and Richard West, grandson of Bishop Burnet. These three, with a fourth, Thomas Ashton formed the quadruple alliance. West was a scholar with a thin vein of poetry and a tendency to melancholy and his premature death in 1742 was a deep sorrow to Gray. The death pained him and he wrote a sonnet to immortalised his death.

After learning Eton, Gray proceeded to Cambridge, which proved so unattractive to him that he called it the abode of desolation and a silly dirty place. One of the reasons of this antipathy towards the University could be that the subjects, he was obliged to study were distasteful to him. They were logic, philosophy and mathematics. Later in the 1742, he changed to law. The Law College, Inner Temple, treated him very well. He was no longer burdened with lectures and tutorials. Not very seriously concerned with his future, he

settled for two years at Cambridge. During these two years, he devoted himself to the study of Italian and also to widening his knowledge of English and French poetry. His devotion was still to the ancient world and to the fresh field of classical learning.

In 1739 Gray set out for a European tour with Horace Walpole. We know nothing of the relations or arrangements between them. In Paris they met the author of 'Manon Lescaut' and saw Racine's 'Britannicus', which Gray began to imitate hundred lines survive. During the passage to Italy over the Mont Cenis, Gray received his first deep impressions of mountain grandeur. After reaching Italy, Gray and Walpole quarrelled and parted.

Gray was a man of strong, sincere, and independent character and when reconciliation took place in November, 1745, he told Walpole with complete frankness that the old relations would not be restored. About the same time he became acquainted with Pope, the most famous poet of his age. Two years later, he became friendly with William Mason, who later became his biographer.

In 1741, the death of his father narrowed the family resources and Gray lived for a time with his mother at Stoke Peges, where she mode her home, Gray returned to Cambridge to live on a small income. In December 1757 on the death of College Cibber, he was offered the Poet Laureateship, which he declined. He did so because he was neither attracted by the emoluments nor by the reputation of office, which had been lowered by a succession of inferior or even ludicrous appointments.

In 1762, he started on his island tour visiting Richmond, Ripon, Sheffield and Chatsworth in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. Two years later he went on a tour of Scotland. In July 1768, Gray was offered the professorship of Modern History at Cambridge. He accepted it. This professorship was merely an honorary appointment. In the summer of 1770, he made his last tour through Worcestershire. Gloucesler shire and Monmouthshire. In 1771 he planned toe visit Switzerland, which he could not do owing to his ill health. His ill health brought his sudden death. He was buried by the side of his beloved mother at Stoke Pege. He write a number of Latin poems. The first poem he wrote in 1730 when he was at School. It was published for the first time by Sir Edmund Gosse. Then at the University again, he wrote a few more Latin verse. In fact from 1970 to 1770 to 1741, he devoted himself to Latin verse. Though these poems are not representative of his genius. They do have ample evidence of that ripeness of Scholarship and that moralising vein that distinguish his finest poems – the 'Odes' and the 'Elegy'.

In 1741 he mode his first attempt at English Poetry. He started writing "Agrippina, a tragedy in blank verse. After writing the first scene, he sent it to his friend west. West spoke unfavourably of the style. So Gray abandoned the attempt and never tried it again. It was in the year 1742 that his best poems were written and commenced.

Gray was perhaps the most learned man in Europe. He knew every branch of history, both natural and civil, had read all the original histories. Gray had a deep influence of the age in which he lived and he influenced many poets

including Wordsworth and Coleridge. Gray's poems are known for his feeling for nature, note pervasive of rural life, classical mode and romantic spirit.

9.2.3 Self Assessment Questions

You have studied about the development of verse writing in eighteenth century in details. You have come to know about the poets of transition period and also about the life and works of Thomas Gray. Now you can yourself evaluate your understanding ability by giving answers to the questions of the following exercises.

Exercise – 1

Each question has been given three alternative answers. Read the question and choose the correct answer :

1. Gray wrote his first poem in :
   - (i) 1730
   - (ii) 1741
   - (iii) 1742
2. Mr. Philip Gray had :
   - (i) a loving attitude
   - (ii) mild nature
   - (iii) peculiar temper
3. Gray saw Racine's 'Britannicus' in :
   - (i) Paris
   - (ii) London
   - (iii) Italy
4. The name of the son of Prime Minister was :
   - (i) Thomas Ashton
   - (ii) Richard West
   - (iii) Horace Walpole
5. Gray went in 1739 on a tour of :
   - (i) Europe
   - (ii) Worwickshire
   - (iii) Switzerland
6. Cambridge University offered Gray :
   - (i) Professorship of Modern History
   - (ii) Poet Laureatship
   - (iii) Professorship of English
7. Pre-Romantics were headed by :
   - (i) Johnson – Thomson – Gray
   - (ii) Thomson – Gray – Collins
   - (iii) Thomson – Pope – Gray

8. Poem entitled 'season' was published in :
   (i) one part
   (ii) two parts
   (iii) four parts
9. Age of Reason modulated into the :
   (i) movement of revolt
   (ii) Age of Dr. Johnson
   (iii) Age of sensibility
10. By middle of century the revolt became more clear against :
   (i) romantic poets
   (ii) reason
   (iii) classical school5

Exercise – 2

1. Discuss the Romantic reaction.

_____

_____

_____

2. What role did 'Seasons' play in realm of poetry ?

_____

_____

_____

3. What were main characteristics of Pre Romantics ?

_____

_____

_____

4. How did William Shenstone add to sensibility ?

_____

_____

_____

5. What is called Age of Classicism?

_____

_____

_____

6. Who were representative poets of Augustan age ?

_____

_____

_____

7. Which tendency was in force from mid eighteenth century?

_____

_____

_____

8. What happened after Pope ?

_____

_____

_____

9. Comment on the Gray – Walpole relationship.

_____

_____

_____

10. Where do we find Gray's influence ?

_____

_____

_____

9.3 Reading Text

In this section we will give you practice to read and understand the most famous poem of Thomas Gray. An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard and provide with critical analysis of the poem.

9.3.1 Reading Text

Given below is the original text of Thomas Gray's Poem

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

1 The curfew tolls the knell of Parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness, and to me.

2 Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds :

3 Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

4 Beneath rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the truf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for-ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

5 The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cook's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

6 For them no more the blazing hearth small burn.
Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
No children run to lisp their sire's return.
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

7 Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow of the stubborn glebe has broke!
How jocund did they drive their team afied!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke

8 Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the Poor.

9 The boast of hearldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e' er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour :-
The paths of glory lead but to the grave

10 Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault
If Memory o'er their tomb on trophies raise
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealings anthem swells the note of praise.

11 Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death,

12 Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasty the liviving lyre :

13 But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unrolt,
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

p1 1

24 For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

25 Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the unlant lawn;

26 'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That sreathes its old fantastic roots so high,

HIs listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the broof that babbles by.

27 'Hard by you wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan life one forlorn,
Or creazed with care or crosse'd in hopeless love.

28 'Ohe morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
'Along the heath, and near his favourite tree.
'Another came, nor yet beside the rill,
'Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he,

29 'The next with dirges due in sad array,
'Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne,
'Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
'Graved on the stone beneath you aged thron'
[There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year.
By hands unseen, are show'rs of violets found,
The red-breast loves to bill and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground]

THE EPITAPH

30 Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown,
Fair science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

31 Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompence as largely send;
He gave to Misery all he had a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

32 No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

9.3.2 Glossary:

1-3	curfew	:	the evening bell rung to make people extinguish house fires and retire to rest. This practice was introduced by William, the Conqueror.
	toll	:	to ring
	lowing herd	:	the cattle giving out their peculiar sounds
	wind	:	move in zigzag way
	plod	:	walk labouriously like a tired person
	rugged	:	hard, twisted appearance of elm trees
	heaves	:	rises
	tuff	:	the surface of land matted with grass
	narrow cell	:	the grave

	rude	:	simple, poor people
	hamlet	:	village
4-6	breezy call	:	pleasant and fragrant morning wind
	shrill	:	loud and sharp
	clarion	:	a wind instrument producing a shrill sound
	them	:	villager's forefathers
	lowley bed	:	their humble graves, graves of poor people
	for them	:	for dead forefathers who are in graves
	blazing hearth	:	burning fire used for cooking
	ply her evening care	:	deligently applies herself to household duties
	lisp	:	to utter in broken accents
	sire's return	:	coming back of forefathers
	envied kiss	:	the kiss which children enjoyed from their father
7-9	stubborn globe	:	hard ground or hard soil
	as broke	:	has broken
	jocund	:	happily
	team	:	team of horses used in ploughing the land
	a field	:	to the field
	ambition	:	ambitious person
	useful toil	:	profession of the village people
	boast hearldly	:	pride of people who belong to noble descent
	all that beauty	:	personalised influence of beauty
	nor you	:	the wealthy and proudy people
	impute	:	lay
	asile	:	division of a Church divided through pillars
	pealing anthem	:	a sacred tune used in Church
	note of praise	:	praise of poor village people
10-12	back to its mansion	:	to return to living state of body
	fleeting breath	:	short lived life
	honour's voice	:	speeches in honour of the dead
	silent dust	:	dead body
	pregnant	:	full of, fuly filled
	hands	:	refers to the village people
	swayed	:	used effectively
13-15	ample page	:	wide and expansive knowledge
	chill penury	:	poverty which has a gloomy effect on mind
	repress's	:	suppressed
	nobel rage	:	poetic fire, noble feelings or sentiments
	froze	:	crushed and choked
	genial current	:	joyous feelings of their heart
	purest ray serene	:	having great purity and brightness about them

	unfathomed	:	very deep
	caves	:	bottom
	blush unseen	:	to bloom without being noted
	Hampden	:	John Hampden (1594-1649) a celebrated English statesman who in 1636 refused to pay ship money tax levied by King Charles-I.
	dauntless	:	fearless
	Cromwell	:	Oliver Cromwell (1529-1659), Lord Protector of England from 1653-59.
16-18	applause	:	fame
	to command	:	to get attention of the audience
	smilling land	:	rich country
	their lot forbade	:	they were not allowed to do the things described above
	circumscibe	:	to limit, to restrict
	wade through	:	to pass through
	gates of mercy	:	door of pity or sympathy
	on mankind	:	towards humanity
	conscious truth	:	which was known to them
	ingenious	:	free and frank
	shine of luxury	:	those people who were proud and lived in luxury
	with incense	:	offerings
	muse's flame	:	poetic inspiration
19-21	ignoble	:	low
	vale of life	:	valley which full of peace and prosperity
	tener	:	course of life
	these bones	:	the bones of these rustics
	uncouth rhymes	:	verses composed by illeterate persons
	implores	:	requests or craves for
	holy text	:	the words and phrases from the Bible.
22-24	prey	:	given over as a victim
	pleasing anxious	:	life full of pleasure and anxieties
	precinct	:	enclosure
	fond breast	:	breast of some loving friend
	pious drops	:	tears
	closing eye	:	a person who is about to die
	wonted	:	accustomed
	for	:	for the sake of country gentle man
	artless	:	simple
	thy fate	:	fate of the poet

25-27	haply	:	perchance, perhaps
	hoary headed	:	with grey hair
	swain	:	country man, shepherd
	peep of dawn	:	just at the time of rising of the sun.
	upland town	:	the grassy hill top from where sunrise could easily be viewed.
	yonder	:	at a distance
	nodding	:	moving in the wind
	beech	:	a smooth barked glossy leaved tree twists
	wreathes	:	twists
	listless	:	leisurely spreading his full body
	pore upon	:	to took attentively, gaze upon
	babbles	:	to move along making a murmuring sound
28-29	you	:	small
	wayward fancies	:	peculiar poetic thoughts and ideas
	missed him	:	peculiar poetic thoughts and ideas
	missed him	:	one who could not see the poet
	heath	:	flat waste tract of land covered with shrubs
	another came	:	the other morning came
	corne	:	carried
	approach	:	come
	the lay	:	the epitaph
	showers of violets	:	petals of violet flowers
	red-breast	:	a singing bird
	warble	:	make noise, sing loudly
30-32	unknown	:	without fame and fortune
	fair science	:	knowledge in general
	bounty	:	charity
	his soul sincere	:	the poet was earnest and sincere
	all the had	:	all that he possessed and could given to others
	tear	:	feelings of sorrow and sympathy
	heaven	:	the God
	a friend	:	it probably refer to the God
	father	:	the God

9.3.3 Summary

The poem begins by describing the approach of evening with its darkness and its silence, which is unbroken except for some such sounds, as those of the droning of the beetle, the tinkling of sheep's bells and the hooting of the owl. This darkness is conduive to mournful thoughts. Then it proceeds to speak of the poor people – the ancestors of the rustic population of the neighbourhood who lay deep buried under the elm and the yew in the country churchyard.

Nothing can wake them from their everlasting sleep. They can no longer enjoy the family gathering round the fireplace when they returned home after the day's work. These poor villagers did the humble work of cultivation. The poet, then, requests the big and the great not to despise these poor peasants for their humble but useful work.

He also requests them not to blame the poor peasants for their having no monuments erected over their graves inside the church, because, according to Gray, the poet, monuments of all kinds, tombstones with inscriptions, statues, honours, tributes are helpless to recall the dead back to life. Speaking of these peasants, the poet says, that some of these poor peasants could have been great rulers or statesmen, famous musicians or poets, if they had not been ignorant and poor. Yet cases of potential greatness are common enough, for beautiful pearls lie at the bottom unseen in the wilderness. This country churchyard may contain the grave of one who could become a popular hero like Hampden or an immortal poet like Milton or a military genius like Cromwell, but their humble lot denied them a chance of becoming great orators or great martyrs or great benefactors of their country. But, then, their humble lot, while preventing the development of their virtues, limited the nature and extent of their vices as well, so that they were saved from becoming bloody usurpers or merciless tyrants.

It saved them likewise from showing a callous disregard of truth and honesty and from becoming mean flatterers of the great. These gravestones of the poor show that their desire to be remembered after death is a desire common to all men. After Gray's death too some people will talk of him, some may be curious even to visit his grave and to read the epitaph on his tomb.

9.3.4 Self Assessment Questions

Now you have read and understood the poem of Gray. It is one of the best poems of English language we give you two exercises have to make you evaluate yourself about what you have understood.

Exercise – 1

Three alternative answers are being given below each question. You have to choose the correct answer.

1. The rustic people were buried :
   - (i) in the church
   - (ii) in forests
   - (iii) outside the church
2. On the graves of the rustic there were :
   - (i) elaborate epitaphs
   - (ii) no trophies
   - (iii) big trophies
3. The people of city were :
   - (i) ambitious and showy
   - (ii) cruel
   - (iii) unruly

4. These poor villagers did the humble work of :
   (i) cultivation
   (ii) gathering sheep
   (iii) sitting around fire place
5. The gravestones of the poor show their desire to be remembered :
   (i) by their relatives
   (ii) in the annals of history
   (iii) after death

9.4 Analysis

In this section we propose to critically analyse this 'Elegy'. Gray's poetry was so unfamiliar to his Age and so unlike the sort of poetry in vogue that it, on its production astonished his contemporaries. Gray's poetic qualities are being discussed here to make you familiar with his genius.

9.4.1 Critical Analysis

The Elegy is perhaps the most widely known poem in English. With the exception of certain works of Byron and Shakespeare, no English poem has been so widely admired and imitated abroad. What is the secret of this extensive popularity? The answer to its perhaps is that it beautiful expresses feelings and thoughts that are common to the human breast. Pathetic composition as it is, it describes to us our own grief and our own sufferings. It is indeed, a cry of human sympathy.

It always finds some disposition of our mind favourable to receive it, some passion which cannot resist its power and some feelings which participate in its sorrow. In the current of the thoughts of the Elegy, there is nothing that is rare or exceptional or out of the common way. In the reflections of the elgy, it is difficult to conceive of anyone musing under similar circumstances who should not muse in the way Gray has done. There are some feelings and thoughts that cannot grow old. The mystery of life does not become clearer, or less solemn and awful, for any amount of contemplation. Such questions inevitable and everlasting as they are, do rise in the mind when one reflects on Death, and they can never lose their freshness, never cease to fascinate and move us.

It is with such questions that the Elegy deals. It deals with them in no lofty philosophical manner, but in a simple, humble, homely way, always with the trust and broadest humanity. The poet's thoughts turn to the poor; he forgets the find tombs inside the church and thinks only f the mouldering heaps" in the churchyard outside. In dealing with them, he faces problems, - problems of the brevity of life, of the certainty of pain, of death and of the helplessness of man. And in these problems, he keeps on brooding and his meditations take a deeper and more universal meaning. The Elegy, therefore, is the outcome of the lonely meditations and musings of his obscure and secluded life. It is a poem, which has reached the hearts of mankind.

There are other merits which this poem possesses, and these merits go to add to the popularity of this poem. It possesses the charm of incomparable felicity

of a melody that is not too subtle to delight every hearer, of a moral persuasiveness that appeals to every generation and of a metrical skill that in each line proclaims the master. Gray himself was, however, of the opinion that the popularity of the Elegy was due to the subject and if the subject had been treated of in prose, it would have been equally popular.

9.4.2 Theme

Gray is considered to be the most original of all the transitional poets in the selection of his themes. It is in his poetry that we have, for the first time, a departure from the treatment of urban life. Poetry of the classical age, written under the inspiration of Alexander Pope, is purely related to the depiction of urban life, the fashions of the ladies adn the manners of the Court. Gray is the first poet who depart from this beaten track of town life and concentrates his attention on the Middle Ages and the Norse and Scandinavian mythology. His originality is endorsed by Gazamian who writes that "he was the first to feel the attraction of the Middle Ages and of Scandinavian antiquity ..... The 'Bard', and specially, the "Fatal Sisters' and the "Descent of Odin' composed before the publication of Perey's 'Reliques' are, as it were, soundings taken in mediaeval superstition, of primitive legeds and beleifs of simple and popular wonder, the depth and fecundity of which were to be gradually realized."

9.4.3 Love of Nature

Gray was alive to the external manifestations of Nature and observed them curiously, as is clear from his reflections in his poems. Instead of being fresh and new, his visions of Nature are discreet and pretty. They are objective. The sublimity of the Alps and the religous horror of high mountains are frank expressions of his visions,-things as others would see them. Again, in the opening lines of the "Elegy", he presents the close of the day remarkably and beautifully.

9.4.4 Musical Quality

The versification of Gray possesses exquisite musical sweetness and about his diction he himself tells that "the style i have aimed at is extreme conciseness of expression yet pure perspicuous and musical." Gray's style has the dignity of Milton and stately march of his verse resemble that of Dryden. The fondness of elegance coupled with the use of musical cadences, which is the characteristic trait of Gray, imparts to his poem a rich rythmical harmony and solemn musical effect.

9.4.5 Self Assessment Questions

Exercise : 4

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given below each question:

1. The reflections in the "Elegy" are :
   (a) exceptional
   (b) full of sorrows and griefs
   (c) of most natural and obvious character

2. The style which Gray aims at, is of :
   (a) extreme consciousness of expression
   (b) dignity of thought
   (c) ever lasting contemplation
3. The poetry of Gray abounds in all the seeds of :
   (a) the eighteenth century
   (b) the Miltonic age
   (c) the coming age
4. The poetry of classical age is purely related to the :
   (a) description of urban life
   (b) description of rustic life
   (c) description of virtuous life
5. "Elegy" presents feelings and thoughts that are :
   (a) moral and philosophical
   (b) true and homely
   (c) common to the human breast

Exercise : 5

Answer the following questions in your own words :

1. Which are the questions deatl in "Elegy"?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What is difficult to conceive in the reflection of the "Eelgy"?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Discuss Dr. Johnson's views on 'Elegy'.

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Discuss the merits of Thomas Gray.

   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What was Gray's opinion about his 'Elegy'?

   _____
   _____
   _____

9.5 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have acquired practice in the study of :

- Understanding of text and critical analysis of Grays Elegy.

- Trends and movements of eighteenth century English Literary Scenario.
- Explanations of words and phrases used by Gray in his poem.
- Answering the questions in own words with desired critical comments.

9.6 Answers To The Exercises

Exercise : 1

1. (a) 1730
2. (c) peculiar temper
3. (a) Paris
4. (c) Horace Walpole
5. (a) Europe
6. (a) Professorship of M0dern History
7. (b) Thomson-Gray-Collins
8. (c) four parts
9. (c) Age of sensibility
10. (c) classical school.

Exercise : 2

1. With the beginning of eighteenth century under the influence of Augustans, society had an upperhand and classicists invariably wrote within the social context of the age. A reaction for the liberation of the human spirit from this dominance was called romantic reaction which was led by pre Romantic poets.
2. 'Seasons' of James Thomson was responsible for the division of the classical tradition.
3. The main characteristic were rural meditation, love of nature, humanity, sentiments and emotions.
4. Shenstone broke away from conventions of his Age and developed a really original line which marks another step forward.
5. The period beginning from Restoration of King Charles II (1660) to the publication of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads' (1798) is called as Age of Classicism.
6. John Dryden, A. Pope and Dr. Johnson were the main representatives of this Age.
7. There was an increase to abandon the literary practices followed by Pope and Dr. Johnson.
8. After Pope's death there was no one who use Pope's form and style in his writings.
9. They both were good friends since their entry in Eton. On the tour of Europe in 1942, they parted due to some dispute and in 1745 they reconciled and became friends again.
10. Gray influenced Wordsworth as we see in 'Lyrical Ballads'.

Exercise : 3

1. (c) outside the church
2. (b) no trophies
3. (a) ambitious and showy
4. (a) cultivation
5. (c) after death

Exercise : 4

1. (c) of most natural and obvious character
2. (c) ever lasting contemplation
3. (c) the coming Age
4. (a) description of urban life
5. (c) common to human breast

Exercise : 5

1. The 'Elegy' mainly deals with mystery of life, death, human behaviour, feelings and thoughts.
2. It is difficult to conceive of anyone musing under similar circumstances who should not muse in the way. Gray has done.
3. Dr. Johnson says that Gray's 'Elegy' abounds with images which find a mirror in every man's mind and sentiments.
4. Thomas Gray was a great poet of humanity who had love for Nature, sentiments, emotions, music, note of melancholy with an ability of pictorial description.
5. Gray said the popularity of 'Elegy' was due to the subject and its treatment.

9.7 Books Suggested

1. Bell, A.F., Gray's Poems (OUP, London, 1956)
2. Cecil, Lord David, Thomas Gray (Macmillan, New York, 1943)
3. Daiches, David, A critical History of English Literature (Allied, New Delhi, 1984)
4. Evans, Sir Ifor, English Literature : Values and Traditions (Unwin, London, 1962)
5. Leavis, F.R., New Bearings in English Poetry (Pelican, New York, 1982)
6. Sampson, g. A Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, (CUP, London 1972)

Unit -10

William Blake : The Chimney Sweeper

Structure

10.0 Objectives :

The purpose of this unit is to acquaint you with the poetry of William Blake by presenting an elaborate discussion of the poem 'The Chimney Sweeper'.

10.1 Introduction :

The poem 'The Chimney Sweeper' depicts the miserable condition of the young children who are a victim to inhuman treatment in the society of industrialised England. Though the poet finds the society indifferent to the miseries of young boys, he is sure that in the hands of God they will be treated kindly. Blake portrays greedy fathers who sell their children for a few pounds and abandon them to the eternal hell of sufferings. The poem ends didactically and reminds us that to do our duty is the way to happiness.

10.2 About the poet :

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, four poets, each in his own way, heralded the opening of the second romantic age in English literature. These were Cowper, Crabbe, Blake and Burns.

William Blake (1757-1827), the third of this group, was a fanatical revolutionary in poetry. He went far beyond the most determined of the romantics in his worship of imagination and repudiation of logic, science and reason. Neither in matter nor in manner is there anything of the eighteenth century in Blake's poetry. He was an eccentric and from all accounts was never wholly sane.

Londoner by birth Blake was the son of an Irish hosier, and a painter and engraver by profession. He had little schooling and while yet a child saw mystic visions such as 'God peeping through the window', 'angels in a tree', etc. Though basically a Christian, Blake had developed a religion of his own with a special mythology for symbolism. Blake's education had been inadequate and was not equal to the demands

of symbolism. Such glimpses tend to show that he was fanatically opposed to all authority or restrictive codes.

Blake's poetry is simple, direct and charmingly musical. It consists of short songs or lyrics and is contained in three little volumes : **Poetical Sketches** (1783), **Songs of Innocence** (1789), and **Songs of Experience** (1794). The poems included in these volumes are the products of genuine inspitation. They are the spontaneous utterances of the poet's heart. Written in short rhyming lines and regular stanzas, they charm the ear by their fairy music.

10.3 About the Age

The later eighteenth century in the sphere of English poetry is known as transitional period which witnessed a struggle between old and new, and of the gradual triumph of the new. The transitional period marked the beginning of a reaction against the rational, intellectual, formal, artificial and unromantic poetry of the age of Pope. The features of the age can be described as follows :

(a) The transitional poetry was marked by a strong reaction against stereotyped rules.

(b) The beginning of Romanticism is marked by a return to nature and to plain humanity for its material. The transitional poets returned to the real nature of earth and air, and not to the bookish nature of the artificial pastoral.

(c) Romanticism was marked by intense human sympathy and by a consequent understanding of the human heart. The poems of Cowper, Crabbe, Gray, Blake and Burns are characterised by an enlightened human sympathy for the poor and oppressed.

(d) The transitional poets revolted against the conventional literary technique, such as, that of the heroic couplet. They discarded the artificial and stereotyped poetic style of the age of Pope and cared for achieving strength, sincerity and simplicity in the expression of the new literary ideals.

10.4 The Chimney Sweeper (Text)

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry " "weep!' weep!' weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.
There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head, **5**

That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved : so I said
"Hush, Tom! Never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."
And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was sleeping, he had such a sight! - **10**

That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.
And by came an Angel, who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins and set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run, **15**

And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.
Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work,
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm'
So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

10.5 Annotations

Stanza 1. *L. 2. And my father sold me* : The speaker is a young boy, a chimney sweeper. He says that his father sold him to a master-sweeper. *L. 3 Could... weep*! Sweep' is the traditional cry of a chimney sweeper. The elimination of 's' from sweep' shows that the boy was too young to utter 'sweep' clearly. *L. 4. sweep* : clean soot :covered with the soot of chimneys that he cleans.

Stanza 2. *L. 5. Tom Dacre* : It is the name of a fellow chimney sweeper *L. 6. That ... back*: The boy's hair curled on his head like the wool on the lamb's back. *Ll 7-8 Hush...hair* : his hair cut. The speaker says that the soot will not now stick on his head as it is hairless.

Stanza 3. *L. 10. he had such a sight* : such a wonderful sight. *L. 11. Dick, Joe, Ned and Jack*: All imaginary young boys belonging to the group of chimney sweepers. *L. 12. Coffin* : The box in which corpses are buried. Locked up in coffins of black rather than a dream this has a realistic sense in the life of the sweepers. After sweeping the chimney they come out wrapped in a thick coat of soot which will appear like a black coffin.

Stanza 5. *L. 17. bags* : bags in which the chimney sweeper stores the soot rubbed out from the chimney walls. *L. 18. They rise upon clouds* : Here it implies divine benediction upon the chimney sweepers. *L. 23 want joy* : lack happiness. Their fathers have sold the chimney sweepers to the master sweepers. But the angel says that if they behave properly they can have God as their father and hence there shall be no lack of parental love.

Stanza 6. *L. 23 Tho' the.... Warm* : The dream Tom had seen was so consoling that he felt warm even in the cold morning. *L. 24. So... harm* : The didactic conclusion of the poem asserts that to do one's duty is the way to God's blessings.

10.6 Explanations :

(i) Then naked and white ……. Never want joy.

Lines 17-20. Then naked and white… and never want joy. Here is another black boy, like the black boy of the poem 'The Little Black Boy', (written by Blake) having to lead a life of suffering inside the suffocating soot of the chimneys. The boy was sold to the master sweeper when he was very young. The poet gives expression to his thought through the mouth of a

chimney-sweeper of this type. The little sweeper says that one day when Tom wept of grief at having his head shaved he was pacified soon by his other friends. That night Tom dreamt of an angel descending to the earth and unlock-Tom and his friends' coffins to set them free. Having been released, the boys, all naked and white, get rid of their soot bags, float freely in the sky and are wafted gently by the wind. This beneficent angel tells Tom that if he is a good boy he can have God for his father.

The chimney-sweepers are in a sense waifs or destitutes since their parents sell them to sweep the soot. The soot that sticks on their body is so choking that the boy in his dream views it as a coffin. As Freud says, children see their unfulfilled desires of real life as fulfilled in dreams and that every thing happens here. The little boy's sense of 'father-lessness' and lack of parental care haunt him and so he dreams of the possibility of having a father who may be kind, protecting and benevolent. But later when he turns back to the reality of daylight, he conjectures and interprets that doing one's duty patiently and tolerantly may entitle him to be the heir of a better world of happiness.

(ii) And so Tom awoke …… not fear harm.

In the dream Tom has a vision of the emancipation of the Chimney Sweepers. The vision of the angel culminates in the little boy's complete freedom from misfortunes. The little boys bereft of their parents are told by the angel that God will be their kind father if they behave gently.

The lines contain a moral uttering. The poet says that if the Chimney Sweeper accepts his wretched condition and takes pleasure in glimpses of innocence in his dreams, he can preserve his humanity from being swept off altogether. This gives solace to the Chimney Sweepers. The words of the angel make them feel encouraged. They decide to return to their duty with a sense of sincerity and commitment. Tom feels happy and joyful in this state of innocence.

10.7 Literary Devices :

The poem discussed in the unit relate to two important literary devices : (a) Lyricism (b) Symbolism. Here we intend to discuss these two in brief.

(a) **Lyricism :** The poem 'The Chimney Sweeper' is a beautiful lyric and is characterised by the usual qualities of lyricism :

(i) Lyricism refers to sweet melody and musical qualities.

(ii) Spontaneity is one of the most striking features of lyricism.

(iii) Intensity of feeling/s and deep passions make lyric more appealing

(b) **Symbolism :** Symbolism refers to a word or set of words that signifies an object or event which itself signifies something else; that is the words refer to something which suggests a range of reference beyond itself. Take as an example the phrase "The Chimney Sweeper" which in its literal meaning is a person who sweeps the chimney. In the poem, however, it also stands for exploitation and the most painful after-effects of Britain's industrialisation.

10.8 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit we have discussed

- William Blake as a transitional poet belonging to the last quarter of the 18th century.
- The features of the transitional poetry.
- 'The Chimney Sweeper', one of the important poems written by William Blake
- the literary devices of Lyricism and Symbolism

10.9 Suggested Readings :

1. *Songs of Innocence*
2. *Songs of Experience*
3. R.D. Trivedi : *A Compendious History of English Literature*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.

10.10 Questions And Answers

Attempt a critical appreciation on William Blake's 'The Chimney Sweeper'

'The chimney Sweeper' by William Blake presents a disenchanting picture of the evils of the world. The French Revolution and the evil effects of Britain's industrialisation had opened Blake's eyes to the tyranny and exploitation that stalked the world. The growing poverty of labourers and the inhuman treatment meted out to them were enough to move Blake's tender heart. The poverty compelled many a father sell his children to master sweepers who employed these children on poor payment. In those days it was not an uncommon sight to see the children sweeping the soot of chimneys even when fire was burning below in the fire place. It were the inhuman atrocities of the type that led Blake to write this poem.

The speaker in the poem is a young chimney sweeper. The speaker narrates his tragic tale that he lost his mother, and his father sold him to a master sweeper when he was too young to cry "weep, weep, weep". The speaker then tells us how one of his fellow sweepers, Tom Dacre cried when his curly hair were shaved. The speaker consoles Tom that as his hair is cut, his white hair will not be soot stained. That very night when Tom sleeps he has a sweet dream. He finds thousands of his fellow sweeps locked up in black coffins. Then there comes an angel with bright keys who opens the coffins and sets them all free. The unbridled children float happily in the air and sport there. The angel tells them that if they behave properly, they will get fatherly treatment from the Almighty. The next day, though it is cold outside, Tom feels the warmth imparted by the dream and he goes peacefully to brush the chimneys. The poem ends on a didactic note with an emphasis on the dictum "Do your duty, if you want to achieve real joy."

The labourers of the factories, in general, had to suffer from the unhealthy atmosphere. The condition of the chimney sweepers was worse; they being the little boys could not stand the choking chimneys. The inhuman treatment, meted out to them was worse. They had to wake up during the whole night and go on sweeping until noon. At home they slept on poor beds and were fed poorly.

The poem is a replica or the realistic picture of the industrialised England. The coffin of soot in which Tom saw his fellow workers locked up is nothing but the coating of soot that stuck on their body when they came out after sweeping the chimney. The poet uses the phrase "The coffin of soot" which is suggestive of extreme peril that lurked in the work the little boys did. The another important phrase "Then naked and white" as the children went up naked into the chimney because to put on clothes was to invite more danger from fire. The soot sticks on their naked body and so their whole body should be purged of it. That is why, the chimney sweepers are said to be having a complete wash in the river and rising to the cloud. The poem ends with a moral uttering "So if all do their duty they need not fear harm".

In form as in thought Blake was in complete revolt against the conventions of the 18th century. He does not follow the set patterns of Neo-classical poetry. The poet uses a special blank verse of his own which is hardly distinguishable from rhythmical prose. Accordingly, the phraseology and words used relate to common man's language. The poem is also remarkable for its brevity of style.

To conclude, the poem is an expression of the bitter observation communicated in a style bereft of artificial decorum of neo-classicism of the 18th century.

Unit - 11

Shakespeare : The Merchant of Venice

Structure

11.0 Objectives

In this unit our aim is (a) to give you practice in reading a summary of a drama, (b) make you understand the meanings of words used in the summary. We have alswo set questions for you to answer. After completing this unit you should be able to read and understand summaries of dramas

-understand the meaning of words

-be able to write sentences in your own words

11.1 Introduction

In Units 11-13 you are going to study William Shakespeare's play The Merchant of Venice. In Unit 11 we shall give you a summary of the drama The Merchant of Venice

11.1.1 Study Guide

This story The Merchant of Venice has been adapted from Charles Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare Annotations will help you to understand the meanings of some of the words used in the passage. After you have read and understood the passage, you must answer the questions. You must also try to use your dictionary as much as possible.

11.1.2 A Summary of The Merchant of Venice

A **Jew** by the name of Shylock lived in **Venice.** He had become very rich by lending money at huge rates of **interest** to Christian Merchants. Shylock was a hard hearted man and he was **hated** for his cruelty by all good men.

Antonio, a Christian and young merchant of Venice, hated him immensely. Shylock hated Antonio because Antonio used to lend money to people in their times of need and he did not charge any interest. Antonio would insult and attack Shylock wherever he met Shylock. Shylock would listen to these insult with great calm. He waited for an opportunity to have his **revenge** on Antonio.

Antonio was a kind man and he was loved by the citizens of Venice. Bassanio, a **Venetian,** was his best friend. Bassanio had a small property, but he had spent away all his money by leading a **life of luxury** Antonio would often help Bassanio with money whenever he needed it. One day Bassanio told Antonio that he was in love with a lady whom he wished to marry. The lady's father had died and had left her a large property. When the lady's father was alive, Bassanio would visit her at her house. Bassanio therefore, **requested** Antonio to lend him three thousand ducats so that he could appear as a rich suitor before the lady.

Antonio had no money with him when Bassanio came to him. Antonio was expecting ships to return with goods for sale. So he went with Bassanio to Shylock in order to **borrow** money. Antonio told the Jew to give him three thousand ducats on interest till the ships returned from sea. Shylock had all along been looking for an **opportunity** to have his revenge on Antonio. Antonio had insulted Shylock a number of times and called him a "dog".

Shylock told Antonio that he would **forgiv**e him and, be friends with him. He offered to lend Antonio money without charging any interest. Antonio was very surprised at Shylock's offer. As an **after thought**, Shylock told Antonio that he should accompany him (Shylock) to a lawyer and sign a **bond** that if he did not repay the money by a certain day, Shylock could cut off a **pound of flesh** from any part of Antonio's body. Antonio agreed to sign the bond. Bassanio asked Antonio not to sign the bond. But Antonio was sure that his ships would come much before the day of payment, and he would be able to return the money **borrowed** from Shylock Antonio signed the bond as desired by Shylock. Bassanio received three thousand ducats. The rich lady whom Bassanio wished to marry lived near Venice, at a place called Belmont. Her name was Portia. She was a graceful and charming lady. Bassanio set off for **Belmont**, with a number of servants and a gentleman named Gratiano in attendance. Portia's dead father in his wil had laid down some rules for Portia's marriage. There were three **caskets** – one of gold, one of silver and one of lead. In one of these caskets, Portia's **portrait** was kept. The person who chose the correct casket could marry Portia. Portia's **suitors** (the Duke of Morocco and the Duke of Arragon) failed to choose the correct casket. Bassanio chose the correct casket and Portia agreed to marry him.

Bassanio told Portia that he had little money. He came from a good and noble family. Portia told him that she loved him, she had a lot of money, and Bassanio was not to worry about money. She gave him a ring and Bassanio **vowed** never to part with it.

Nerissa, Portia's maid, and Gratiano fell in love with each other at about the same time when Bassanio and Portia were to get married. Both Portia and Bassanio agreed to the marriage of Nerissa and Gratiano. The happiness of these two couples was **short-lived**. A **messenger** came from Antonio and he brought the news that Antonio's ships were **destroyed** in a storm. The last day to make the payment of three thousand ducats (borrowed by Antonio from Shylock for Bassanio) went by. The Jew, Shylock, wanted a pound of flesh as per the bond. Antonio wished to see Bassanio before Antonio's death.

Bassanio told Portia aboaut the money Antonio had borrowed for him. The

debt could not be paid as Antonio had lost his ships. As desired by Shylock, Antonio had signed a bond requiring a pound of flesh to be cut off from Antonio's body. Portia, wise lady that she was, immediately married Bassanio, so that Bassanio could have a right to her money by law. Portia told Bassanio to take gold worth twenty times the loan amount and asked him to rush to Venice. Gratiano and Nerrisa also got married. Bassanio and Gratiano set out for Venice, and on arrival they found that Antonio was in prison. The day of payment being past, the Jew would not accept the money which Bassanio offered him. The Jew said he must have a pound of Antonio's flesh. A day was fixed for trial before the Duke of Venice.

When Bassanio left for Venice, Portia began to think how she could rescue her husband's friend Antonio. She decided to go to Venice and speak in Antonio's **defence.**

Portia knew a lawyer. To this gentleman, whose name was Bellario, she wrote asking for **advice.** She requested him to lend her the dress worn by a lawyer. When the **messenger** returned, he brought from Ballario letters of advice and also every thing necessary for her journey.

Portia dressed herself and her maid Nerissa in men's clothes. Portia wore the dress of a lawyer and she and Nerissa set out immediately for Venice. They arrived in Venice on the day of the trial. The case was just going to be heard before the Duke and **counsellors** of Venice in the court-house. Portia entered the court room and gave the Duke a letter from Bellario, which said that he would have come himself to speak for Antonio, but he (Bellario) was not well and could not come. Therefore, he had sent his friend, Balthsar, a learned young doctor, to speak in Antonio's defense. (Balthasar is the name by which Portia is called in this trial scene). The duke granted permission to this young stranger who was dressed in a lawyer's dress.

Now began the important trial-on the side was the Jew, **merciless** in his demand for a pound of flesh, and on the other stood Bassanio and Antonio. Portia's husband Bassanio could not recognize Portia, and she noted that her husband appeared to be in great **distress** regarding the outcome of the trial. Her husband was worried for Antonio.

Portia **addressed** herself to Shylock and told him that by the laws of Venice he could get what was promised in the bond. But she told Shylock to show mercy and very sweetly she said that we all pray to God for mercy. Mercy was a quality of God himself. When justice is mixed with mercy one can feel the closeness of God's power. But Shylock refused to show mercy and wanted what was promised in the bond. When Portia asked whether Antonio was unable to pay the money, Bassanio replied that he was willing to pay more than the promised amount. But Shylock wanted only a pound of **Antonio's** flesh. Bassanio **pleaded** with the lawyer to **twist** the law a little to save Antonio's life. But Portia replied that the law could not change. Shylock on hearing this statement thought that the lawyer was speaking in his favour and he began to praise the lawyer for his wisdom.

Portia asked Shylock to let her look at the bond.. She read it and again asked the Jew to show mercy, to take the money and tear the bond. But the Jew

was **adamant.** Portia then told Antonio to prepare himself for the event. Shylock began s**harpening** a knife. In his parting speech Antonio bade farewell to Bassanio and told him not to feel sorry for him (Antonio) and to **commend** him to his (Bassanio) wife. Bassanio, in great sorrow, replied that he would part with everything he had (his life, his wife, and things that he valued in this world) and give them all to Shylock in order to save Antonio's life. On hearing this Portia told Bassanio that had Bassanio's wife been present she would not have thanked him for his offer (remember that Bassanio had failed to recognize Portia who was dressed as a lawyer).

Gratiano who loved to copy his lord then observed that he too had a wife and he wished that she were in heaven so that she could beg to God to make the cruel Jew change his mind. On hearing this Nerissa remarked that if his wife had heard this observation of Gratiano's there would have been **trouble** at his home.

After having sharpened his knife Shylock demanded that he be allowed to cut a pound of flesh. Portia asked him if he had the **scales** ready to weigh the flesh and if he had a doctor with him also. Shylock replied that he did not bring a doctor as it was not stated in the bond. Portia then told him to cut a pound of flesh. As the Jew asked Antonio to prepare himself, Portia decided to look at the bond again. She told the Jew that he could cut a pound of flesh but the bound did not sanction the spilling of blood. The Jew could not spill one single drop of blood if he did spill even a drop of blood then the Jew's lands and all his goods would be taken over by the state of Venice. Thus the Jew could not shed Christian blood.

Now it was quite impossible for Shylock to cut off the pound of flesh without spilling some of Antonio's blood. Thus Portia's wise words that it was flesh not blood that was named in the bond, saved the life of Antonio. In the court-room everyone began to admire the wisdom of the young lawyer. Gratiano said that a wise and upright judge was there. Shylock, found himself defeated and decided to take the money Bassanio had earlier offered. But Portia stopped Bassanio from giving the money saying that Shylock by the laws of Venice could only cut a pound of flesh – neither more nor less. Shylock once again demanded the money from Bassanio, but Portia stopped Bassanio again. Portia told Shylock that all his wealth would go to the State of Venice because Shylock had **made a plot** against the life of one of its citizens. She told the Jew that his life was at the mercy of the Duke and he was Shylock was required to go down on his knees and ask the duke's pardon. The Duke told Shylock that he granted him (Shylock) pardon even before the latter requested for it. But the Duke told Shylock that half of his wealth would go to Antonio and the other half to the State. Antonio of course **declined** to take Shylock's wealth. He said that Shylock should rather sign a bond and give this wealth to his (Shylock's) daughter and her husband. Antonio knew that Shylock's daughter had married, against Shylock's wishes, a young Christian by the name of Lorenzo. Lorenzo was a friend of Antonio. Shylock was very angry with his daughter for this marriage. The Jew had no **option** but to agree. He **begged permission** to go home. He said that the new bond should be sent

home for his signature. The Duke permitted him to go home. The Duke told knew that Shylock's daughter had married, against Shylock's wishes, a young Christian by the name of Lorenzo. Lorenzo was a friend of Antonio. Shylock was very angry with his daughter for this marriage. The Jew had no **option** but to agree. He **begged permission** to go home. He said that the new bond should be sent home for his signature. The Duke permitted him to go home. The Duke told Shylock that if he became a Christian the State would return the other half of his wealth. The Duke set Antonio free. The Duke alongwith his Counsellors left the court-room.

Bassanio thanked Portia for saving the life of Antonio. He requested Portia to accept the money that he had offered to pay to the Jew. Bassanio felt that by offering money he was paying a tribute to Portia's intelligence. Portia did not accept the money. When Bassanio requested her to accept a gift, she agreed to take Bassanio's gloves. When Bassanio opened his gloves, she saw a ring on his finger. She told Bassanio that she would take the ring also. Bassanio was in a fix. He told Portia that his wife had given the ring to him. Therefore, he could not part with the ring. On hearing this Portia pretended to be angry. She left the court-room. Antonio then told Bassanio to part with the ring. Gratiano took Bassanio's ring and gave it to Portia. The clerk Nerissa asked Gratiano for his ring. Gratiano very **unwillingly** gave away his ring. Bassanio and Gratiano had not recognized Portia and Nerissa. The two ladies were laughing amongst themselves as they left Venice.

On her return to Belmont, Portia was in a happy frame of mind. Nerissa and she awaited the arrival of Gratiano and Bassanio. Soon after Bassanio, Gratiano and Antonio arrived at Portia's house. On meeting Gratiano, Nerissa asked about the ring, and not finding a **satisfactory** answer a quarrel **ensured.** Nerissa said that Gratiano must have given the ring to a woman. Gratiano said that he had given it to – the lawyer's clerk. Then Portia told Gratiano that he should not have parted with the ring. Portia was sure that Bassanio had kept the ring she had given him. Gratiano said that Bassanio had given the ring to the lawyer. Portia, on hearing this, appeared to be very angry. She felt that he had given the ring to a woman. Bassanio said that he had given it to the lawyer. Antonio held himself **responsible** for these quarrels (quarrels between Portia and Bassanio, and Nerissa and Gratiano). Antonio then told Portia that Bassanio had given the ring to the lawyer. Portia gave Antonio a ring and asked him to tell Bassanio not to part with it.

Bassanio **realized** that it was the same ring he had given to the lawyer. Then Portia told him that she was the young lawyer and Nerissa was her clerk. Bassanio admired his wife's courage and wisdom. His wife Portia had saved his friend's (Antonio's) life. Portia welcomed Antonio to her house. She gave him letters which stated that Antonio's ships were safe. The ships were in the **harbour.** On hearing this good news, everyone present there felt happy. There was **rejoicing** and laughter in Portia's house.

Check your progress

(a) Who was Shylock and What did Shylock do ?

(b) Why did Antonio and Bassanio go to Shylock ?
(c) What did Shylock ask Antonio to do ?
(d) Who was Portia ?
(e) Who was Nerissa ?
(f) How did Portia save Antonio?

11.1.3 Annotations

annotations - a note by way of explanation or comment added to a text

Jew - a member of a community whose religion is Judaism Jews trace their origins to the ancient Hebrew people of Israel. Christians hated Jews.

Venice - a city in NE Italy. Italian name Verezia. Situated on a lagoonor off the Adriatic Sea, it is built on numerous islands that are separated by carol and linked by bridges.

interest - Money paid regularly at a particular rate for the use of money lent.

hated - intense dislike

immensely - to a great extent, extremely.

with great calm - not getting angry

revenge - to hurt or harm someone for an injury or wrong suffered at their hands

venetian - a citizen of Venice

a life of luxury - life of ease and comfort, squandering one's wealth

requested - an act of asking politely or formally for something or someone.

ducat - gold coin formerly used in most European Countries.

opportunity – chance

insulted – speak to or treat with disrespect.

forgive – to show mercy

after thought – an item or thing that is thought of or added later.

bond – a deed by which a person is committed to make payment to another.

pound of flesh – something one is legally entitled to but which is inhuman to demand

borrowed – take and use money from a person or bank under an agreement to pay it back later.

Belmont - imaginary city.

casket - Small box or chest for holding jewels, letters or valuable objects

portrait - painting, drawing, photograph or engraving of a person, especially one depicting only the face, or head and shoulders.

suitor - a man who pursues a relationship with a woman with a view to marriage.

vowed - Promised

short-lived - lasting only a short time

mesanger	–	bearer of a news
destroyed	-	completely ruined or spoiled
debt	-	typically a sum of money that is owed or due.
defence	-	the case presented by or on behalf of the party being accused or sued in a law suit.
advice	–	obtain information and guidance
counsellors	-	advisors
merciless	-	cruel
great distress	-	sorrow
addressed	-	a person's manner of speaking to someone else.
pleaded	-	make an emotional appeal
twist	-	to give a new treatment or outlook
statement	-	clear expression of something in speech or writing
adamant	-	refusing to change one's mind
sharpening	-	give a weapon an edge or point so that it is able to cut or pierce something
commend	-	praise
observed	-	noted
were in heaven	-	dead
demanded	-	insist on having something
scales	-	an instrument for weighing
sanction	-	official permission or approval
spilling	-	to cause or allow liquid to flow over
admire	-	regard with respect or warm approval, look at with pleasure
made a plot	–	hatched a conspiracy
option	–	choice
begged permission	–	craved consent, asked to be allowed
unwillingly	–	not eager to do something
satisfactory	–	acceptable
ensured	–	make certain that something will occur or be the case
responsible	-	having an obligation to do something
realized	-	understood
harbour	-	a place on the coast where ships may take shelter
rejoicing	-	feel or show great joy and delight

11.1.4 A Note on the Age

Queen Elizabeth (1553-1603) was ruling over England when Shakespeare was writing his plays and sonnets. England was a Christian Country. When children were born they were baptized into the Church of England. Children were taught the essentials of the Christian religion. They were taught to do their duty to God and to mankind. Only licensed clergy were allowed to perform marriages and conduct funeral services. The Church of England had its own rites and ceremonies. People went to the Church regularly. Births, deaths and marriages were duly recorded by the Church. This enabled the

authorities to have some check on the populace.

Boys went to school where they were taught the rudiments of reading and writing and some arithmetic. Latin was also taught. Girls generally stayed at home and learnt the art of cooking and sewing. Some girls also learnt to play some musical instruments.

Hardly any literature was written in the English Language at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Latin was the most admired language and translations of Latin works, were undertaken. French, Italian and Spanish works were also translated. For the first time English translations of the Bible appeared. These English versions of the Bible were read aloud by the public in the Churches. By the end of the sixteenth century, because of the efforts of writers like Shakespeare, English language acquired variety and subtlety. A number of dramas were written during the Elizabethan period. During the middle ages, play-acting was much in practice. The Elizabethans inherited this tradition. Plays were performed by males (boys acted the female roles). In 1576 a new building was erected in London for the performance of plays. Drama gained new heights of eloquence. Rich patrons encouraged the writings of plays and sonnets. They also encouraged the performance of plays.

Some of the important writers of the age apart from Shakespeare were Robert Green, Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, and Ben Jonson. Their works brought dignity to the English Language. Their works enabled the reader to understand concepts like humanism, scholarship, nationalism and tradition. In the works of these writers there was a lot of moral teaching through allegory. Writers imitated nature in their work. The writings of these writers inspired the people of England to be virtuous, civil and upright. As stated earlier in the Elizabethan age drama flourished. The writers wrote in the language spoken by the common masses. Wit and humour were there in the plays.

During the Elizabethan era, England was undergoing great change Queen Elizabethan was a wise and refined lady. She had a great taste in art and literature. She encouraged explorations and expeditions. She enjoyed the company of wise people. The spirit of competition was encouraged by the Queen. Capitalism began to gain popularity. This brought about changes in the social hierarchy. This is reflected in the works of the writers. The sixteenth century especially the reign of Queen Elizabeth is considered to be one of the best periods in English Literature.

11.1.5 A Note on the Author

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was born at Stratford-on-Avon on April 23, 1564. His father's name was John Shakespeare and his mother's name was Mary Arden. William Shakespeare was educated at King Edward VI's Grammar School, Stratford. He got married to Anne Hathaway in 1582. His first child Susanna was born in 1583 and in 1585 he had twins Hamnet and Judith. Very little is known about Shakespeare's life during the period 1585 to 1592.

But in 1592 Shakespeare was in London and was writing plays because

Robert Greene mentions in a letter that Shakespeare was becoming a serious rival to Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Nashe. There is no definite record as to when Shakespeare wrote his first play, nor the order in which he wrote them. What we do know is that Shakespeare borrowed his ideas from history. He knew that audiences enjoyed being shown their own history. He took ideas from Plutarch "Lives" and Holinshed's "Chronicles". Shakespeare had the ability of putting forth in simple language the ideas that he borrowed.

Shakespeare wrote a number of plays, poems and sonnets. Some of his well-known plays are The Merchant of Venice, The Tempest, As You Like It, A Mid summer Night's Dream, King Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello and many other plays. His plays have a lot of wit and satire. He plays upon words and manages to torment and tease his readers with his wit. His plays reveal his deep knowledge of human nature and psyche.

In play after play William Shakespeare flouted the unities of time and place. The great classical theorist Aristotle had stated in his work "Poetics" that a good drama should follow the unities of time and place. The action would then appear plausible, probable and possible. Shakespeare's contemporary Ben Jonson was surprised at Shakespeare's defiance of the Aristotelian norms. Shakespeare's plays were a mixture of tragedy and comedy (aptly called tragi-comedy). His plays won him immense popularity and fame. His plays have a universal appeal. The characters he presents and the situations he depicts appear to be realistic. One can identify with them. His plays have relevance even today.

11.1.6 Answers To Check your progress

(a) Shylock was a Jew. He lived in Venice. He lent money to needy people at high rates of interest.

(b) Antonio and Bassanio went to Shylock to borrow money from him. Actually Bassanio needed some money. He went to Antonio and asked him to lend him some money. Antonio had no money with him when Bassanio came to ask him for money. So they went to Shylock, the money lender, to borrow money.

(c) Shylocks asked Antonio to sign a bond. It was stated in the bond that if Antonio could not retain the money within a certain period, then Shylock would have the right to cut off a pound of flesh from every part of Antonio's body.

(d) Portia was a wise and rich lady who lived in Belmont. Bassanio was in love with her.

(e) Nerissa was Portia's main and Portia trusted her a lot.

(f) Portia went to Venice dressed as a lawyer. Nerissa went as her clerk. Portia was granted permission by the Duke to present Antonio's case. After having looked at the bond very carefully Portia told the Jew that he could only cut a pound of flesh, but he could not spill even a drop of blood. Now it was impossible for the Jew to cut a pound of flesh without spilling a drop of blood. In this way Portia managed to same Antonio's life.

11.1.7 Questions

(a) Why did Bassanio go to Belmont? Who went with Bassanio to Belmont.

(b) What were the terms and conditions of the bond ?

(c) What were the rules laid down by Portia father for Portia's marriage.

(d) Why did Shylock hate Antonio.

(e) What good news did Antonio get when he came to Portia's house.

11.2 Some Literary Terms

(1) **Allegory** - A story, poem or picture which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or a political one. The two greatest examples of allegory in English are Spenser's **Faerie** Queene and John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. In both these works various virtues and vices are personified.

(2) **Blank Verse** -It is a metrical composition without any rhyme. Each line consists of five iambic measure (iambic pentameter is explained below) Iambic Pentameter is also called Epic or heroic metres. Most English poetry is in the iambic meter. Pentameter refers to the five feet in a line, unstressed syllable followed by stressed syllable. It is also called Heroic Verse for it is used in Epic. Shakespeare's plays are mostly written in the blank verse. Blank verse is unrhymed verse. It was introduced into England from Italy in the sixteenth century. It was used by dramatists like Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher who slightly preceded or were contemporaries of Shakespeare. Shakespeare freed drama from the rigidity of the rhymed verse.He made blank verse more flexible and natural. The idea was not contained in the line only the sense ran on into the next line also.

(3) **Comedy** - A genre of drama. A play characterized by its humourous or satirical tone and its depiction of amusing people or incidents in which the characters ultimately win over their enemies.

(4) **Humour** - The quality of being amusing or comic. The ability to perceive or a to appreciate a joke. It is important to remember that humour is also referred to an inclination or whim. Ben Jonson has written a play Every Man In His Humour. In this play reference is made to the four chief fluids of the body (blood, phlegm, yellow bile or choler and black bile or melancholy.

These fluids were thought to determine a person's physical and mental qualities by the relative proportion in which they were present.

(5) **Pathos** - A quality that evokes pity or sadness. Pathos involves suffering and grief.

(6) **Pun** - It consists in playing with words which are similar in sound but different in meaning. It also occurs when the same word has been used in two different senses.

(7) **Paradox** - A seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement which when investigated or explained may prove to be well founded or true.

(8) **Rhyme** - It denotes the recurrence of similar sounds in the closing syllables of different verses. In a poem the sound of the word or syllable at the end of each line corresponds with that at the end of another line.

(9) **Rhythm** - The musical flow of language arising out of the periodical recurrence of pauses and accents resulting in a harmonious effect. Rhythm is a quality that is found in prose, poetry and music.

(10) **Satire** - In a play, novel, poem, drama, film or other work the literary artist with the help of humours, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule exposes and criticizes people's stupidity or vices. The faults of individuals or communities is normally written in a humorous vein.

(11) **Soliloquy** - An act of speaking one's thoughts aloud by a character in a play regardless of hearers. The hearers may be near the character, but the character expresses his views aloud.

(12) **Tragedy** - A play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, especially one concerning the downfall of the main character. Tragedy also refers to any event which causes great suffering, destruction and distress.

(13) **Tragicomedy** - A play or novel containing elements of both comedy and tragedy.

(14) **Wit** - A natural aptitude for using words and ideas in a quick and inventive way to create humour.

11.3 Answers to the Questions

(a) Bassanio went to Belmond in order to present himself as a suitor before Portia, the lady he loved. Grationo went with Bassanio to Belmont.

(b) Shylock made Antonio sign a bond before lending him three thousand ducats. In the bond it was stated that if Antonio failed to return the amount within a certain period, then Shylock was entitled to cut off a pound of flesh from any part of Antonio's body.

(c) Portia's father was a wise and rich man and Portia was his only child. Before dying he had made a will in which he had laid down some rules for Portia's marriage. In his house there were three caskets – one of gold, one of silver and one of lead. In one of these caskets Portia's portrait was kept. The person who chose the correct casket could marry Portia.

(d) Shylock hated Antonio because Antonio used to lend money without charging any interest. Moreover, Antonio was a Christian and he was very popular in Venice. In the age of Shakespeare there was much hatred between Jews and Christians. Antonio had often insulted and abused Shylock, called him a 'dog' and cursed his tribe' and nation. These were the reason for Shylock's anger and hate.

(e) When Antonio went to Portia's house. Portia welcomed him warmly. She gave him letters which stated that his ships were safe and they had arrived in the harbour. On hearing this good news everyone present in Portia's house felt happy for Antonio.

11.4 Let Us Sum Up

(1) In this unit you have read and understood the play The Merchant of Venice presented to you in the form of a story.

(2) The questions asked will make you more familiar with the story

(3) Annotation will help you to understand certain terms

(4) The section dealing with literary terms will enable you to understand some of the important terms that were used in the age of Shakespeare.

(5) After having completed the unit you will be familiar with the story of the Merchant of Venice. You will be familiar with the literary terms. When you see these terms being used in literary works, you can understand them.

11.5 Suggested Readings

1. *The Merchant of Venice Oxford* School Shakespeare 1979 edition

2. Crompton & Rickett – A History of the English Literature

3. Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* Macmillan: Bombay, 1986.

Unit - 12

Shakeskpeare : The Merchant Of Venice

Structure

12.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to

-understand the ideas contained in a play

-use a dictionary to find out the particular meaning of a word that will fit the context in which it appears in a passage.

-understand the meaning of words and use them when you make sentences.

-rewrite a given text in a different style.

12.1 Introduction

In Unit 11 you have read a summary of the play *The Merchant of Venice.* In this Unit you will study important passages from the play *The Merchant of Venice.* After every passage the meanings of the words used in that passage have been explained for your benefit. This unit will reinforce your understanding of Unit 11. These passages will help you to understand the style of William Shakespeare.

12.2 Important Passages from The Merchant of Venice.

The play has been divided into five acts. The five acts have been subdivided into scenes : in all there are twenty scenes in the play.

Act 1 has three scenes.

Act 2 has nine scenes.

Act 3 has five scenes.

Act 4 has two scenes.

Act 5 has one scene.

Act 1 Scene 1

Venice : A Street

Enter Antonio, Salerio, and Solanio.

1) Antonio.

In sooth[1], I know not why I am so sad :
It wearies[2] me; you say it[3] wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by[4] it,
What stuff 'tis made of, where of it is born,

I am to learn[5];

And such a want wit[6] sadness makes of me,

That I have much ado[7] to know myself.

1 In sooth – truly
2 Wearies – tires
3 it – this sadness
4 came by – got
5 am to learn – do not know
6 Want – Wit – idiot
7 Ado – trouble

Explanation

Truly I do not know why I am sad. It tires me and you say that it tires you too. Where I picked it from, found it, or acquired it, and what it consist of, and from where it originated, I have yet to find out. This sadness makes me so dull that I have much trouble in knowing my self.

2) Salerio.

Nor in love neither? Then let us say you are sad
Because you are not merry : and 't were as easy
For you to laugh and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad. Now, by two – headed Janus,[1]
Nature hath fram'd[2] strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore[3] peep through their eyes,[4]
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;
And other of such vinegar[5] aspect[6]
That they 'll not show their teeth in way of smile,

Through Nestor[7] swear the jest be laughable.

1 Janus – a Roman god, always placed above door ways; with one head looking in wards and the other looking out
2 fram'd – constructed
3 evermore – always
4 peep through their eyes – wrinkle their faces with laughter, so that their eyes appear to be peeping through the folds.
5 Parrots at a bag-piper – Bagpipes make a dreary noise and someone as brainless as a parrot will laugh at it.
6 Vinegar – bitter
7 Aspect – nature
8 Nestor – an old and solemn Greek general, who fought in the Trojan war; a joke must have been very funny if Nestor laughed at it.

Explanation

What, you are not in love either. Then we can say that you are sad, merely because you are not happy. It would be quite easy for you to laugh and jump and say that you are happy because you are not sad. Now by the God Janus who had two heads, nature has created some peculiar men. Some are always peeping through half-closed, laughter – filled eyes, and laugh like parrots listening to a bag piper. Others have such

a sour nature that they will not show their teeth in a smile even when Nestor says that the joke is worth laughing.

Act 1 Scene 2

3) Portia

If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been[1] Churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine[2] that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood,[3] but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is Madness (the youth), to such o'er the meshes of good counsel[4] (the cripple). But this reasoning[5] is not in the fashion[6] to choose me a husband. O me[7], the word 'choose'1 I may neither choose who I would[8] nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will[9] of a living daughter curbed[10] by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none!

1. had been – would have been
2. divine – preacher
3. blood – will Portia is making the distinction between reason and will, or mind and body.
4. such a hare is madness (the youth) to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel (the cripple) – youthful high spirits are like a have, which easily leap over the nets (meshes) of limping good advice.
5. reasoning – wise talk
6. in the fashion – the rightway
7. O me – oh dear
8. I would – I like
9. the will – Portia plays with the two meanings, 'desire' and 'testament'.
10. curbed – restrained.

Explanation

If to act on some thing were as easy as to know what were good, then small chapels would be churches, and poor men's houses would be royal palaces. A priest is good if he practices what he teaches I can more easily tell twenty persons what was good than be one of the twenty and follow my own teachings. The mind may make laws for the body to follow, but the heat of desire jumps over cold laws. Young people are mad at, advice they avoid listening to good advice just as a rabbit avoids good counsel. But this kind of logic will not make me choose a husband. Oh the word choose ! I can neither choose whom I want to, nor refuse the one I dislike, for my will is controlled by the will of a dead father. Is it not cruel, Nerissa, that I can neither choose nor refuse a husband ?

Act 1 Scene 3

Shylock

(Aside) How like a fawning[1] publican[2] he looks!

I hate him for[3] he is a Christian;

But more for that in low[4] simplicity[5]

He lends out money gratis,[6] and brings down.

The rate of usance[7] here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip[8],
I will feed fat[9] the ancient grudge[10] I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails[11],
Even there where merchants most do congregates[12]
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift[13]
Which he calls interest[14]. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

1. fawning – servile
2. publican – inn keeper
3. for – because
4. low – base
5. simplicity – foolishness
6. gratis – free of interest
7. usance – money – lending
8. upon the hip – off his guard, at a dis advantage
9. feed fat – as though the grudge were an animal to be looked after
10. grudge – dislike
11. rails – abuses
12. congregate – gather
13. thrift – success
14. interest – profit

Explanation

He (Antonio) looks like a servile innkeeper. I hate him not only because he is a Christian, but also because in foolish simplicity, he lends money without interest, and so brings down its rate for us here in Venice. If I can once trap him and catch him, I shall gratify my long – standing grudge against him. He even hates our holy nation. Wherever merchants most often meet, he abuses me and my business deals, and my well – earned profits which he calls interests. May my tribe be damned if I forgive him.

Act 1 Scene 3 Continued

5) Antonio

Mark[1] you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite[2] Scripture[3] for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain[4] with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten[5] at the heart;
O what a goodly outside falsehood hath[6]:

1. Mark – Remember
2. cite – quote
3. Scripture – the Holy Book (Bible)
4. Villain – bad, evil person
5. rotten – bad

6. goodly out side falsehood hath – what a fine outer appearance falsehood has!

Explanation

Hear this and remember this, Bassanio, the devil can quote scriptures for his purpose. An evil man who has the ability to produce holy evidence, is like a villain with a similing face. He is like a nice looking apple which is rotten from inside. Oh what a fine outer appearance falsehood has.

Act 2 Scene 7

Prince of Morocco

O hell[1] ! What have we here ?
A carrion Death[2], within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll. I'll read the writing.
All that glisters[3] is not gold;
Often have you heard that told;
Many a man his life hath sold[4]
But my outside[5] to behold;
Gilded tombs do worms[6] infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,[7]
Your answer had not been in scroll'd[8] .
Fare you well, your suit is cold.[9]
Cold indeed; and labour lost:
Then farewell heat[10], and welcome, frost[11]!
Portia, adieu I have too griev'd a heart
To take a tedious[12] leave: thus losers part[13]

1. O hell – an explanation expressing anger, and resentment.
2. a carrion death – a skull
3. glisters – glitters
4. his life hath sold – has given his whole life
5. my outside – the gilded outside of the casket.
6. worms – worms that feed on bodies inside gilded tombs
7. old – experienced
8. inscroll'd written on this scroll
9. your suit is cold – your hopes are dead
10. heat – warmth
11. frost – cold
12. tedious – lengthy, formal
13. part – depart.

Explanations

O Hell ! what do we have here ? A dead skull and in the hallow eye socket there is a written scroll. I'll read it – "All that glitters is not gold; often have you heard that

said. Many a man has paid with his life only to see the outer gloss of gold. But gold – plated tombs have worms inside. If you had been young and bold but wise and old in your judgement, then this would not have been the answer that has appeared on the scroll for you. Your quest for love (to marry Portia) is negated." It is over indeed and all my efforts wasted. Goodbye fervent love, and welcome cold frustration. Portia farewell! I am too sad at heart for a formal farewell. A loser should depart thus.

Act 2 Scene 8

7) Salerio

A kinder gentleman treads[1] not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed[2]
Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so;
Slubber not business[3] for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time[4];
And for[5] the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love[6]
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents[7] of love
As shall conveniently become you there[8],
And even there[9], his eyes being big with tears,
Turning[10] his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible[11]
He wrung[12] Bassanio's hand, and so they parted.

1. treads not – walks not
2. make some speed – return quickly
3. slubber not business – do not hurry your business carelessly
4. riping of the time – until the time is ripe
5. for – as for
6. your mind of love – your head should be full of love
7. Ostents – demonstrations
8. become you there – do you credit there
9. even there – then and there
10. Turning – turning away
11. wonderous sensible – wonderfully tender
12. wrung-shook

Explanation:

A kinder gentleman does not walk on this earth. I saw Basanio and Antonio part. Bassanio told him that he would return quickly. Antonio asked him not to do so. He adviced Bassanio not to spoil his business for his (Antonio's sake). He told Bassanio to stay till the time was ripe for his return. As for the Jew's bond which he had signed, he warned Bassanio not to allow that to enter into his mind. Antonio told Bassanio that his mind should be full of love and all his thoughts should be directed towards courting his (Bassanio's) lady love. Antonio's eyes were full of tears as he bade farewell to his friend. He shook hands with Basanio and they parted.

8) Shylock –

He[1] hath disgraced[2] me and hindered me half a million[3], laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned[4] my nation, thwarted my bargains[5], cooled[6] my friends, heated[7] mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions[8], senses, affections, passions? Fed with' the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warned and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we well resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility[9]? Revenge ! If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be[10] by Christian example? Why, revenge! The villiany you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction[11].

1. He – Antonio
2. disgraced – dishonoured
3. hindred me half a million – prevented me from making half a million (ducats) profit
4. scorned – mocked, insulted
5. bargains – business deals
6. cooled – reduced their affections
7. heated – encouraged their hatred.
8. dimensions – parts of the body
9. what is his humility – what does the Christian do ?
10. What should his sufferance be – how should he endure it.
11. better the instructions – do even more harm than you have taught me to do.

Explanation:

Antonio has disgraced me and because of him I have lost half a million ducats. He has laughed at my losses and rebuked my profits. He has insulted my nation, prevented me from bargaining, reduced the affection of my friends, encouraged my enemies, and all for what reason? He has done so because I am a Jew. Has not a Jew eyes like other people? Does not a Jew have hands, physical organs, bodily form, sense, affection and passions? Does not a Jew eat the same food, get hurt by the same weapons is subject to the same diseases, cured by the same medicines, warned by summer and cooled by winter, just as a Christian is? If you pierce us do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not seek revenge? If we are like you in every respect, we will resemble you in that also. If a Jew wrongs a Christian, where is his humility? No, he will take revenge. If a Christian wrongs a Jew, what should his suffering be as per the Christian example? Why, it should be revenge. So the villainy you teach me, I will carry out. It may be difficult, but I will improve upon your guidance.

9) Portia -

The quality of mercy is not strain'd[1],
It droppeth[2] as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd.
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
Tis mightiest in the mightiest[3] : it becomes[4]
The throned monarch[5] better than his crown;
His sceptre[6] shows the force of temporal[7] power,
The attribute[8] to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings,
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,[9]
It is enthroned[10] in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When Mercy seasons[11] justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea,[12] consider this,
That in the course of justice,[13] none of us
Should see salvation[14] : we do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice[15] of thy plea.
Which if you follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs[16] give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Word meanings

1. not strain'd – cannot be forced, constrained
2. droppeth – falleth
3. mightiest in the mightiest – mercy is seen as a powerful weapon in men with power.
4. it become – it suits
5. monarch – king
6. scepter – staff borne in hand as symbol of royalty.
7. temporal – earthly
8. attribute – quality belonging to
9. this sceptred sway – this world that is ruled by the royalty.
10. enthroned – enshrined
11. mercy season justice – mercy moderates the demands for justice.
12. justice be thy plea – although you are asking for justice.
13. course of justice – pursuit of justice
14. should see salvation – if we were to get what we deserved, none of us would be saved.
15. mitigate the justice – soften your demand for justice
16. Must needs – is compelled.

Explanation

The quality of mercy cannot be forced upon anyone. It must fall/drop as freely as rain falls upon the earth from heaven. Mercy is blessed twiced : Mercy blesses the person who shows mercy (or is merciful) and mercy blesses the person who receives it. It is the greatest quality in the most powerful of men. The crown worn by the monarch becomes far more nobler when it is tempered by the quality of mercy. The king's scepter (staff) shows the power he has – this royal sign creates fear and respect in the minds of the people. But the quality of mercy is above this worldly power. It is enshrined in the hearts of kings. Mercy is a quality belonging to God. When a king becomes merciful, he appears to be like God especially if he mingles justice with mercy. Therefore Jew, even though you demand justice, remember that if God were to strictly follow the rules of justice, none of us would be saved (none of us would attain Salvation). We pray to God for mercy, so we should show mercy to others. I have spoken so much to reduce the harsh justness of your claim. However, if you strictly stick to your claim for justice, this court will have no option but to pass sentence against the Merchant (Antonio) there.

10) Act V Scene 1

Portia - I had it[1] of him. You are all amazed[2]:
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;[3]
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth[4] as soon as you
And even but now return'd; I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;[5]
There you shall find three of your argosies[6]
Are richly come to harbour suddenly:
You shall not know by what strange accident[7]

I chanced on this letter.

1. it – ring
2. amazed – surprised
3. at your leisure – when you have time
4. set forth – went out
5. soon – at once
6. argosies – merchant ships
7. accident-chance.

Explanation

Yes, I got it (the ring) from him (the lawyer), You all look very surprised. Here is a letter for you to read, when you have the time. It comes from Bellario in Padua. On reading the letter you will learn that Portia was the doctor of law, and Nerissa was her clerk. Lorenzo is a witness to the fact that I left the house as soon as you did. I have only returned just now and have not as yet entered my house. Antonio, you are welcome to my house. I have good news for you.

Open this letter, you shall find that three of your merchant ships with valuable cargo have arrived unexpectedly in the harbour. You will never know by what strange accident I got this letter.

12.3 Questions

(a) Who is Nestor ?

(b) Why could Portia not marry on her own?

(c) Why did Shylock hate Antonio?

(d) When the Prince of Morocco opened the casket whose picture was in it?

(e) What did Antonio tell Bassanio when Bassanio was going to Belmont

(f) What has Antonio done to Shylock to make Shylock angry ?

(g) What advise does Portia give to Shylock the Jew?

(h) What good news does Portia give Antonio?

12.4 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have become familiar with some important passages from the play *The Merchant of Venice.* Some words have been explained for your benefit. Explanations of the passages taken from the text have also been given. These explanations

will enable you to understand the passages thoroughly. In William Shakespeare's time, people spoke in a different way. People played with words and words could be interpreted in different ways. Shylock's speech (Act 1 Scene 3) is said in an aside. Aside means that even though people are present, the person talks to him self: the others cannot hear what he is saying. We have set some questions for you; these questions will enable you to check your progress. We have also provided answers for you. The passages have been taken from Oxford School Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice,* Oxford University Press 1979. The meanings of the passages have been incorporated from UBSPD Publication of the play *The Merchant of Venice* reprinted 2006.

12.5 Answers

(a) Nestor was an old and solemn Greek general who fought in the Trojan war. He rarely laughed. A joke must have been very funny if Nestor laughed at it.

(b) Portia could not marry on her own because she was bound by the will of her dead father. She could neither choose on her own nor could she refuse a suitor if the latter full filled the clauses of the will.

(c) Shylock hated Antonio because Antonio was a Christian. Antonio also lent money without charging any interest. Antonio had often insulted Shylock and his tribe (the other Jews). It must be remembered that Christians and Jews hated one another during the period when Shakespeare was writing.

(d) When the Prince of Morocco opened the casket, he found the portrait of a skull.

(e) When Bassanio was going to Belmont, Antonio told Bassanio to return at leisure and to enjoy himself. Antonio also told him not to worry about the bond. Bassanio's mind should be occupied with thoughts of love, rather than with business.

(f) Shylock was angry with Antonio for a number of reasons. Antonio had scorned and mocked him and had often disgraced him. Shylock felt that even though he was a Jew, he too had feelings like a Christian. Hence he felt wronged at the insults heaped on him by Antonio. That was why he was angry with Antonio, and desired to take revenge on Antonio.

(g) Portia told Shylock to be merciful. Mercy was a quality which could not be forced on anyone. Even though Shylock's demands for justice according to the terms of the bond were correct, Portia advised Shylock to take the money (offered by Bassanio) and to tear up the bond. Portia told Shylock that if God were to strictly follow the laws of justice, none of them would be saved. Therefore she advised him to be merciful.

(h) Portia gave Antonio a letter wherein it was stated that three ships full of cargo had landed at the harbour. These ships belonged to Antonio and these were thought to have been destroyed. This was indeed a piece of good news for Antonio and everyone present there in Belmont rejoiced at this news.

Unit - 13

Shakespeare - The Merchant Of Venice

Structure

13.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to
-understand the issue presented in the play
-understand the meaning of the word in the context in which they are used (The words explained have been numbered)
-understand how a dead father's will plays an important role in the play
-understand why Jews and Christians hated one another

13.1 Introduction

In Unit 8 you have read a summary of the play *The Merchant of Venice.* In Unit 9 you have read some important passages from the play and now in Unit 10 you will study some important scenes from the *The Merchant of Venice.* Meanings of difficult words will be explained for your benefit. This Unit will reinforce your understanding of Units 8 and 9. These scenes will help you to understand the play in a far better manner.

13.2 Important Scenes

You are familiar with the fact that the play has been divided into five acts. These five acts have been subdivided into scenes: in all there are twenty scenes in the play.

Act 1 has three scenes.
Act 2 has nine scenes.
Act 3 has five scenes.
Act 4 has two scenes.
Act 5 has one scene.

Act - I

In Act 1 scene 1, Antonio, a great merchant (and the main hero of the play) is very sad. He does not know the reason for his sadness. His friends Salerio and Solanio try to cheer him up. Antonio is eager to meet his friend Bassanio. At last Bassanio comes. Bassanio tells Antonio that he has spent a great deal of money and now he (Bassanio) has no money. Bassanio also tells Antonio that he is in love with Portia, a rich lady, who lives in Belmont. Bassanio asks Antonio for money, but Antonio's has no money with him. Antonio is anxiously waiting for the arrival of his ships. These ships would be carrying cargo. Antonio would get money by selling the cargo. Bassanio wants money so that he can appear as a suitor before Portia. Antonio offers to help Bassanio. He tells Bassanio that he would go with him (Bassanio) to the moneylenders in order to borrow money from them.

Act - I Scene II

In Act 1 Scene 2, Portia and her maid Narissa talk about the test which Portia's suitors must take in order to marry her (Portia) and Nerissa also talks abou the suitors who have come. But Portia does not like any one of them. Nerissa then reminds her of Bassanio; Nerissa knows that Portia is fond of Bassanio.

Act - I Scene III

Act 1 Scene 3, This scene is very important because for the first time the reader becomes aware of the fact that the Jews and Christians hated one another. The theme of racial hatred is introduced here in this scene. Antonio and Bassanio come to Shylock, the Jew, to borrow money. Shylock lends money and charges huge rates of interest. Antonio, too, would help people in their times of need by lending money. But Antonio did not charge any interest. Antonio disapproves morally of lending money for interest. For the sake of his friend Bassanio, Antonio is prepared to break the rule he has always followed. He is very contemptuous of the Jew. Antonio tells Shylock.

Antonio - Shylock, albeit[1] I neither lend
nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply[2] the ripe[3] wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom[4]. (To Basanio)
Is he yet possess'd[5]
How much ye would[6]?

Word meanaings:

1. albeit - although
2. supply - meet
3. ripe - fully matured
4. custom - habit
5. possess'd - informed
6. ye would - How much money you want

Act - I Scene III

A few lines later the reader becomes acquainted with the behaviour of Christians and Jews. This part of Scene 3 is given below:

Shylock - Signior Antonio, many a time and oft1
In the Rialto you have rated[2] me
About my money and my usances.[3]
Still4 have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufference[5] is the badge[6] of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever,[7] cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdiner[8]
And all for use of that which is mine own,
Well then it now appears you need my help;
Go to then9, you come to me, and you say,
'Shylock, we would have money[10], you say so;
You, that, did void your rheum[11] upon my beard,
And foot[12] me as you spurn[13] a stranger cur

Over your threshold. Moneys is your suit[14].
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' or
Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key[15],
With bated breath[16], and whispering humbleness,
Say this:
'Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog - and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much money's?

Antonio I am as like[17] to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too,
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends, for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal[18] of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy;
Who if he break[19], thou may'st with better face[20]
Exact the penalty.

Shylock Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you, and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit[21]
Of usance[22] for my moneys, and you'll not hear me;
This is kind[23] I offer.

Bassanio This were kindness.

Shylock This kindness will I show
Go with me to a notary[24], seal me[25] there
Your single[26] bond; and, in a merry sport,[27]
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition[28], let the forfeit
Be nominated[29] for an equal[30] pound
Of you fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.
Within these two months, that's a month before

Antonio Content, in faith: I'll seal to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bassanio You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I'll rather dwell[31] in my necessity.

Antonio Why, fear not, man, I will not forfeit it:
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shylock O father Abram[32], what these Christians are,
Whose own hard[33] dealings teaches them suspect[34]
The thoughts of others!Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day[35], what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man,
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship;
If he will take it, so: if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Antonio Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shylock Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond.
And I will go and purse the ducats[36] straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful[37] guard
Of an unthrifty[38] knave,[39] and presently
I'll be with you.(Exit Shylock)
Antonio Hie thee, gentle Jew
The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

Bassanio I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

Antonio Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.
(Exeunt)

1. oft - often.
2. rated - scolded
3. usances - financial deals
4. still - always
5. sufferance - long-suffering.
6. badge - characteristic
7 misbehiever : heretic, unbeliever
8. gaberdine - long loose coat, worn traditionally by Jews
9. Go to, then - and now what are you doing (an expression of exasperation).
10. Moneys - The plural form may be Shakespeare's attempt to indicate some Jewish speech habit.
11. void your rheum - spit.
12. foot - kick
13. Spurn - reject with disdain
14. suit - request
15. key - tone
16. With bated breath - anxiously
17. As like - just as likely
18. A breed .. metal - a product of sterile metal.
19. break - fail to keep his bond.
20. better face - boldly
21. doit - jot (a very small amount)

22. usance - interest
23. kind - kindess
24. notary: solicitor.
25. seal me - sign for me
26. single - simple
27. in a merry sport - as a joke
28. Express'd in the condition - set down in the formal agreement.
29. nominated for - named as
30. equal - accurate
31. dwell - remain
32. Abram - Lord of the Jews
33. hard - tough
34. suspect - be suspicious of
35. break his day - fail to pay on the agreed date.
36. purse the ducats - put the ducats in a purse
37. fearful - not to be trusted
38. unthrifty - careless
39. knave - lad, servant

You have just read about the behaviour of Christians and Jews towards one another The detailed explanation of the above scene is given below. The word meanings have already been given.

Shylock Signior Antonio, many a time in the Rialto you have insulted me. You have berated me about my financial deals. I have borne every insult of yours patiently because that is the characteristic feature of my tribe. You have called me an unbeliever, a dog, spat on my dress and insulted me frequently. Now you need my help, you have come to me for help. You ask me to lend you money. You have spat on my beard, kicked and rejected me the way a strange dog is rejected. Now you come to me for help.What should I say? Should I not say 'Has a dog money? Is it possible for a dog to lend you three thous and ducatsw?' Do you expect that I should bend low and in a humble tone say 'Fair sir, you spat on me last Wednesday, insulted me, called me a dog - and for these courtesies I shall lend you money?'

Antonio I am just as likely to say these things again : to spit on you and spurn you. If you wish to lend money, do not lend it as a friend. It is not possible to be friends with a hard hearted man (a sterile metal). Lend money as you would to an enemy, so that if he breaks the bond, you can boldly exact the penalty.

Shylock Look how you are behaving. I wish to be friends with you. I wish to forget the insult you have heaped upon me. I am ready to supply your wants. I shall not take even a small amount of interest on the money I lend you. But you are not willing to hear what I am ready to offer. My kind behaviour (my generosity) is not being accepted by you. Bassanio This is indeed very kind of you.

Shylock I will show my generosity. Come with me to a notary and let us seal this agreement (bond). The bond can be signed in merry sport (jokingly). The bond would state that if by a certain day the sum is not repaid, then I am entittled to take a pound of flesh from your body.

Antonio I am satisfied and I shall sign the bond. I must say that the Jew is kind.

Bassanio You shall not sign such a bond let me remain as I am

Antonio Do not be afraid. I shall not forfeit the bond. In the next two months I expect to receive thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shylock O Father Abrams, look at these Christians. Their own tough dealings makes themsuspicious of others. Tell me if Antonio fails to pay on the agreed date, what should I gain? A pound of flesh taken from a man is neither profitable nor estimable. Muttons, beefs or goats are of much more value. In order to gain his favour, I offer this friendship, take it or leave it, it is for you to decide. And do not think it otherwise, I offer my friendship out of love. Antonio Yes, Shylock, I will sign the bond.

Shylock Then meet me at the notary: ask him to prepare the bond. I will go to my house to get the ducats which I have left in the custody of careless guards. I shall be with you soon (Exit Shylock)

Antonio The Jew is growing kinder; very soon he will acquire the qualitie of a Christian.

Bassanio I do not like the terms of the bond. Shylock has a villain's mind.

Antonio Come on : do not be dismayed my ships shall come before the day of payment. (Exeunt all)

In *The Merchant of Venice* as in all other plays of Shakespeare there is a main plot and a sub-plot. While the reader's focus is on the main-plot, the sub-plot also has its own importance. The sub-plot acts as a foil to the main plot. In this play the sub-plot deals with the elopement of Shylock's daughter Jessica with Antonio's friend Lorenzo. We get a hint of Jessica's plans in Act 2 Scene 3. She gives a letter to Launeelot (Shylock's servant who is leaving Shylock) and asks Launcelot to give it secretly to Lorenzo. Jessica is ashaamed of her father's behaviour. In Act 2 Scene 4, we see that Launcelot has given the leter to Lorenzo. In Act 2 Scene 5 Shylock tells Jessica to say indoors and keep the house locked. He tells her that he has to go out for some work, but he would return soon.

Act - II Scene VI

In Act 2 Scene 6 Jessica elopes with Lorenzo. Jessica is dressed as a boy and she has taken a lot of money from her father's house. Shylock is of course not aware of Jessica's plans. This scene (6) has been reproduced below for your benefit.

Gratiano This is the penthouse[1] under which Lorenzo
Desir'd us to make stand.[2]

Salerio His hour is almost past

Gratiano And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
Four lovers ever run before the clock,[3]

Salerio O ten times faster Venus' pigeons[4] fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

Gratiano That ever holds[5]: who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread[6] again

His tedious measures with the unbated[8] fire
That he did pace[9] them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.
How like a younger[10] or a prodigal
The scarfed bark[11] puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumper wind[12]
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs[13] and ragged sails,
Lean, rent[14], and beggar'd by the strumped wind!
(Enter Lorenzo)

Salaerio Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Lorenzo Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;[15]
Not I but my affairs have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then, Aproach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho!who's within?
(Enter Jessica on the balcony, dressed as a boy)

Jessica Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.[18]

Lorenzo Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jessica Lorenzo, certain; and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Lorenzo Heaven and thy thoughts ae witness that thou art.

Jessica Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains,
I am glad' tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much asham'd of my exchange[17].
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid[18] himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.

Lorenzo Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jessica What ! must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth[19], are too too light[20]
Why, 'tis an office of discovery,[21] love,
And I should be obscur'd.[22]

Lorenzo So are you, sweet,

Even in the lovely garnish[23] of a boy,
But come at once;
For the close night[24] doth play[25] the runaway,
And we are stay'd[26] for at Bassanio's feast

Jessica I will make fast[27] the doors, and gild[28] myself

With some more ducats, and be with you straight[29]
(Exit above)

Gratiano Now, by my hood,[30] a gentle,[31] and no Jew.

Lorenzo Beshrew me[32], but I, love her heartlly;[33]
For she is wise, if I can judge of her;
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true;[34]
And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself;
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul,[35]
Enter Jessica
What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay
(Exeunt, except Gratiano
Enter Antonio

Antonio Who's there?

Gratiano Signior Antonio!

Antonio Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock; our friends all stay[36] for you
No masque tonight: the wind is come about;[37]
Bassanio presently[38] will go abroad.[39]
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gratiano I am glad on't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail[40] and gone tonight.
(Exeunt)

1. penthouse - porch
2. make stand - wait
3. before the clock - before their appointed hour
4. Venus' pigeons - the classical goddess of love rode in a chariot drawn by doves
5. That ever holds - that is always true
6. untread - retrace
7. tedious measures - boring steps in a formal riding exercise (which we now call'dressage')
8. unbated - undiminished
9. pace - perform
10. younger - younger son, such as the Prodigal Son in the parable
11. scarfed bark - ship decorated with flags and pennants
12. strumpet wind - the wind is like an unfaithful woman because it changes so easily; the metaphor continues the 'Prodigal son' allusion, because the son wasted his money on prostitutes.
13. over-weather'd ribs - weather-beaten sides.
14. rent - torn
15. abode - delay

16. tongue - voice
17. exchange - i.e. of clothes
18. Cupid - God of love (mythological figure)
19. good sooth - indeed
20. light - both ‘obvious’ and ‘wanton’.
21. an office of discovery - a torch bearer’s job is to light up and reveal things.
22. obscur’d - concealed
23. garnish - costume
24. close night - night that hides our secret
25. doth play the runaway - is slipping away.
26. stay’d - waited
27. make fast - lock
28. gild - adorn with gold
29. straight - at once
30. by my hood - upon my word
31. gentle - both ‘gentle lady’ and ‘genteel’
32. Beshrew me - curse me (a very mild oath, added only to intensify the declaration of love).
33. heartily - with all my heart
34. be true - see truly
35. She shall always have a place in my soul.
36. stay - wait
37. is come about - has changed direction
38. presently - now
39. abroad - on to his ship
40. to be under sail - to sail

Act II - Scene VI

The Street Before Shylock’s House
Enter Gratiano and Salerio wearing masks

Gratiano This is the shed under which Lorenzo told us to stand Salerio. It is almost past the decided hour.

Gratiano It is strange that he should be late, for lovers always run ahead of time. Salerio O, the pigeon’s of the love, Goddess Venus, run ten times faster to secure newly sworn love than they do to prevent faith of old love being broken

Gratiano. That always holds true. Who can get up from a meal as hungry as when he sat down on the table? Where is the horse that retraces the ground he has covered with the unimpaired energy with which he covered the initial ground. All things are more enjoyable in their pursuit than in their acquiring. How like a spendthrift youngman does a flag-bedecked ship sail out from her native port, but after being blown about and hugged by that prostitute wind, she comes back just as a spendthrift does, with broken wood and torn sails. Like the spendthrift, the ship too is rendered lean, torn, and worthless, stripped by the prostitute wind!

Salerio Here comes Lorenzo. We shall talk more of this afterwards.

(Enter Lorenzo)

Lorenzo Sweet friends, forgive me for my long delay. It is not I, but my business that made you wait. When it is your turn to become thieves of wives, I shall wait just as long for you. Come this way; here is the residence of my father-in-law, the Jew. Hullo! is anyone inside?

(Enter Jessica, dressed in boy's clothes).

Jessica Who are you? Tell me for greater certainty, though I can swear that I know your voice.

Lorenzo It is Lorenzo, and your love

Jessica Yes, it is certainly Lorenzo, and indeed my love, for who else can I love so much? But who knows, apart from you Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Lorenzo Heaven and your thoughts are witness that you.

Jessica Here, catch this casket. It is worth the trouble. I am glad that it is night and that you cannot see me, for I am much embarrassed of this change of dress. But love is blind, and lovers cannot see little acts of foolishness that they themselves commit. If they could see, the little God of love, Cupid, himself would blush to see me changed thus to a boy.

Lorenzo Come down, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jessica What, must I hold a light to show my embarrassment? The dress, in itself is too revealing. Why, that would expose me, my love, and I should rather be hidden.

Lorenzo You ae hidden, my sweet one, even in these lovely clothes of a boy. But come at once, for the secret night is already slipping away, and we are expected at Bassanio's banquet.

Jessica I shall fasten the doors, and load my self with some more ducats. Then I shall join you immediately.

(She goes inside.)

Gratiano Now I swear by my hood, she is a Christian and not a Jew.

Lorenzo May I be damned if I do not love her with allo my heart! She is wise, if I have read her correctly, and she is beautiful, if my eyes are true. And true she is, for she has proved herself to be so. Therefore like her these three qualities, wisdom, beauty, and honesty, so shall be placed permanently in my soul.

(Enter Jessica)

Well, have you come? Now, gentlemen, let us go! Our companions in the masque are waiting for us till now. (He goes out, with Jessica and Salarioo).

(Enter Antonio)

Antonio Who is there?

Gratiano Signior Antonio!

Antonio It is a shame, Gratiano! where are the rest of them? It is nine o'clock, and our friends are waiting for you. There will be no masque tonight, for the wind has changed direction and become favourable. Bassanio, at this moment, is on board his ship. I have sent twenty men out to search for you.

Gratiano.I am glad of it. I wish no other pleasure than to be sailing along and gone to-night

(They go away)

Act - II Scene VII

We have chosen another very important scene for your bnefit. This is the Casket Scene (Act 2 Scene VII). Portia's father was a very wise person. He was also extremely rich. Portia would inheirt his wealth. Portia's father knew that after his death a number of men would come to woo her on account of her wealth. Therefore, in his will he laid down certain rules for Portia's marriage. He had 3 caskets made - one of gold, one of silver and one of lead. In one of them he kept Portia's portrait. If a suitor chose that casket which contained her portrait, he could marry her. In Act 2 Scene 7 Portia enters with one her suitor the Prince of Morocco.

This scene 7 alongwith word meanings and the paraphrase is reproduced below.

Portia Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover[1]
The several[2] caskets to this noble prince.
(The curtains are drawn back
Now make your choice.

Morocco The first, of gold, who this inscription bears:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire'.
The second, silver, which this promise carries:
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves'.
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt[3]:
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard[4] all he hath'.
How shall I know if I do chose the right?

Portia The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal[5].

Morocco Some god direct my judgement! Let me see:
I will survey th'inscriptions back again[6]:
What says this leaden casket?
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
Must give! For what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:[7]
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;[8]
I'll then nor give nor[9] hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue[10]?
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even[11] hand.

If thou be'st rated[12] by thy estimation,[13]
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afreard of my deserving[14].
Were but a weak disabling of myself[15].
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding:
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying grav'd[16] in gold.[17]
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire,
Why, that's the lady: all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal[18] breathing saint:
The Hyrcanian deserts[19] and the vasty wilds[20]
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares[21] now
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom[22], whose ambitious head[23]
Spits in the face of heaven;[24] is no bar[25]
To stop the foreign[26] spirits, but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picuture
Is't like[27] that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought : it were too gross[28]
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.[29]
Or shall I think in silver she's immur'd,[30]
Being ten times undervalu'd to[31] tried[32] gold?
O sinful thought? Never so rich a gem[33]
Was set in worse than gold[34]. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel[35]
Stamp'd in gold, but that's insculp'd upon[36];
But here an anagel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

Portia There, take it, prince; and if my form[37] lie there,
Than I am yours
(He unlocks the golden casket

Morocco O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death,[38] within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll. I'll read the writing.
All that glisters[39] is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold[40]
But my outside[41] to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms[42] infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,

Young in limbs, in judgement old,[43]
Your answer had not been inscroll'd.[44]
Fare you well, your suit is cold.[45]
Cold, indeed: and labour lost:
Then farewell heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu. I have too griev'd a heart
To take a tedious[46] leave: thus losers part.[47]
(Exist with his Servants

Portia A gentle riddance,[48] Draw the curtains: go.
Let all of his complexion[49] choose me so. (Exeunt)

1. discover - reveal
2. several - different
3. as blunt - as dull as the lead
4. hazard - risk
5. withal - with the casket
6. back again - in reverse order
7. fiar advantages - good returns
8. dross - rubbish (impure metal)
9. nor . . .nor - neither . . .nor
10. virgin hue - colour of purity (white)
11. even - steady
12. rated - assessed
13. thy estimation - your own estimation

14-15 to be . . . myself - to be unsure of what I deserve is a sign of weakness, bringing discredit on myself.

16. grav'd: engraved.
17 in gold - on the gold casket
18. mortal - living
19. Hyrcanian deserts - savage region to the south of the Caspian Sea.
20. Vasty wilds: imense wilder-ness
21. throughfares - main roads
22. The watery kingdom - the ocean

23-24 whose . . . .heaven - whose waves surge up as though they wanted to touch the sky, throwing spray (spitting) into the clouds.

25. bar - obstacle.
26. foreign spirits - suitors from abroad.
27. Is't like - is it likely?

28-29 it were . . . cerecloth - lead would be too crude to enfold ('rib') the winding - sheet when she is buried

30. immur'd - walled in
31. undervalue'd to - less value than
32. tried - tested (without impurities)
Jewels as precious as Portia are

33-34. never set in worse metal than gold

35. A coin . . . angel - the gold coin was in fact known as an 'angel'
36. insculp'd upon: engraved on the surface of the coin
37. form - picuture
38. A carrion Death - a skull
39. glisters - glitters
40. his life hath sold - has given his whole life.
41. my outside - the gilded outside of the casket
42. worms - that feed on the bodies inside the 'Gilded tombs'.
43 old - experienced
44. You would not have been given the answer written on this scroll
45. your suit is cold - your hopes are dead
46. tedious - lengthy, formal
47. part - depart
48. A gentle riddance - happy deliverance
49. complexion - both 'colour' and 'personality'

Act II : Scene VII

Belmont, A hall in Portia's house.

Sound of trumpets. Enter Portia and the Prince of Morocco, with their respective attendants

Portia Go, pull aside the curtains and display the different caskets to the noble prince. Now make your choice.

Morocco The first casket of gold bears the inscription, "who chooses me shall gain what many men desire". The econd, silver casket, has an inscription "who chooses me shall get as much as he deserves". The thrid is plain lead, and its inscription is equally plain, "who chooses me must give and risk all that he has". How shall I know that I am choosing the right casket?

Portia. One of them contains my picuture, prince. If you choose that one, then I am yours along with it.

Morocco May some god direct my thinking! Let me see; I shall read the inscriptions in reverse order. What is on this leaden casket? "Whoever chooses me must give and risk all that he has". Give everything! For what? For lead? Risk for lead? This casket is a threat. Men who risk all do in hope of rich gains. A mind of gold never stoops to the level of useles things. I shall neither give nor risk anything for lead. Next, what says the silver casket, with its cold, chaste colour?" Whoever chooses me shall gain as much as he deserves." Stop there, Morocco, and Weigh your own worth with an impartial mind. If you are judged by your own estimation, then you deserve plenty, and yet that may not extend upto the lady. Yet to be afraid of what I deserve, would be a weak disabling of myself, and against my own chances. As much as I deserve! Well, that is the lady herself. I deserve her due to my birth, and fortunes, for my virtues and good upbringing. More than all of these, I deserve her due to my love.

What if I went no further but chose this casket? Let me see once more the inscription written on the golden casket; He who chooses me shall gain what many men desire". Why, that is the lady, for all the world desires her. From the four corneers of the earth they come to kiss this image of a saint alive like a normal mortal. The Persian deserts and the vast barren plains of Albia are now as ordinary streets which are used by princes as thoroughfares on which they can travel to come to see fair Poria. The ocean, whose ambitious waves, throw water upto the very heavens is no hurdle for those foreign adventures, who come as if merely jumping over a small river to see fair Portia. One of these three contains her divine picture. Is lead likely to contain it? It would be damnable to have so low a thought. It is too orinary a metal even to hide her shroud used to hide her into the darkness of the grave. Or shall I think that she is locked in silver, being then times undervalued than pure gold? A sinful thought! Such a rich gem was never set in anything less than gold. They have a England a coin which has the figure of an angel stamped on it, in gold. But here an angel lies enclosd in a golden bed. Give me the key; I choose this one, whatever my succes may be.

Portia. there, take it prince. If my picture is inside, then I am yours (Morocco unlocks the golden casket.

Morocco. O Hell; What do we have here? A dead skull, within whose hollow eye-socket there is a written scroll. I'll read. (Reads)

"All the glitters is not gold: often have you heard that said. Many a man has sold his life only to see the outer gloss of gold. But gold-plated tombs have worms inside. If you had been young in body but old in your judgement, then this would not have been the answer that appeared on the scroll for you. Your quest for love is dead".

Dead indeed, and efforts wasted. Goodbye fervent love, and welcome cold frustration.

Portia farewell! I am too sad at heart for a formal farewell. A loser should depart thus.

(Leaves with his followers, as trumpets sound)

Portia. We got rid of him rather easily. Draw the curtains and let us go. May all who have his skin make a smiliar choice

(Goes away)

The Prince of Morocco chooses the gold casket and he departs immediately because Portia's portrait is not in that casket.

The Prince of Arragon comes to try his luck (act 2 scene 9). He chooses the silver casket, but Portia's portrait is not in it. He leaves immediately.

In Act 3 Scene 2 Bassanio comes to Belmont. Portia is in love with him, but her marriage can only take place if one of her suitors chooses the correct casket. Fate smiles on Portia. Bassanio chooses the casket made

of lead. That casket contains Portia's portrait. Thus Bassanio is able to marry the lady he loves.

The casket scenes are important: These scenes enable us to understand and appreciate the wisdom of Portia's father. He knew that a single lady with a fortune of her own would be in peril. Here he had laid down terms and conditions for her mariage.

Another very important scene in the Merchant of Venice is the trial scene. Antonio's ships have not come, hence Antonio is unable to repay Shylock within the stipulated time. Shylock insists on cutting a pound of flesh from any part of Antonio's body. This was in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Bond.

The Duke and his Counsellors enter the court room in Act 4 Scene 1. The Duke asks Shylock to show mercy, but Shylock refuses. He is keen to cut off a pound of flesh from any part of Antonio's body. Portia disguised as a young lawyer, with Nerissa as the lawyer's clerk, comes into the courtroom Portia makes a speech in praise of mercy but Shylock is unmoved. Portia agrees that Shylock is legally entitled to a pound of flesh from any part of Antonio's body. Shylock is happy and Antonio prepares to die. At the last moment Portia looks at the bond once again She tells the Jew Shylock that he can only cut a pound of flesh, but he canot spill any blood. Shylock cannot cut a pound of flesh without spilling blood.

Antonio is saved from the evil designs of the Jew. Bassanio is very happy fo his friend. He offers to reward Portia. Portia asks him to give a ring which is on Bassanio's finger. With great reluctance Bassanio parts with the ring.

Act - IV Scene I

(The Trial Scene is given below alongwith the meanings of the words. The passages are Paraphrased) Act IV Scene 1

Duke Come you from old Bellario?

Portia I did, my lord.

Duke You are welome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference[1]
That holds this present question in the court?

Portia I am informed throughly[2] of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Portio Is your name Shylock?

Shylock Shylock is my name.

Partia Of strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule[3], that the Venetian law
cannot impugn you as you do proceed.[4]
(to Antonio) You stand within his danger,[5] do you not?

Antonio Ay, so he says.

Portia Do you confess the bond?

Antonio I do.

Portia Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shylock On what compulsion must[6] I? tell me that.

Portia The quality of mercy is not strain'd[7];
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest[8] ; it becomes[9]
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the froce of temporal power,[10]
the attribute to awe and majesty,[11]
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings :
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,[12]
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute[13] to God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons[14] justice. Therefore, jew,
Though justice be thy plea[15], consider this,
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation[16]: we do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea.[17]
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs[18] give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shylock My deeds upon my head[19]! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Portia Is he not able to discharge[20] the money?
BassanioYes, here I tender[21] it for him in the court:
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound[22] to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down[23] truth. And, I beseech you,
Wrest[24] once[25] the law to[26] your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb[27] this cruel devil of his will.

Portia It must not be. There is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

Shylock A Danial[28] come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Portia I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shylock Here'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Portia Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

Shylock An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven;
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

Portia Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond

Shylock When it is paid according to the tenour.[29]
It doth appear you are a worthy judge:
You know the law, your exposition[30].
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,[31]
Proceed to judgement : by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.
Most heartily[32] I do beseech the court
To give the judgement.

Portia Why then, thus it is: You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

Shylock O noble judge! O excellent young man!

Portia For, the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation[33] to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond

Shylock 'Tis very true! O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder[34] art thou than thy looks!

Portia Therefore lay bare your bosm

Shylock Ay 'his breast': So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge?
"Nearest his heart' - those are the very words

Portia It is so. Are there balance[35] here to weigh
The flesh?

Shylock I have them ready

Portia Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your[36] charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death

Shylock Is it so nominated[37] in the bond?

Portia It is not so express'd; but what of that?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

Shylock I cannot find it : 'tis not it the bond.

Portio — You, merchant, have you anything to say?

Antonio — But little : I am arm'd [38] and well prepar'd.
Give me your hand, Bassanio : fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you,
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custome : it is still her use[39]
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife.
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death;[40]
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you[41] that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

Bassanio — Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which[42] is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all,
Here to this devil, to deliver[43] you.

Portia — Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by to hear you make the offer.

Gratiano — I have a wife, who, I protest, I love :
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

Nerissa — 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shylock — These be the Christian husbands! I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock[44] of Barabas[45]
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
We trifle[46] time; I pray thee, pursue[47] sentence.

Portia — A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shylock — Most rightful judge!

Portia — And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shylock — Most learned judge! A sentence! come, prepare!

Portia — Tarry[48] a little : there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot[49] of blood;

The words expressly are ‘a pound of flesh’:
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gratiano O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

Shylock Is that the law?

Portia Thyself shalt see the[50] act;
For, as thou urgest[51] justi e, be assur’d
Thou shalt have justice more than thou desir’st.

Gratioano O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

Shylock I take this offer than: pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

Bassanio Here is the money.

Portia Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:-
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gratiano O Jew! an upright[52] judge, a learned judge!

Portia Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less, nor more,
But just a pound of flesh: if thou tak’st more,
Or less, than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance[53],
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple[54], nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation[55] of a hair,
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gratiano A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.[56]

Portia Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shylock Give me my principal[57], and let me go.

Bassanio I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Portia He hath refus’d it it the open court:
He shall have merely justice, and his bond.

Gratiano A Daniel, still say I; a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shylock Shall I not have barely my principal?

Portia Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shylock Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I’ll stay no longer question[58]

Portia Tarry, Jew;
The law hath yet another hold on you,
It is enacted[59] in the laws of Venice,
If it be prov'd against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party[60]' gainst the which he doth contrive[61]
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer[62] of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.[63]
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears by manifest proceedings,[64]
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast countriv'd against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehears'd.[65]
Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

Gratiano Beg that thou may'st have leave to hang thyself-
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke That thou shalt see he difference of our spirit,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,[66]
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.[67]

Portia Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.[68]

Shylock Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
You take my house, when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live

Portia What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gratiano A halter[69] gratis[70]; nothing else, for God's sake!

Antonio So please[71] my lord the duke, and all the court,
To quit[72] the fine for[73] one half of his goods,
I am content so[74] he will let me have
The other half in use[75], to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter.
Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
He presently[76] become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,[77]
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter

Duke He shall do this, or else I do recant[78]
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Portia Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shylock I am content.

Portia Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shylock I pray you give me leave to go from hence:
I am not well. Send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

Duke Get thee gone, but do it.

Gratiano In christening shalt thou have two god-fathers;[79]
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not to the font.
(Exit Shylock)

Duke Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Portia I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet[80] I presently set forth.

Duke I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.[81]
Antonio, gratify[82] this gentlemen,
For, in my mind, you are much bound[83] to him.
[Exeunt Duke, Merchants, and Officers of the Court)

Bassanio Most worthy gentlemen, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties, in lieu[84] whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely[85] cope[86] your courteous pains[87] withal.

Antonio And stand indebted, over and above,[88]
In love and service to you evermore.

Portia He is well paid that is well satisfied,
And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therin do account myself well Paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary[89].
I pray you, know[90] me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

Bassanio Dear sir, of force[91] I must attempt you further[92]:

Take some rememrbrance[93] of us as a tribute,[94]
Not as a fee. Grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.[95]

Protia You press me far[96], and therefore I will yield.
Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;[97]
And (for your love)[98] I'll take this ring from you.
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more,
And you in love shall not deny me this.

Bassanio This ring, good sir? alas! it is a trifle,
I will not shame myself to give you this.

Portia I will have nothing els but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.[99]

Bassanio There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation.[100]
Only for this[101], I pray you, pardon me.

Portio I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:[102]
You taught me first to beg, and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd

Bassanio Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife,
When she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell, nor give, nor lose it.

Portio That 'scuse[103] serves many men to save their gifts.
And if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserv'd this ring,
She would not hold out enemy[104] for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you.
[Exeunt Portia and Nerissa]

Antonio My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valu'd' gainst[105] your wife's commandement.[106]

Bassanio Go, Gratiano; run and overtake him;
Give him the rin, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house. Away, make haste.
(Exit Gratiano)
Come, you and I will thither presently,
And in the morning arly will we both
Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio. (Exeunt)

1 the difference. . . court - the dispute that is at present on trial in this court.
2 throughly - throughly.
3 insuch rule - so correctly.
4 Cannot find any fault in your proceedings.
5 within his danger - in danger from him.
6 on . . . I - what will compel me force me to do it?
7 is not strain'd - cannot be forced (constrained).
8 'Tis . . . mightiest - both 'mercy is seen at its most powerful in the men with most power',and 'mercy is the most powerful weapon that the most powerful men possess'.
9 becomes - suits.
10-11 The king's sceptre symbolizes his earthly ('temporal') power, which is the proper characteristic ('attribute') of a royal man ('majesty') who commands respect ('awe').

12 this sceptred sway - this world that is ruled by men with sceptres.
13 attribute to - quality belonging to.
14 seasons - moderates.
15 through . . . plea - although you are asking for justice.
16 in . . . salvation - if we were all to get what we deserve, in the strict course of justice none of us would be saved
17 To ask you to soften your demand for justice.
18 Must needs - is compelled.
19 My . . . head - I will take the responsibility for what I am doing crave - ask for.
20 discharge - repay.
21 tender - offer,
22 be bound - make a legal promise.
23 bears down - overcomes.
24 Wrest - twist.
25 once - on this one occasion.
26 to - with.
27 curb - restrain.
28 Daniel - the 'History of Susanna' in the Apocrypha tells how god sent Daniel, 'a young youth', to give judge-ment against the elders.
29 tenour - actual wording.
30 exposition - understanding of the case.
31 pillar - support.
32 Most hearily - with all my heart.
33 Hath full relation - entirely supports.
34 elder - more mature.
35 balance - scales.
36 on your charge - at your expense.
37 nominated - specified.
38 arm'd - i.e. spiritually.
39 still her use - usually her custom.
40 speak . . . death - speak kindly of me when I am dead.
41 Repent but you - you must only regret.
42 which - who.
43 deliver - save
44 stock - breed.
45 Barabas - the thief who was released when Christ was crucified (St. John I 8 : 40).
46 trifly time - waste time in trivialities.
47 Pursue - go on with.
48 Tarry - wait.
49 jot - drop.
50 act - the legal act confirming the law.
51 urgest - demand.

52 upright - honest.
53 substance - weight.
54 scruple - a weight unit (used by the old apothecaries) of 20 grains.
55 estimation - weight.
56 on the hip - at my mercy.
57 principal - the original sum borrowed.
58 question - to argue.
59 enacted - decreed.
60 party - person (Portia uses the correct legal term, still used today).
61 contrive - plot.
62 privy coffer - treasury.
63 'gainst all other voice - no matter what anyone else says.
64 manifest proceeding - quite clearly from what has happened.
65 rehears'd - declared.
66 general state - general use of the state.
67 And if you are humble this may be reduced to a fine.
68 hot for Antonio - the money due to Antonio will not be reduced.
69 halter - rope to hang himself with.
70 gratis - free of interest.
71 so please - if it pleases.
72 quit - be satisfied with.
73 for - instead of.
74 so - if.
75 in use - on trust - to use as Antonio now describes.
76 presently - immediately.
77 all he dies possess'd - all that he owns when he dies.
78 recant - withdraw.
79 god-father - these take the reponsibility for seeing that the baptized child is properly educated in the christian faith ; 'god-father' was also a joking name for the members of a jury - a body of twelve men who were need to pass sentance on a criminal.Gratiano suggests that a jury would have condemned Shylock to death.
80 meet - necessary.
81 your leisure serves you not - you do not have time to spare.
82 gratify - show your gratitude to.
83 bound - indebted.
84 in lieu where of - in payment for this.
85 freely - most willingly.
86 cope - reward.
87 pains - trouble.
88 over and above - in addition.
89 mercenary - interested in money.
90 know - recognize.
91 of force - it is necessary.

92 attempt you further - try harder to persuade you.
93 some remembrance - something to remind you.
94 tribute - token of respect.
95 not to refuse my request, and to forgive me for making it.
96 you press me far - you are very insistent.
97 for your sake - to acknowledge your politeness.
98 for your love - to acknowledge your love.
99 and now I really do want it.
100 by proclamation - by public announcement that I will buy the most expensive ring in Venice.
101 for this - i.e. this ring
102 liberal in offers - generous only in making offers (not in fulfilling them).
103 'scuse - excuse.
104 hold out enemy - be angry with you.
105 gainst - more highly than.
106 commandement - the extra e' is for the sake of the rhythm.

Portia

Mercy is a quality which cannot be forced.It must fall as freely as the gentle rain falls from heaven upon the earth beneath. It is twice blessed; it blesses the person who shows mercy, and also who receives it. It is the greatest quality in the greatest of men. It is nobler than the crown worn by a king. His sceptre reveals worldly power, creating fear and respect. But mercy is something far above this worldly power, creating fear and respect. But mercy is something far above this worldly power. It exists in the hearts of kings. It is a tribute to God and the kings become divene when they mingle justice with mercy. So, Jew, although justice is your demand, remember that if we were subjected to the strict Justice of God, one of us would be saved. We all pray to God for mercy, and the same prayer teachers us to show mercy to others. I have spoken so much to reduce the harsh justness of your claim, which if you follow, this court of justicve will have to pass sentence against the merchant there.

Shylock

My acts are my moral responsibility! I seek the penalty allowed by the law, due to the breach of contract.

Portia

Is Antonio not able to pay the money?

Basanio

Yes, here I offer it on his behalf in the court. I will pay twice the sum, and if that is not enough. I am prepared to pay it ten times over, and let my hands, my head and my heart be cut, if I fail to pay it. If this is not sufficient then it must appear that malice suppresses truth. I request you to bend the law a little, to do a great right by committing a slight irregularity, and restrain this cruel devil of fulfilling his wish.

Portia

It is not possible. There is no power in Venice that can alter a fixed law, once established. It will be recorded and others will make it a precedent and will rush to the state to grant similar concessions. It cannot be.

Shylock

Why, a second Daniel has come to give judgement! Yes, a second Daniel! O wise young judge, how much I respect you!

Portia

Let me see the contract, please

Shylock

Here it is, most respected doctor. Here it is

Portia

Shylock, there is three times the amount offered to you

Shylock

I have taken an oath before God. Shall I lay the burden of breaking my oath on my soul. No, not for Venice.

Portia

Then the penalty in this bond is due, and the Jew can lawfully claim a pound of flesh, to be cut closest to the merchant's heart. Be merciful, Shylock take three times the amount, and let me tear the contract.

Shylock

Only after it is paid according to the terms. You app3ear to be a very worthy judge. You know the law and administer it correctly. I ask you in the name of the law, of which you ae so worthy a member, proceed to give the judgement. I swear by my soul that nothing that man can say will change me. I stand here for my contract.

Antonio

With all my heart I request the court to give the judgement.

Portia

Well, then, it is this, You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

Shylock

O, noble judge! O, excellent young man!

Portia

For the intention and scope of the law it covers the penalty incurred by this agreement.

Shylock

That is very true. O, wise and upright judge! You are much wiser than your looks!

Portia

Therefore, Antonio, uncover your bosom.

Shylock

Yes, his breast. This is what the bond says, does it not, noble judge? "Nearest his heart", are the exact words.

Portia

It is so. Is there a weighing-machine here to weigh the flesh?

Shylock

Yes, I have it ready

Portia

Have a doctor here, at your own expense, Shylock, to stop blood from his wounds, lest he bleeds to death.

Shylock

Is it laid down in the bond?

Portia

It is not laid down expressly, but what aboaut that? It is good that you do as much out of charity.

Shylock

I can find no such condition in the contract

Portia

Have you anything to say. Antonio?

Antonio

Very little. I am armed and prepared for this. Give me your hand, Bassanio, Farewell! Do not grieve that I have died because of you, for in this instance, fortune treats me more kindly than is her custom. It often lets the wretched man live after his wealth has been lost, so that his hollow eyes and wrinkled face show his poverty. She cuts me off from such continuous anguish. Convey my respect to your honourable wife, and tell her the manner of Antonio's end. Tell her how I loved you, and speak well of me after I am gone. When you have told her everything, let her be the judge whether Bassanio had not a truly loving friend. I regret only the loss of a friend, for I have no regrets in paying your debt. If the Jew cuts deep enough, I will pay it immediately with all my heart.

Bassanio

Antonio, I am married to a wife who is as precious to me as my own life. But my life, my wife, and the whole world do not mean more to me than your life. I would loose them all, yes, sacrifice them all here to this devil, to rescue you.

Portia

Your wife would thank you little for that offer, if she were present to hear you.

Gratiano

I have a wife, whom I swear I love. But I wish that she were dead and in heaven, so that she could muster some heavenly power to change this evil Jew.

Nerissa

It is well that you make this offer behind her back, otherwise the wish would disrupt the peace of your home.

Shylock

(Aside) Such are Christian husbands. I hare a daughter. I wish she had maried in the family of Barbaras, the murderer, rather than a Christian! But we are wasting time. I request you, pronounce the sentence.

Portia

A pound of this merchant's flesh is yours. The court awards it to you, for the law authorises it.

Shylock

Most just judge!

Portia

And you must cut this flesh from his breast; the law permits this, and the court sanctions it.

Shylock

Most learned judge! It is a good sentence. Come, prepare!

Portia

Wait a moment; there is omething else. The bond does not give you a drop of blood. The words definitely say “a pound of flesh.” So take as per the contract, which is a pound of flesh. In cuting it, if you shed one drop of Christian blood, then by the laws of Venice, all your lands and property will be confiscated by the state.

Gratiano

O, upright judge! listen, Jew: O, learned Judge!

Shylock

Is that the law?

portia

You yourself shall see the Act. You have requested strict justice; be assured that you will have more justice than you desire.

Gratiano. O, learned judge! Listen, Jew, A learned judge!

Shylock

I accept the offer. Pay three times the amount of the contract and let the Christian go.

Bassanio

Here is the money

Portia

Stop! The Jew will have complete justice. Do not be in a such a hurry. He will have nothing except the penalty.

Gratiano

O Jew! An upright and learned judge!

Portia

Therefore prepare to cut off the flesh. Shed no blood, and cut neither more nor less than an exact pound. If you cut more or less, one twentieth in excess or lesser than a scruple; if the scales tilt even by a hair’s breath, you will die and all your possessions will be confiscated.

Gratiano

A second Daniel! A Daniel, Jew! Now, unbeliever, I have you firmly by your hip!

Portia

Why do you wait Jew? Take your pound of flesh

Shylock

Give me my main amount and let me go

Bassanio

I have it ready for you. Here is the sum.

Portia

He has already refused it in open court. He shall have only justice, as per his contract.

Gratiano

A Daniel, I repeat, a second Daniel! I thank you Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shylock

Will I not have even my principal sum?

Portia

You shall have nothing but the penalty, to be taken at your own risk.

Shylock

Then may the devil take him! I will not stay here any longer for arguments' sake.

Portia

Wait, Jew! The law has yet another hold on you. It is laid down in the laws of Venice that if it be proved against a foreigner that, by direct or indirect method he sought the life of any citizen of Venice, then that citizen against whom he plotted may seize half of his property. The other half goes to the private treasury of the state, and the offender's life lies at the mercy of the duke, against any other intervention. This is the sorry state that you are in, for it appears with absolute clarity that you have conspired against the life of the defendant, both directly and indirectly. You have become liable to the penalty read by me. So I advise you to kneel down at once, and ask for mercy from the duke.

Gratiano

Ask that you may be permitted to hang yourself; but yet, since all your wealth has been confiscated by the state, you do not have enough money to buy a rope, so you must be hanged at the expense of the state.

Duke

In order that you may see the difference between our intentions and yours, I grant you your life before you ask for it. Half your wealth, now belongs to Antonio. The other half belongs to the public treasury, but it may be reduced to a fine if you humbly beg for mercy.

Portia

Yes, as far as the state's half is concerned, but not Antonio's

Shylock

No, you may as well take my life. Do not pardon that You take my house when you pull away the pillars which support it. You take my life when you take the means by which I live.

Portia

What mercy can you show to him, Antonio?

Gratiano, Give him a rope, free of chrge, to hang himself. Nothing more, for God's sake.

Antonio

If you, my lord the duke, and this court, will please remit the fine of one half of his goods, I am content, on the condition that he will let me have the other half in trust, so that I may give it, on Shylock's death.to the gentleman who lately eloped with his daughter. Two other things I suggest, that for this favour he must become a Christian and that he draws up his will herein the court, leaving all he possesses, at death, to his son-in-law, Lorenzo, and his daughter.

Duke

He shall do this, or else I shall cancel the pardon that I just pronounced.

Portia

Are you contented, Jew? What do you say?

Shylock

I am content

Portia

Clerk, draw up a legal document for transferring the property.

Shylock

I beg of you to let me to go from here. I am ill. Send the document after me, and I shall sign it.

Duke

You may go, but do sign it.

Gratiano

When you undergo Christian baptism, you shall have two god-fathers. Had I been judge, you should have had ten more to complete a jury to send you to the gallows, instead of baptism in the sacred font.

(Shylock departs.

Duke

Sir, I request you to come home and have dinner with me.

Portia

I humbly ask your honour to pardon me. I must leave for Padua to-night, and it is important that I leave immediately.

Duke

I am sorry that you have no spare time. Antonio, reward this gentleman, for in my mind you are greatly indebted to him.

(The Duke and his followes leave

Bassanio

Most worthy sir, I and my friend have, thanks due to your intelligence and skill, been freed from heavy penalties to-day; therefore we offer in payment for your courteous efforts the three thousand ducats due to the Jew.

Antonio

And, over and above this, we shall alwasy remain in debt to you for love and service.

Portia

He who is well satisfied is well paid, and I feel well satisfied rescuing you, so I am well paid. My mind was never inclined towards money. I hope that you remember me when we meet again. Accept my best wishes and permit me to leave.

Bassanio

My dear sir, I must make another attempt. Accept something as a remembrance or a momento and not as a fee. Do me two favours; first, do not refuse me and pardon me for making it.

Portia

You press me hard so I shall give way. (To Antonio) Give me your gloves; I will wear them for your sake. (To Bassanio) And as a momento of your love, I shall take this ring. Do not draw your hand away; I will not take anything more, and your cannot refuse this out of love.

Bassanio

The ring, good sir, is of little value. I would not embrarass myself to give you something of so little value.

Portia.

I will have nothing else but this. And now I feel a desire to have it.

Bassanio

More depends on this ring than its acutal value. I will give you the most expensive ring in Venice, and find it out throug advertisement. Only for this I ask you to pardon me.

Portia.

I see, sir, that you are lavish in making offers. You taught me first how to beg, and now teach me how a beggar should be replied.

Bassanio.

Good sir, this ring was given to me by my wife. When she placed it on my finger, she made me take a vow that I would neither sell it, nor give it away, nor lose it.

Portia

Such excuses make many men to save their gifts. If your wife is not a mad woman, and if she knew how well I deserved this ring, she would not be angry for long with you for it to me. Well, let peace be with you.

(Exit Portia, with Nerissa)

Antonio

My lord Bassanio, let him have the ring. Let his worth and your love for me, influence you more than your wife's command.

Bassanio.

Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him. Give him the ring, and bring him back if you can to Antonio's house. Make haste! (Exit Gratiano) Come, you and I will go there now and early tomorrow morning we will both swiftly travel towards Belmont. Come Antonio.

(They go away)

13.3 Questions

i) Who was Shylock?
ii) Why does Shylock hate Antonio?
iii) Why did Antonio and Bassanio go to Shylock
iv) What does Shylock ask Antonio to do before lending the money?
v) Who was Jessica?
vi) How and with whom does Jessica elope?
vii) How could Portia get married?
viii) The suitors had to choose from how many caskets?
ix) Apart from Bassanio, name the two other suitors for Portia's hand.
x) Who chooses the correct casket?
xi) How are Portia and Nerissa disguised?
xii) How did Portia save Antonio's life
xiii) What did Portia ask from Bassanio.

13.4 Let us Sum Up

In this unit we have made you familiar with some important scenes from the play. These scenes will enable you to understand

- the play in a better way.
- You are now familiar with the Style of Shakespeare.
- You are aware of the hatred between Jews and Christians
- The importance of the subplot is also explained to you.

13.5 Answers

i) Shylock was a Jew. He used to lend money to people and charge high rates of interest (He was a money lender)

ii) Shylock hated Antonio because

(a) Antonio was a Christian

(b) Antonio used to lend money without taking any interest.

(c) Antonio had often insulted Shylock and called Shylock a "dog"

iii) Antonio and Bassanio went to Shylock to borrow money. Bassanio had asked Antonio to lend him money. But Antonio did not have any money. So they went to the Jew to borrow

iv) Shylock asked Antonio to go to a notary and sign a bond before lending him the money.

v) Jessica was Shylock's daughter

vi) Jessica eloped with Lorenzo, a friend of Antonio. Lorenzo was a Christian. Jessica dressed her self as a boy and left Shylock's house when Shylock had gone to give Antonio the money.

vii) The suitor who chooses the corect casket could marry Portia.

viii) The suitors had to choose from three caskets.

ix) A part from Bassanio, two other suitors were named in the play. These two suitors were (i) Prince of Morocco and (ii) Prince of Aragoan.

x) Bassanio chose the correct casket.

xi) Portia was disguised as a lawyer and Nerissa was disguised as the lawyer's clerk.

xii) Portia saved Antonio's life by telling Shylock that he could cut a pound of Antonio's flesh, but he could not spill any blood. Now it was not possible for Shylock to cut a pound of flesh without spilling blood. Thus Shylock lost the case and Antonio's life was saved.

xiii) Portia asked Bassanio for the ring that was on his finger. Actually Bassanio was so grateful to Portia for saving Antonio's life, that he wanted to reward her Portia would not take any money. She agreed to take Bassanio's gloves and when Bassanio opened his gloves, she saw the ring and asked for it.

Unit - 14

Shakespeare: Julius Ceasar

Structure

14.0 Objectives

This unit will introduce you to the age of Shakespeare and his life. It will also give you an insight into the plays of Shakespeare. The history plays will be discussed with reference to the position of Julius Caesar in the in the category of plays of Shakespeare.

A summary of the play shall be provided to make you familiar with the plot and the sequence of events in the play.

Thus, in this unit you will study:

a) the author and his plays
b) the history plays
c) the characteristics and themes of the plays of Shakespeare
d) a summary of Julius Caesar
e) suggested questions and answers

14.1 Introduction

Shakespeare was living under the reign of Elizabeth I, the last monarch of the house of Tudor, and his history plays are often regarded as Tudor propaganda because they show the dangers of civil war and celebrate the founders of the Tudor dynasty. In particular, *Richard III* depicts the last member of the rival house of York as an evil monster ("that bottled spider, that foul bunchback'd toad"), a depiction disputed by many modern historians, while portraying his usurper, *Henry VII* in glowing terms. Political bias is also clear in *Henry VIII*, which ends with an effusive celebration of the birth of Elizabeth. However, Shakespeare's celebration of Tudor order is less

important in these plays than the spectacular decline of the medieval world. Moreover, some of Shakespeare's histories — and notably Richard III - point out that this medieval world came to its end when opportunism and machiavelism infiltrated its politics.

Traditionally, the plays of William Shakespeare have been grouped into three categories: tragedies, comedies, and **histories**. Some critics have argued for a fourth category, the romance. Histories are normally described as those based on the lives of English kings. The plays that depict older historical figures such as *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, *Julius Caesar*, and the legendary *King Lear* are not usually included in the classification. *Macbeth*, which is based on a Scottish king, is also normally regarded as a tragedy, not a history.

14.2 About the Author and his Plays

14.2.1 About the Author

Shakespeare is renowned as the English playwright and poet whose body of works is considered the greatest in history of English literature. Shakespeare was baptized on April 26, 1564 and it is assumed that he was born on April 23, 1564. William was the third child of John and Mary Shakespeare. The first two were daughters and William was himself followed by Gilbert who died in 1612 and Richard who died in 1613. Edmund (1580-1607), sixth in the line was baptized on May the third, 1580 and William's oldest living sister was Joan who outlived her famous playwright brother. Of William's seven siblings, only Judith and four of his brothers survived to adulthood. William's father was a John Shakespeare, said to be a town official of Stratford and a local businessman who dabbled in tanning, leatherwork. William's mother was Mary Arden who married John Shakespeare in 1557. The youngest daughter in her family, she inherited much of her father's landowning and farming estate when he died.

In his younger years Shakespeare attended the Christian Holy Trinity church, the now famous elegant limestone cross shaped cathedral on the banks of the Avon river, studying the Book of Common Prayer and the English Bible. In 1605 he became lay rector when he paid £440 towards its upkeep, hence why he is buried in the chancel. Early on Shakespeare likely attended the Elizabethan theatrical productions of travelling theatre troups, come to Stratford to entertain the local official townsmen, including the Queen's Men, Worcester's Men, Leicester's Men, and Lord Strange's Men. There is also the time when Queen Elizabeth herself visited nearby Kenilworth Castle and Shakespeare, said to have been duly impressed by the procession, recreated it in some of his later plays.

Although enrolment registers did not survive, around the age of eleven Shakespeare probably entered the grammar school of Stratford, King's New School, where he would have studied theatre and acting, as well as Latin literature and history. When he finished school he might have apprenticed for a time with his father, but there is also mention of his being a school teacher. The next record of his life is in 1582, when still a minor at the age of eighteen and requiring his father's consent, Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway (1556–1623) married in the village of Temple Grafton. Baptisms of three children

were recorded; Susanna (1583-1649), who went on to marry noted physician John Hall, and twins Judith (1585-1662) who married Richard Quiney, and Hamnet (1585-1596) his only son and heir who died at the age of eleven.

By 1593 the plague was haunting London and many who were able fled the teeming city for the cleansing airs of open country. While it was a time for many upstart theatres, the popular public entertainment of the day, they were often shut down and forbidden to open for stretches of time. Shakespeare probably spent these dark days travelling between London, Stratford, and the provinces, which gave him time to pen many more plays and sonnets. Among the first of his known printed works is the comedic and erotically charged Ovidian narrative poem *Venus and Adonis* (1593). It was wildly popular, dedicated with great esteem to his patron Henry Wriothesly, third earl of Southampton, the young man that some say Shakespeare may have had more than platonic affection for. It was followed by the much darker *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1594, *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599 and the allegorical *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601).

At this time of prolific writing, Shakespeare began his association until his death with The Lord Chamberlain's Men. With the accession of James I they became the King's Men, who bought and performed most of Shakespeare's plays. The troupe included his friend and actor Richard Burbage. They performed frequently at court, and in the theatres that Shakespeare was co-owner of including the Blackfriars, The Theatre, and The Globe in London until it burnt down during a performance of *King Henry VIII*. It is said that Shakespeare himself acted in a number of roles including the ghost in *Hamlet* and Old Adam in *As You Like It*. In the late 1590s he bought 'New Place' on Chapel Street in Stratford, one of his many real estate investments.

Shakespeare wrote most of his plays as 'quarto texts', that being on a sheet of paper folded four ways. A few of his plays were printed in his lifetime, though they appeared more voluminously after his death, sometimes plagiarised and often changed at the whim of the printer. *First Folio* would be the first collection of his dramatic works, a massive undertaking to compile thirty-six plays from the quarto texts, playbooks, transcriptions, and the memories of actors. The approximately nine hundred page manuscript took about two years to complete and was printed in 1623 as *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*. It also featured on the frontispiece the famous engraved portrait of Shakespeare said to be by Martin Droeshout (1601-c1651).

It is generally agreed that most of the Shakespearean Sonnets were written in the 1590s, some printed at this time as well. Others were written or revised right before being printed. 154 sonnets and "A Lover's Complaint" were published by Thomas Thorpe as *Shake-speares Sonnets* in 1609. The order, dates, and authorship of the Sonnets have been much debated with no conclusive findings. Many have claimed autobiographical details from them, including sonnet number 145 in reference to Anne. The dedication to "Mr. W.H." is said to possibly represent the initials of the third earl of Pembroke William Herbert, or perhaps being a reversal of Henry Wriothesly's initials. Regardless, there have been some unfortunate projections and interpretations of modern concepts

onto centuries old works that, while a grasp of contextual historical information can certainly lend to their depth and meaning, can also be enjoyed as valuable poetical works that have transcended time and been surpassed by no other.

14.2.2 Shakespeare as a Playwright

By 1596, Shakespeare was so successful as a playwright that his family was finally granted a Coat of Arms which amongst other things allowed Shakespeare to call himself a "gentleman".

His first plays are believed to be the three parts of *Henry VI*; it is uncertain whether Part I was written before or after Parts II and III. *Richard III* is related to these plays and is usually grouped with them as the final part of a first tetralogy of historical plays.

After these come *The Comedy of Errors, Titus Andronicus* (almost a third of which may have been written by George Peele), *The Taming of the Shrew, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost,* and *Romeo and Juliet.* Some of the comedies of this early period are classical imitations with a strong element of farce. The two tragedies, *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet,* were both popular in Shakespeare's own lifetime. In *Romeo and Juliet* the main plot, in which the new love between Romeo and Juliet comes into conflict with the longstanding hatred between their families, is skillfully advanced, while the substantial development of minor characters supports and enriches it.

After these early plays, and before his great tragedies, Shakespeare wrote *Richard II, A Midsummer Night's Dream, King John, The Merchant of Venice,* Parts I and II of *Henry IV, Much Ado about Nothing, Henry V, Julius Caesar, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth Night.* The comedies of this period partake less of farce and more of idyllic romance, while the history plays successfully integrate political elements with individual characterization. Taken together, *Richard II,* each part of *Henry IV,* and *Henry V* form a second tetralogy of historical plays, although each can stand alone, and they are usually performed separately. The two parts of *Henry IV* feature Falstaff, a vividly depicted character who from the beginning has enjoyed immense popularity.

The period of Shakespeare's great tragedies and the "problem plays" begins in 1600 with *Hamlet.* Following this are *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (written to meet Queen Elizabeth's request for another play including Falstaff, it is not thematically typical of the period), *Troilus and Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus,* and *Timon of Athens* (the last may have been partially written by Thomas Middleton).

On familial, state, and cosmic levels, *Othello, Lear,* and *Macbeth* present clear oppositions of order and chaos, good and evil, and spirituality and animality. Stylistically the plays of this period become increasingly compressed and symbolic. Through the portrayal of political leaders as tragic heroes, *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra* involve the study of politics and social history as well as the psychology of individuals.

The last two plays in the Shakespearean corpus, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* may be collaborations with John Fletcher. The remaining four plays—*Pericles* (two acts of which may have been written by George Wilkins), *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale,* and *The Tempest*—are tragicomedies. They feature characters of tragic potential, but resemble comedy in that their conclusions are marked by a harmonious resolution achieved through magic, with all its divine, humanistic, and artistic implications.

Shakespeare's works are often divided into four periods beginning with what is referred to as an experimental period starting around 1591 and ending around 1593 which includes *Titus Andronicus, Love's Labour's Lost, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew.*

The second period ending around 1601, marks the establishment of Shakespeare and includes the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, the comedies, *The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, The Merry Wives of Windsor* and the history plays, *Henry IV, Parts I* and *II*, *Henry V, Richard II, King John* and *Julius Caesar.*

The third period ending around 1610 marks perhaps the apex of Shakespeare's work with the tragedies, *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear* but also comedies such as *Twelfth Night, All's Well that Ends Well* and the epic history play, *Antony and Cleopatra.*

The final period ends around 1611 with the plays, *Cymbeline, Henry VIII* and romances such as *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*.

The Shakespeare we read today comes from *The First Folio* of 1623 written by fellow actors John Heminge and Henry Condell to preserve Shakespeare's legacy. Amazingly, no original manuscripts survive reflecting the fact that many of these manuscripts were written purely for performance and were not regarded as pieces of literary work. There is also no general consensus on when all the plays were first performed. It might surprise readers to know that many of Shakespeare's plays, especially in the experimental period were hardly original, borrowing plot features from earlier plays. Likewise with his history plays, Shakespeare compresses events and does not follow history too closely to add to the drama. However borrowing plots and taking liberties with historical facts was not uncommon in Shakespeare's time and his skill for language, imagery, pun and his creative adaptation of myth and history have set Shakespeare apart as arguably the greatest playwright of all time.

Since his death Shakespeare's plays have been almost continually performed, in non-English-speaking nations as well as those where English is the native tongue; they are quoted more than the works of any other single author. The plays have been subject to ongoing examination and evaluation by critics attempting to explain their perennial appeal, which does not appear to derive from any set of profound or explicitly formulated ideas. Indeed, Shakespeare has sometimes been criticized for not consistently holding to any particular philosophy, religion, or ideology; for example, the subplot of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* includes a burlesque of the kind of tragic love that he idealizes in *Romeo and Juliet.*

The strength of Shakespeare's plays lies in the absorbing stories they tell, in their wealth of complex characters, and in the eloquent speech—vivid, forceful, and at the same time lyric—that the playwright puts on his characters' lips. It has often been noted that Shakespeare's characters are neither wholly good nor wholly evil, and that it is their flawed, inconsistent nature that makes them memorable. Hamlet fascinates audiences with his ambivalence about revenge and the uncertainty over how much of his madness is feigned and how much genuine. Falstaff would not be beloved if, in addition to being genial, openhearted, and witty, he were not also boisterous, cowardly, and, ultimately, poignant. Finally, the plays are distinguished by an unparalleled use of language. Shakespeare had a tremendous vocabulary and a corresponding sensitivity to nuance, as well as a singular aptitude for coining neologisms and punning.

14.3 Classification of Plays

The plays of Shakespeare can broadly be put under four categories i.e. the comedies, the tragedies, the romances and the history plays.

14.3.1 Tragedies

Shakespeare's tragedies are among the most powerful studies of human nature in all literature and appropriately stand as the greatest achievements of his dramatic artistry. Attention understandably has focused on his unforgettable tragic characters, such as Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth. Yet the plays also explore and extend the very nature of tragedy itself by discovering within it a structure that derives meaning precisely from its refusal to offer consolation or compensation for the suffering it traces

Shakespeare wrote his first tragedies in 1594 and 1595. But he left the field of tragedy untouched for at least five years after finishing *Romeo and Juliet,* probably in 1595, and turned to comedy and history plays. *Julius Caesar,* written about 1599, served as a link between the history plays and the mature tragedies that followed.

The earliest tragedy attributed to Shakespeare is *Titus Andronicus* (published in 1594). In its treatment of murder, mutilation, and bloody revenge, the play is characteristic of many popular tragedies of the Elizabethan period. The structure of a spectacular revenge for earlier heinous and bloody acts, all of which are staged in sensational detail, derives from Roman dramatist Seneca. *Romeo and Juliet* (1595) is justly famous for its poetic treatment of the ecstasy of youthful love. The play dramatizes the fate of two lovers victimized by the feuds and misunderstandings of their elders and by their own hasty temperaments. *Julius Caesar* was written about 1599 and first published in 1623. Though a serious tragedy of political rivalries, it is less intense in style than the tragic dramas that followed it. Shakespeare based this political tragedy concerning the plot to overthrow Julius Caesar on *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* by 1st-century Greek biographer Plutarch. Plutarch's *Lives* had first appeared in English in 1579, in a version produced by Thomas North from a French translation of the original. The North translation provided Shakespeare and his contemporaries with a great deal of historical material. Shakespeare followed Plutarch closely in *Julius Caesar*; little of incident or character appears in the play that is not found in the *Lives* as well, and he

sometimes used North's wording. Shakespeare's play centers on the issue of whether the conspirators were justified in killing Caesar. How a production answers that question determines whether the conspirator Brutus is seen as sympathetic or tragically self-deceived.

The tragedies Shakespeare wrote after 1600 are considered the most profound of his works and constitute the pillars upon which his literary reputation rests. Some scholars have tied the darkening of his dramatic imagination in this period to the death of his father in 1601. But in the absence of any compelling biographical information to support this theory, it remains only a speculation. For whatever reason, sometime around 1600 Shakespeare began work on a series of plays that in their power and profundity are arguably unmatched in the achievement of any other writer. *Hamlet,* written about 1601 and first printed in 1603, is perhaps Shakespeare's most famous play. It exceeds by far most other tragedies of revenge in the power of its ethical and psychological imagining. *Othello* was written about 1604, though it was not published until 1622. It portrays the growth of unjustified jealousy in the noble protagonist, Othello, a Moor serving as a general in the Venetian army. The innocent object of his jealousy is his wife, Desdemona. In this domestic tragedy, Othello's evil lieutenant Iago draws him into mistaken jealousy in order to ruin him. Othello is destroyed partly through his gullibility and willingness to trust Iago and partly through the manipulations of this villain, who clearly enjoys the exercise of evildoing just as he hates the spectacle of goodness and happiness around him. *King Lear* was written about 1605 and first published in 1608. Conceived on a grander emotional and philosophic scale than *Othello,* it deals with the consequences of the arrogance and misjudgment of Lear, a ruler of early Britain, and the parallel behavior of his councilor, the Duke of Gloucester. *Antony and Cleopatra* was written about 1606 and first published in 1623. It deals with a different type of love than that in Shakespeare's earlier tragedies, namely the middle-aged passions of the Roman general Mark Antony and the Egyptian queen Cleopatra. Their love, which destroys an empire, is glorified by some of Shakespeare's most sensuous poetry. *Macbeth* was written about 1606 and first published in 1623. In the play Shakespeare depicts the tragedy of a man torn between an amoral will and a powerfully moral intellect. Shakespeare's last tragedies, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*, both set in classical times, were written in 1607 and 1608 and first published in the 1623 Folio. Because their protagonists appear to lack the emotional greatness or tragic stature of the protagonists of the major tragedies, the two plays have an austerity that has cost them the popularity they may well merit.

14.3.2 The Comedies

The early comedies of Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour Lost and The Two Gentleman of Verona* are immature plays of the dramatist, and exhibit the early efforts of a writer who scaled high heights of success in his later dramatic career. The plots of these comedies lack originality. The characters of these plays are less finished and marked with artistic lapses in character portrayal. The style lacks the graces of the matured works of the dramatist. The mature comedies include *Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, The Merchant of Venice and As You Like It*. In these comedies is to

be found the flower of Shakespeare's comic genius. These plays are full of vitality and vivacity and are marked with enlivening wit and pleasant humour. They are romantic in character and saturated with spirit of love. *All's Well that End's Well, Measure for Measure and Troilus and Cressida,* are considered as comedies and end happily but their general tone is marked with a note of tragedy and somberness.

14.3.3 The Romances

Toward the end of his career, Shakespeare created several experimental plays that have become known as tragicomedies or romances. These plays differ considerably from Shakespeare's earlier comedies, being more radical in their dramatic art and showing greater concern with reconciliation among generations. Yet like the earlier comedies the tragicomedies end happily with reunions or renewal. Typically, virtue is sorely tested in the tragicomedies, but almost miraculously succeeds. Through the intervention of magic and art—or their emotional equivalent, compassion, or their theological equivalent, grace—the spectacular triumph of virtue that marks the ends of these plays suggests redemptive hope for the human condition. In these late plays, the necessity of death and sadness in human existence is recognized but located within larger patterns of harmony that suggest we are "led on by heaven, and crowned with joy at last," as the epilogue of *Pericles* proposes.

The romantic tragicomedy *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* was written in 1607 and 1608 and first published in 1609. It concerns the trials and tribulations of the title character, including the painful loss of his wife and the persecution of his daughter. After many exotic adventures, Pericles is reunited with his loved ones; even his supposedly dead wife is discovered to have been magically preserved. The play's central themes are characteristic of the late plays. *Pericles* focuses particularly on the relationship between father and daughter, as do *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. Its backdrop of the sea also recalls the setting of *The Tempest,* while its concern with separation and reunion is reminiscent of *The Winter's Tale.* Although *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* was a great success in its own time, the play exists only in a somewhat corrupted text *Pericles* is based on a medieval legend, *Apollonius, Prince of Tyre,* which had many English retellings, from *Confessio Amantis* (Confessions of a Poet) by John Gower in the late 14th century to a prose novella by Laurence Twine written in the 1570s.

Cymbeline was written about 1610 and first published in the 1623 Folio, where it appears as the last of the tragedies. Like the other late plays, *Cymbeline* responds to the fashion of the time for colorful plots and theatrical display. It is packed with adventure, plot reversals, and dramatic spectacle, and was perhaps intended to exploit the mechanical resources of Blackfriars, the new indoor theater of Shakespeare's company.

14.3.4 History Plays

The "history plays" written by Shakespeare are generally thought of as a distinct genre: they differ somewhat in tone, form and focus from his other plays (the "comedies," the "tragedies" and the "romances"). While many of Shakespeare's other plays are set in the historical past, and even treat similar

themes such as kingship and revolution (for example, *Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra , Hamlet,* or *Cymbeline*), the eight history plays have several things in common: they form a linked series, they are set in late medieval England, and they deal with the rise and fall of the House of Lancaster—what later historians often referred to as the "War of the Roses.

Shakespeare's most important history plays were written in two "series" of four plays. The first series, written near the start of his career (around 1589-1593), consists of *Henry VI, Parts 1, 2 & 3,* and *Richard III,* and covers the fall of the Lancaster dynasty—that is, events in English history between about 1422 and 1485. The second series, written at the height of Shakespeare's powers (around 1595-1599), moves back in time to examine the rise of the Lancastrians, covering English history from about 1398 to 1420. This series consists of *Richard II,Henry IV, Parts 1 & 2,* and *Henry V.* Although the events he writes about occurred some two centuries before his own time, Shakespeare expected his audience to be familiar with the characters and events he was describing. The battles among houses and the rise and fall of kings were woven closely into the fabric of English culture and formed an integral part of the country's patriotic legends and national mythology.

It is important to remember, when reading the history plays, the significance to this genre of what we might call the "shadows of history." One of the questions which preoccupies the characters in the history plays is whether or not the King of England is divinely appointed by the Lord. If so, then the overthrow or murder of a king is tantamount to blasphemy, and may cast a long shadow over the reign of the king who gains the throne through such nefarious means. This shadow, which manifests in the form of literal ghosts in plays like *Hamlet, Macbeth, Julius Caesar,* and *Richard III,* also looms over *Richard II* and its sequels. The murder of the former King Richard II at the end of *Richard II* will haunt King Henry IV for the rest of his life, and the curse can only be redeemed by his son, Henry V. Similarly, Richard II himself, in the play which bears his name, is haunted by a politically motivated murder: not of a king, but of his uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. This death occurs long before the beginning of the play, but, as we will see, it haunts Richard, just as his own death will haunt the usurper who is responsible for it.

Sometimes Shakespeare ignored chronology and telescoped the events of years to fit his own dramatic time scheme. Above all, he used the power of his imagination and language to mold vivid and memorable characters out of the historical figures he found in his sources. The overall theme of the history plays is the importance of a stable political order, but also the heavy moral and emotional price that often must be paid for it. Shakespeare dramatized the great social upheaval that followed Henry IV's usurpation of the throne until the first Tudor king, Queen Elizabeth's grandfather, restored peace and stability. In addition to chronicling the often violent careers of England's great kings, Shakespeare's history plays explore the extreme pressures of public life, the moral conflicts that kings and queens uniquely face, and the potential tragedy of monarchy.

Although Shakespeare probably did not invent the genre of the history play, only a very few plays on English history had been written before he turned to it for his plots, and no contemporary playwright wrote more histories than his ten. Clearly Shakespeare learned from his few predecessors in English drama, especially Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe had initiated the early greatness of Elizabethan tragedy, placing a single monumental personality at the center of each of his major plays. By studying Marlowe's style and energetic protagonists, Shakespeare learned in *Richard III* to construct a play around a complex, dominating personality. But Shakespeare is as interested in the sweep of history itself, as it catches up personalities in rhythms they are unable to predict or control.

Reference Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/shakespeareanhistory

14.4 Shakespeare's Style

Shakespeare's first plays were written in the conventional style of the day. He wrote them in a stylised language that does not always spring naturally from the needs of the characters or the drama. The poetry depends on extended, sometimes elaborate metaphors and conceits, and the language is often rhetorical—written for actors to declaim rather than speak. The grand speeches in *Titus Andronicus*, for example, often hold up the action; and much of the verse in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is stilted.

Soon, however, Shakespeare began to adapt the traditional styles to his own purposes. The opening soliloquy of *Richard III* has its roots in the self-declaration of Vice in medieval drama. At the same time, Richard's vivid self-awareness looks forward to the soliloquies of Shakespeare's mature plays. No single play marks a change from the traditional to the freer style. Shakespeare combined the two throughout his career, with *Romeo and Juliet* perhaps the best example of the mixing of the styles. By the time of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the mid-1590s, Shakespeare had begun to write a more natural poetry. He increasingly tuned his metaphors and images to the needs of the drama itself.

Shakespeare's standard poetic form was blank verse, composed in iambic pentameter. In practice, this meant that his verse was usually unrhymed and consisted of ten syllables to a line. The blank verse of his early plays is quite different from that of his later ones. It is often beautiful, but its sentences tend to start, pause, and finish at the end of lines, with the risk of monotony. Once Shakespeare mastered traditional blank verse, he began to interrupt and vary its flow. This technique releases the increased power and flexibility of the poetry in plays such as *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. After *Hamlet*, Shakespeare varied his poetic style further, particularly in the more emotional passages of the late tragedies. The literary critic A. C. Bradley described this style as "more concentrated, rapid, varied, and, in construction, less regular, not seldom twisted or elliptical". In the last phase of his career, Shakespeare adopted many techniques to achieve these effects. These included run-on lines, irregular pauses and stops, and extreme variations in sentence structure and length. In *Macbeth*, for example, the language darts from one metaphor to another ("was the hope drunk when you dressed yourself"; "pity, like a naked new-born babe"). The listener is challenged to complete the sense. The late romances, with their shifts in time and surprising turns of plot, inspired a last poetic style in which long and short sentences are set against one

another, clauses are piled up, subject and object are reversed, and words are omitted, creating an effect of spontaneity.

Shakespeare's poetic genius was allied with a practical sense of the theatre. Like all playwrights of the time, Shakespeare dramatised stories from sources such as Petrarch and Holinshed. He reshaped each plot to create several centres of interest and show as many sides of a narrative to the audience as possible. This strength of design ensures that a Shakespeare play can survive translation, cutting and wide interpretation without loss to its core drama. As Shakespeare's mastery grew, he gave his characters clearer and more varied motivations and distinctive patterns of speech. He preserved aspects of his earlier style in the later plays, however. In his late romances, he deliberately returned to a more artificial style.

14.5 The Play: Julius Caesar

14.5.1 Introduction

The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar, more commonly known simply as ***Julius Caesar***, is a tragedy by William Shakespeare written in 1600. It portrays the conspiracy against the Roman dictator, Julius Caesar, his assassination and its aftermath. It is the first of his Roman plays, based on true events from Roman history.

Although the title of the play is "Julius Caesar", he is not the central character in the action of the play, appearing in only three scenes and dying at the beginning of the third Act. The central protagonist of the play is Marcus Brutus and the central psychological drama is his struggle between the conflicting demands of honour, patriotism, and friendship.

The play reflected the general anxiety of England due to worries over succession of leadership. At the time of its creation and first performance, Queen Elizabeth, a strong ruler, was elderly and had refused to name a successor, leading to worries that a civil war similar to that of Rome's might break out after her death.

The play contains many elements from the Elizabethan period, making it anachronistic. The characters mention objects such as hats, doublets (large, heavy jackets), and clocks - none of which existed in ancient Rome. Caesar is mentioned to be wearing an Elizabethan doublet instead of a Roman toga

Marcus Brutus is Caesar's close friend; his ancestors were famed for driving the tyrannical King Tarquin from Rome (described in Shakespeare's earlier *The Rape of Lucrece*). Brutus allows himself to be cajoled into joining a group of conspiring senators because of a growing suspicion—implanted by Gaius Cassius—that Caesar intends to turn republican Rome into a monarchy under his own rule. Traditional readings of the play maintain that Cassius and the other conspirators are motivated largely by envy and ambition, whereas Brutus is motivated by the demands of honour and patriotism; other commentators, such as Isaac Asimov, suggest that the text shows Brutus is no less moved by envy and flattery. One of the central strengths of the play is that it resists categorising its characters as either simple heroes or villains.

The early scenes deal mainly with Brutus' arguments with Cassius and his struggle with his own conscience. The growing tide of public support soon turns Brutus against Caesar (This public support was actually faked. Cassius wrote letters to Brutus in different handwritings over the next month in order to get Brutus to join the conspiracy). A soothsayer warns Caesar to "beware the Ides of March," which he ignores, culminating in his assassination at the Capitol by the conspirators that day.

Caesar's assassination is perhaps the most famous part of the play, about halfway through. After ignoring the soothsayer as well as his wife's own premonitions, Caesar comes to the Senate. The conspirators create a superficial motive for the assassination by means of a petition brought by Metellus Cimber, pleading on behalf of his banished brother. As Caesar, predictably, rejects the petition, Casca grazes Caesar in the back of his neck, and the others follow in stabbing him; Brutus is last. At this point, Caesar utters the famous line "*Et tu, Brute?*" ("And you, Brutus?", *i.e.* "You too, Brutus?"). Shakespeare has him add, "Then fall, Caesar," suggesting that Caesar did not want to survive such treachery. The conspirators make clear that they did this act for Rome, not for their own purposes and do not attempt to flee the scene but act victorious.

After Caesar's death, however, Mark Antony, with a subtle and eloquent speech over Caesar's corpse—the much-quoted *Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears...*—deftly turns public opinion against the assassins by manipulating the emotions of the common people, in contrast to the rational tone of Brutus's speech. Antony rouses the mob to drive the conspirators from Rome. Amid the violence, the innocent poet, Cinna, is confused with the conspirator Cinna and is murdered by the mob.

The beginning of Act Four is marked by the quarrel scene, where Brutus attacks Cassius for soiling the noble act of regicide by accepting bribes ("Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake? / What villain touch'd his body, that did stab, / And not for justice?", IV.iii,19-21). The two are reconciled, but as they prepare for war with Mark Antony and Caesar's adopted son, Octavian (Shakespeare's spelling: Octavius), Caesar's ghost appears to Brutus with a warning of defeat. Events go badly for the conspirators during the battle; both Brutus and Cassius choose to commit suicide rather than to be captured. The play ends with a tribute to Brutus by Antony, who has remained "the noblest Roman of them all" and hints at the friction between Mark Antony and Octavius which will characterise another of Shakespeare's Roman plays, *Antony and Cleopatra*

'Julius Caesar' is one of the timeless creations of Shakespeare, the great master artist. This historical play is a great tragedy that ends in a huge waste of human lives. The play abounds in admirable and affecting passages, and is remarkable for the profound knowledge of character, in which Shakespeare could scarcely fail. It is as if he had been actually present, had known the different characters and what they think of one another, and had taken down what he hear and saw, their looks, words, and gestures as they happened. The truth of history in Julius Caesar is very ably worked up with dramatic effect. The councils of generals, the doubtful turns of battles are represented to life.

With his superb language, Shakespeare has breathed life into a glorious chapter torn from the history of Rome dealing with the struggle of Monarchy and Republicanism and has given it a befitting place in the galaxy of his great plays

14.5.2 Complete Summary

Marcellus and Flavius criticize the commoners for celebrating Caesar's recent military defeat of Pompey since they feel it's actually a sad day. During a victory march, a soothsayer warns Caesar to "Beware the Ides of March" (March 15); Caesar ignores him. A race is run, wherein Marc Antony, in the course of competing, touches Caesar's wife Calphurnia in hopes of curing her infertility. During the race, Cassius tries to convince Brutus that Caesar has become too powerful and too popular. Brutus neither agrees nor disagrees. Caesar confers with Antony that he fears Cassius is evil and worth fearing. Casca explains to Brutus and Cassius that shouting they heard was caused by Caesar's thrice refusal of a crown offered to him by Antony (though confusing, the commoners rejoiced that he had refused it for it indicated he is a noble man). At the third offering, Caesar collapsed and foamed at the mouth from epilepsy. Afterward, Caesar exiled/executed Flavius and Marcellus for pulling scarves off of Caesar's images (statues). In a thunderstorm, Casca meets Cicero and tells him of many ominous and fearful sights, mostly of burning images, he has seen. Cassius then meets Cicero and tells him the storm is a good sign of the evil he and his other cohorts plan to do to Caesar. It seems the senators plan to crown Caesar King, but Cassius aims to prevent it, or else commit suicide. Casca agrees to help Cassius. Cinna informs Cassius that Decius Brutus (actually Decimus), Trebonius, and Metallus Cimber will help them to kill Caesar.

Cassius is trying to convince Brutus to join too. Brutus, unable to sleep, tells himself that he fears Caesar will become a tyrant if crowned king. Cassius et al. come to Brutus and resolve to murder Caesar the next day (March 15). Metallus also convinces Caius Ligarius to join their cause. The men leave and Portia (Brutus' wife) begs Brutus to tell her what is happening, but he does not (though he does tell her before he leaves for the Senate). At Caesar's house, Calphurnia begs Caesar to stay home for fear of danger (based on a foreboding dream and the night's storm). Holy priests pluck the entrails of an animal and find no heart in it, another bad sign. Caesar declares he will stay home, to calm his wive's fears. Decius, though, convinces Caesar to come to the senate. On the way, the soothsayer Artemidorus tries to warn Caesar of impending death, to no avail. At the Senate, Trebonius leads Antony away from Caesar, then the conspirators murder Caesar. They cover themselves in his blood and go to the streets crying, "Peace, freedom, and liberty." Antony comes back and mourns Caesar's murder. Antony pretends to support the clan, yet yearns for great havoc to occur as a result of the death. Brutus explains to the crowd that they killed Caesar because he was too ambitious. Antony replies with reverse psychology to incite the commoners to riot in grief over Caesar's murder. Antony also reads them Caesar's (supposed) will, wherein he leaves money to all the citizens, plus his private gardens. In the ensuing riots, Cinna the poet is wrongly killed by a mob that believes him to be Cinna the conspirator.

Antony forms a triumvirate with Octavius Caesar and Lepidus, to rule Rome. However, Brutus and Cassius are raising an army to defy them. Brutus learns that his wife Portia kills herself by swallowing hot coals. Messala tells Brutus that the triumvirate has killed 100 senators. Titinius, Messala, Brutus, and Cassius decide to confront Antony's army at Phillipi. At Brutus' tent, the ghost of Caesar comes and tells Brutus he will see him at Phillipi. The battle indeed ensues at Phillipi. Cassius confers to Messala that it is his birthday and that he fears defeat. In battle, Titinius is captured by Octavius. Cassius convinces Pindarus to help him commit suicide. Pindarus, in grief, flees after the deed is done. In a twist, Brutus overthrows Octavius and Cassius' army, defeating part of Antony's army. Titinius, in grief over Cassius' death, kills himself with Cassius's sword. The battle turns again, this time against Brutus' army. Cato is killed and Lucilius is captured, while pretending to be Brutus. Brutus successively asks Clitus, Dardanius, and Volumnius to help him commit suicide, yet all refuse. Brutus finally convinces Strato to hold the sword while he (Brutus) runs onto it and dies. Thus, Antony and Octavius prevail, while Cassius and Brutus both commit suicide, assumedly partly in grief over murdering Caesar.

14.5.3 Act wise Summary

Act I.

Shakespeare's famous Roman play opens to the scene of two Tribunes, Marullus and Flavius scolding Roman citizens for blindly worshipping Caesar. Their conversation reveals deep-seated fears that Caesar is growing too powerful, too arrogant and must be stopped. Hoping to reduce the blind hero worship of Caesar, the two men remove ceremonial decorations off Caesar's "images" (statues) despite the obvious dangers of doing so...

A little later, we see Caesar leading a procession through the streets of Rome. A Soothsayer or fortune teller tells Caesar to beware the "ides of March [the 15th of March]" a warning that Caesar will die on this day. It is ignored. Cassius, who fears Caesar's ever growing power, begins to recruit Brutus, a close friend of Caesar's, towards his conspiracy by implying that Caesar is becoming too powerful... We also learn that Marullus and Flavius, the two tribunes pulling decorations off Caesar's statues have been put to silence for "pulling scarfs off Caesar's images [statues]." Brutus is suspicious of Cassius' motives but tells Cassius that he will think it over... Casca, another conspirator, reveals information to Brutus that suggests Caesar may be getting more ambitious...

Cassius' conspiracy gains momentum when he recruits a suspicious Casca to their cause against Caesar by pointing out that several recent strange occurrences are omens warning them against Caesar... To ensure Brutus joins his conspiracy, Cassius has Cinna place some forged letters where Brutus will find them convincing Brutus to join their cause. Cinna reveals that Brutus' good name will be an asset to their conspiracy...

Act II.

Brutus cannot sleep, revealing for the first time his own true fears that Caesar may be growing too powerful. A letter is discovered, which Brutus reads,

convincing him to join the conspiracy. The complete group of conspirators meets at Brutus' house, discussing Caesar's assassination. Brutus argues against Caesar's right hand man, Mark Antony being assassinated as well. Cassius and Trebonius have their doubts but go along with Brutus. Brutus' troubled wife Portia tries to find out what her husband is planning, worried for him...

Calphurnia, Caesar's wife, wakes Caesar up after herself awakening from a terrible nightmare. She tells Caesar, that her dream foretells doom and succeeds in convincing Caesar not go to the Senate (also referred to as The Capitol) on the "ides of March" which is tomorrow. Decius Brutus arrives and hearing that Caesar will not be at the Senate tomorrow, flatters Caesar into going so as not to show fear (allowing Brutus and company to kill him there).

Artemidorus waits in a street with a letter warning Caesar of the conspiracy, hoping to avert Caesar's assassination...

Portia worries for her husband, hoping his "enterprise" today will succeed. The Soothsayer who warned Caesar about the "ides of March" in Act I, waits in a narrow street hoping to warn Caesar of his imminent danger...

Act III.

Caesar arrogantly tells the Soothsayer that today is the "ides of March", but the Soothsayer tells him the day is not over yet... Artemidorus nearly warns Caesar but Decius Brutus prevents this. Popilius wishes the conspirators good luck, scaring them that Caesar may already know their plans.

Metellus Cimber petitions Caesar to lift his brother's banishment order. Caesar refuses and the conspirators kill Caesar. Mark Antony flees. Mark Antony pretends to treat Caesar's murderers as friends. He asks to speak at Caesar's funeral. Cassius thinks this is dangerous, Brutus, disagreeing, lets Mark Antony speak at the funeral.

Mark Antony reveals his true hatred for the conspirators. Octavius, Mark Antony's ally is remain safely outside of Rome a little longer... Brutus and Cassius explain to the citizens of Rome why they killed Caesar, gaining their support.

Using the immortal words, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;" Mark Antony turns the citizens of Rome against Brutus and Cassius by making the citizens feel remorse for Caesar's cruel death and by bribing then with the news that Caesar's will gifts each citizen money from his will. Mark Antony uses this fact to suggest Caesar was a great man who should not have been murdered.

The crowd, now an angry, crazed mob, go after the conspirators including Brutus and Cassius who flee in fear...

A poet called Cinna who bears the same name as one of the conspirators is killed by the angry mob which shows Shakespeare's insight into the senselessness of the mob mentality...

Act IV.

The Triumvirs (Octavius, Mark Antony and Lepidus) decide which of the conspirators shall live and which shall die. Mark Antony assures Octavius that

Lepidus does not and will not ever have any serious power... The two men start planning their attack on Brutus' and Cassius' forces.

Brutus learns that Cassius has finally arrived. Brutus is angry with Cassius, Cassius saying he has done his friend no wrong. Brutus wanting privacy from his troops, tells Cassius to step into his tent where he will discuss the issue further...

Brutus angrily attacks Cassius first for contradicting his order to remove Lucius Pella for taking bribes and then Cassius himself for his own dishonesty. Cassius is upset by this but eventually Brutus chooses to forgive his friend. We learn that Portia, Brutus' wife has died, over one hundred senators have been put to death by the Triumvirs and that a large army led by Mark Antony and Octavius is approaching their position... Brutus is greeted by Caesar's Ghost which tells Brutus he will see Caesar again at Philippi.

Act V.

On the Plains of Philippi, Mark Antony's and Octavius' forces face Brutus' and Cassius' forces. The two sides insult each other, Mark Antony and Octavius then leaving with their army.

Later in battle with Mark Antony and Octavius, Brutus sends orders via messenger Messala to Cassius' forces on the other side of the battlefield.

Cassius' forces are losing ground to Mark Antony's forces. Brutus has defeated Octavius' forces but instead of reinforcing Cassius' forces, have instead sought out spoils or bounty from the field.

Needing information, Cassius sends Titinius to a nearby hill to report if it is friendly or not. Cassius instructs Pindarus to go atop a hill to report Titinius' progress to him.

Pindarus sees Titinius pulled off his horse and fears Titinius has been captured. This would mean Brutus' forces have been beaten so Cassius kills himself on Pindarus' sword. Titinius now returns realizing that Titinius was not captured but was greeted by Brutus' victorious forces. Brutus learns of Cassius' death. Titinius, mourning Cassius, kills commits suicide.

Brutus inspires his men to keep fighting. Lucilius who is mistaken for Brutus is captured. Eventually Mark Antony realizes this. The battle rages on and Antony issues orders for Brutus to be captured, dead or alive...

Tired, weary, but still alive, Brutus finds a place to catch his breath with his few remaining followers. One by one, Brutus asks first Clitius, Dardanius and Volumnius to kill him but each refuses. Finally Brutus gets his wish by falling on his sword, killing himself.

Octavius, Mark Antony, Messala and Lucilius now arrive. Strato explains how Brutus died. Mark Antony pays tribute to Brutus' noble spirit by famously saying, "This was the noblest Roman of them all..." Octavius tells his soldiers to stand down, as the battle was over.

Reference Source: www.william-shakespeare.info/william

14.6 Questions

Q1. Write an essay on Shakespeare's conception of tragedy and the nature of Shakespearean tragedy.

Q2. Under what groups can Shakespeare's dramas be classified?

Q3. Write a short note on Shakespeare's Historical Plays.

Q4. Write a brief note on Shakespeare's Julius Caesar.

14.7 Let us Sum Up

In this unit you have acquired knowledge and have been given practice :

- to know about the life and works of Shakespeare
- to know about Shakespeare as a playwright
- to know and understand the classification of Shakespeare's plays
- to understand the history plays of Shakespeare
- to understand and summarize the play, Julius Caesar
- to answer the questions.

14.8 Answers

Ans. 1 A tragedy is essentially a tale of death or suffering and Shakespeare's tragedy reflects the same. Tragedy as perceived by Shakespeare is concerned with the ruin or restoration of the soul and the life of man. Shakespeare wrote tragedies from the beginning of his career. One of his earliest plays was the Roman tragedy *Titus Andronicus*, which he followed a few years later with *Romeo and Juliet*. *The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar*, more commonly known simply as *Julius Caesar*, is a tragedy by William Shakespeare written in 1599. It portrays the conspiracy against the Roman dictator, Julius Caesar, his assassination and its aftermath. It is the first of his Roman plays, based on true events from Roman history. However, his most admired tragedies were written in a seven-year period between 1601 and 1608. These include his four major tragedies *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, along with *Antony & Cleopatra* and the lesser-known *Timon of Athens* and *Troilus and Cressida*. Many have linked these plays to Aristotle's precept about tragedy: that the protagonist must be an admirable but flawed character, with the audience able to understand and sympathize with the character. Certainly, each of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists is capable of both good and evil. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, and *Othello* could all be considered love tragedies.These tragedies differ from the other tragedies in that the lovers are not doomed through any fault of their own, but because of some barrier in the world around them. In these tragedies, death is almost a kind of consummation of their love — as if love can not properly succeed in a tragic world.

Shakespeare's tragedies are concerned with the fate of person's of high degree often with kings or princes and with leaders of the state. The dramatist does not concentrate on the lives of ordinary persons nor does he recall the sufferings of the layman. The cause of tragedy in his plays is some fatal flaw in the character of the hero or the heroine. Shakespeare believed in the principle that, 'Character is Destiny' and this is evident in his tragedies.

Ans 2. Shakespeare's works include the 36 plays printed in the First Folio of 1623, according to their folio classification they are classified as, comedies, histories and tragedies. Shakespeare's early plays were mainly comedies and histories. Next he wrote mainly tragedies until 1608, producing plays, such as *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, considered some of the finest in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote romances or tragicomedies.

The early comedies including, *Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour Lost and The two Gentlemen of Verona* are immature plays of the dramatis, and exhibit the early efforts of a writer. The plots of these plays lack originality. The characters of these plays are less finished and marked with artistic lapses. The style lacks the graces of the matured works of the dramatist. These plays are full of wit and word play. The mature comedies include *Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, The Merchant of Venice and As You Like It*. These comedies reflect Shakespeare's comic genius. These plays are full of vitality and vivacityand are marked with wit and pleasant humour.

The great tragedies of Shakespeare are Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and King Lear. His tragedies are the most powerful studies of human nature. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* tells the story of the prince's effort to revenge the murder of his father, who has been poisoned by Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, the man who then becomes Hamlet's stepfather and the king. Othello, portrays the growth of unjustified jealousy in the noble protagonist i.e. Othello, a Moor serving as a general in the Venetian army. King Lear deals with the consequences of the arrogance and misjudgment of Lear, a ruler of early Britain, and the parallel behavior of his councilor, the Duke of Gloucester. Macbeth, depicts the tragedy of a man torn between an amoral will and a powerfully moral intellect. In intensity of emotion, deapth, psychological insight and power of style these tragedies stand supreme. Julius Caesar contemporary with the English histories, show the same concern with political security, and in its depth of character studies approaches the great tragedies. Shakespeare's tragicomedies or romances including Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest bring forth a mellowed maturity in the works of the writer. They are based on the theme of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The English Histories include *Henry VI, Parts 1, 2 & 3, Richard III, Richard II ,Henry IV, Parts 1 & 2, Henry V and King John.* These historical plays present British history of three hundred years and provides portraits of English kings, these plays serve as guides to kings of England. In these plays we witness a rapid maturing of Shakespeare's skill in plot construction and characterization.

Ans 3. Shakespeare wrote ten plays about English kings (from John to Henry VIII), as well as several plays based upon Roman history (the most famous of these are *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*). The main source for the Roman plays was Plutarch. For the English histories, his primary source was Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587), but he also drew on other sources, e.g. the anonymous history play *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (1598) and Hall's *The Union of the Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and York* (1542). The English history plays reflect the nationalism of England under Queen Elizabeth. The Roman histories reflect the Renaissance admiration of

classical Greece and Rome and taste for classical (Greek and Latin) learning. There is an audience for both Roman and English history plays in Shakespeare's time because humanists felt that "modern" (16th century) England had inherited the torch from classical antiquity. For the English humanists, Elizabeth's England is the "rebirth" of the glories of the Roman Empire.

Ans.4 Julius Caesar is a play about political power and how it may be legitimately and illegitimately wielded. It also shows the role of what we now call public opinion, which in this play is embodied in the gut responses of the common folk. Shakespeare presents a many-sided picture in which all the characters' strengths and weaknesses are clearly shown. Caesar is the authoritarian, arrogant leader, who rules with a firm although not unjust hand; Brutus is the man of conscience, concerned about his public duty and willing to take action that he feels is for the common good. But he is not suited to running a government; he is too concerned with upholding his sense of his own nobility and honor, and he makes many tactical errors. Cassius is the intellectual who is aware of the dangers presented by an authoritarian leader who concentrates power in his own hands, yet Cassius is also tainted by the ignoble sentiment of envy. As for Antony, he is loyal to his friend Caesar, but he is also ruthless and cunning. Shakespeare also shows the fickleness of public opinion. One moment the crowd is cheering Caesar, but it does not take long for Brutus to persuade them that Caesar was too hungry for power and deserved his fate. But then Antony soon manipulates the crowd into the opposite belief, and the mob goes on a rampage against the conspirators. This shows how politicians may shape and use the sentiments of ordinary people in service of their own goals. No one in the play shows any respect for the common people. Cassius and Brutus commit an act of violence to keep Rome free; they end up with chaos and civil war. In effect, they go to war (by killing Caesar) to keep the peace. Although Caesar is presented as arrogant, and he shows no mercy or flexibility when petitioned by responsible Romans to end a banishment, he is also a man who knows how to wield power. He is a formidable military commander, and most people, except for Cassius, respect him. Brutus himself can think of no accusation to charge Caesar with, except an imagined fear of what Caesar might do if his power continued to grow. This is surely a weak argument. And Brutus, for all his nobility, does not seem to realize that he continually allows himself to be manipulated by stronger or more ruthless personalities, first Cassius and then Antony. As so often in such situations, the conspirators fall victim to what is called the law of unintended consequences. No one can predict with certainty the consequences of such a momentous act as the assassination of a powerful political and military leader. Certainly, history has judged Brutus and Cassius harshly as traitors. . No one knows, of course, how Caesar would have behaved had he lived. And Shakespeare leaves us with such a full sense of the humanity of all the characters that definitive judgments about who is right and who is wrong may not do justice to the complexities of life, politics, and human motivation.

14.9 Books Recommended

Mundra & Mundra, A History of English Literature. Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly

Unit – 15

Shakespeare - Julius Caesar

Structure

15.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to

- understand the role of different characters of the play
- understand the issues presented in the play
- understand the meanings of the words used in the play
- understand the important quotes for reference to context
- answer the questions based on explanations of the quotes/ important speeches

15.1 Introduction

In Unit 14 you have been given an introduction to the author and his plays. You have also read the summary of the play *Julius Caesar.* Now in this Unit you will study the role of different characters and their important speeches. Some important quotes from the play shall be explained in details. Meanings of difficult words will be explained for your benefit. This Unit will reinforce your understanding of Unit 14 . The quotes explained will help you to understand the play in a far better manner.

15.2 Important Characters

Julius Caesar is a highly successful but ambitious political leader of Rome and his goal is to become an unassailable dictator. Caesar is warned that he must "beware the Ides of March". The prophecy comes true and Caesar is assassinated. Marcus Brutus is a well-respected Roman senator who helps plan and carry out Caesar's assassination, which he believes, will rid Rome of a tyrant. Caesar's friend Mark Antony provides the famous funeral oration ("Friends, Romans, and countrymen…") Brutus and Cassius meet their inevitable defeat. Brutus, the noble Roman, whose decision to take part in the conspiracy for the sake of freedom, plunges his country into civil war.

Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar is a great Roman general and senator who has recently returned to Rome in triumph after a successful military campaign. While his good friend Brutus worries that Caesar may aspire to dictatorship over the Roman republic, Caesar seems to show no such inclination, declining the crown several times. Yet while Caesar may not be unduly power-hungry, he does possess his share of flaws. He is unable to separate his public life from his private life, and, is deeply affected by the populace's increasing idealization and idolization of his image, he ignores ill omens and threats

against his life, believing himself as eternal as the North Star. He eventually suffers the repercussions of this attitude and is murdered.

Brutus

Brutus is a supporter of the republic who believes strongly in a government guided by the votes of senators. While Brutus admires and loves Caesar as a friend, he opposes the accession of any single man to the position of dictator, and he fears that Caesar aspires to such power. Brutus's inflexible sense of honor makes it easy for Caesar's enemies to manipulate him into believing that Caesar must die in order to preserve the republic. While the other conspirators act out of envy and rivalry, only Brutus truly believes that Caesar's death will benefit Rome. Unlike Caesar, Brutus is able to separate completely his public life from his private life; by giving priority to matters of state, he epitomizes Roman virtue. Torn between his loyalty to Caesar and his allegiance to the state, Brutus becomes the tragic hero of the play.

Antony

Antony is a friend of Caesar. He claims allegiance to Brutus and the conspirators after Caesar's death in order to save his own life. Later, however, when speaking a funeral oration over Caesar's body, he spectacularly persuades the audience to withdraw its support of Brutus and instead condemn him as a traitor. With tears on his cheeks and Caesar's will in his hand, Antony engages masterful rhetoric to stir the crowd to revolt against the conspirators. Antony's desire to exclude Lepidus from the power that he himself and Octavius intend to share hints at his own ambitious nature.

Cassius

Cassius is a talented general and longtime acquaintance of Caesar. Cassius dislikes the fact that Caesar has become godlike in the eyes of the Romans. He slyly leads Brutus to believe that Caesar has become too powerful and may misuse his power, thus he must die; finally converting Brutus to his cause by sending him forged letters claiming that the Roman people support the death of Caesar. Impulsive and unscrupulous, Cassius harbors no illusions about the way the political world works. A shrewd opportunist, he proves successful but lacks integrity.

Octavius

Caesar's adopted son and appointed successor. Octavius, who had been traveling abroad, returns after Caesar's death; he then joins with Antony and sets off to fight Cassius and Brutus. Antony tries to control Octavius's movements, but Octavius follows his adopted father's example and emerges as the authoritative figure, paving the way for his eventual seizure of the reins of Roman government.

Casca

Casca is the most important character of the minor characters in the play. A public figure opposed to Caesar's rise to power. Casca relates to Cassius and Brutus how Antony offered the crown to Caesar three times and how each time Caesar declined it. He believes, however, that Caesar is the consummate actor, lulling the populace into believing that he has no personal ambition. Casaca is intensely superstitious. The unnatural disturbances in nature unnerve him. Casca proves worthy of the confidence and trust reposed in him. He strikes the fist blow on Caesar from back.

Calphurnia

Calphurnia is Caesar's wife. She was very superstitious and terrified of potent; though not for herself but for her husband, Caesar. She was also a loving and a dutiful wife. Calpurnia invests great authority in omens and portents. She warns Caesar against going to the Senate on the Ides of March, since she has had terrible dreams and heard reports of many bad omens. Nevertheless, Caesar's ambition ultimately causes him to disregard her advice.

Portia

Portia is Brutus's wife; the daughter of a noble Roman Cato, who took sides against Caesar. Portia is stoic, brave and assertive. She has a strong will and determination. She was a heroic wife, who gives full support to her husband, Brutus. Portia, accustomed to being Brutus's confidante, is upset to find him so reluctant to speak his mind when she finds him troubled. Brutus later hears that Portia has killed herself out of grief that Antony and Octavius have become so powerful.

Flavius

Flavius is a tribune (an official elected by the people to protect their rights). He hates Julius Caesar. Flavius condemns the plebeians for their fickleness in cheering Caesar, when once they cheered for Caesar's enemy Pompey. Flavius is punished along with Marullus for removing the decorations from Caesar's statues during Caesar's triumphal parade.

Marullus

Like Flavius, Marullus is also a tribune who condemns the plebeians for their fickleness in cheering Caesar, when once they cheered for Caesar's enemy Pompey. He gets angry very quickly. Marullus and Flavius are punished for removing the decorations from Caesar's statues during Caesar's triumphal parade.

Cicero

Cicero is a great orator, an intellectual and a skeptic. He is widely respected in Rome. He is dissatisfied with most of the things and people. A Roman senator renowned for his oratorical skill. Cicero speaks at Caesar's triumphal parade. He later dies at the order of Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus.

Cinna - The Conspirator

Cinna is one of the main conspirators and docs important duties concerning the conspiracy. He is considered responsible and loyal to Cassius. He proves himself to be worthy of his confidence. He sends anonymous letters to Brutus to influence him. He is also a close friend and trusted supporter of Cassius. Cinna was also a strong republican. He was the most hated among the conspirators by the roman mob.

Lepidus

The third member of Antony and Octavius's coalition. He is a triumvir. He is seen to be active only once. He lacks worldly wisdoms. Though Antony has a low opinion of Lepidus, Octavius trusts his loyalty and praises him as a tried and valiant soldier.

Ligarius

Although a sick man, Ligarus is strong in mind . He is devoted to Brutus. His grudge against Caesar is the result of a rebuke received from the latter for speaking well of Pompey. He has fiery enthusiasm.

Decius

A member of the conspiracy and a cunning flatterer. Decius convinces Caesar that Calpurnia misinterpreted her dreams and that, in fact, no danger awaits him at the Senate. Decius leads Caesar right into the hands of the conspirators.

Artemidorus

A teacher of rhetoric, Artemidorus helps in increasing the dramatic tension. He tries to save Caesar with the help of a petition, notifying him of a danger , but fails. He is a well wisher of Julius Caesar.

Metellus Cimber

Metellus Cimber is one of the prominent conspirators. He is given the task of starting the action on the day of murder of Julius Caesar. He pleads to Caesar with a very humble manner for repealing of banishment of his brother. After the murder of Caesar he advices the other conspirators to remain close to each other so that the friend of Caesar can not hurt them.

Trebonius

He is one of the conspirators. In the play he draws aside Antony when he was entering the senate. Cassius also praises him for his work on the day of the murder.

Volumnius

He is an old friend of Brutus and fights on the side of the conspirators. He has a high sense of friendship. He refuses to help Brutus in committing suicide after his defeat.

Strato

A servant of Brutus, he follows his master's stoic philosophy and he requires very little coaxing to agree to hold a sword while Brutus runs on it. He has to much self respect to accept employment with Ocatavius until Messala recommends him.

Lucius

A servant of Brutus, he brings out the gentler side of his master's nature. He makes a deep impression of with his sweetness and gentleness towards his master, Brutus. He is a very dutiful, thoughtful and careful person.

Lucilius

He is Brutus's friend . He tries to protect Brutus by personating himself as Brutus. He bribes the soldiers to kill him. Lucilius remains very friendly and faithful till his death.

Titanium

He is devoted to Cassius. He does not care for his personal safety and goes out to ascertain whether a squadron of horsemen in the distance were friend or enemies. When he returns, he finds Cassius dead. Then he kills himself with Cassius's sword. He cannot bear to live without his friend.

Pindarus

Pindarus was a slave of Cassius and was taken as a prisoner at Parthia. He has to follow his master like a dog. He even had to promise that he will obey what his master said. When Cassis heard then Titinius has been captured by the enemy, he thinks everything is lost. So, he called Pindarus to kill him and be a free man and Pindarus do so.

Reference Source: http://absoluteshakespeare.com

15.3 Glossary of the play

A

Accoutered - fully clothed
Afeard - afraid ague - (pron : 'eig-yoo')
Alarum - trumpet signal for attack
An - if
Apparent prodigies - wonders that have appeared
Appertain - pertain
Apt - ready
Art - are / theory
Aside - by side of stage
As lief not be - rather not live
Aught - anything awhile - for a while
Augurers - priests who interprets omens
Ay - yes

B

Bade - commanded
Be - is/are
Become - suit
Beest - is/are
Behold - see
Beholding - indebted
Belike - probably
Be'st - is/are
Beseech - request/beg
Bestride - stand with one leg on each side
Bestow - distribute
Bethink - change
Betimes - early
Betwixt - between
Bid - tell
Bootless - vainly
Break'st - break
Bring'st - bring
Brother - brother/brother-in-law
But- only/except
But soft- slowly

C
Can'st - can
Carrion - living carcasses
Chafing with - beating on
Charactery - writing
Chidden - scolded
Common proof - common experience
Concave shores - overhanging banks
Construe - explain
Coronets - small crown made of laurel wreath
Couldst - could
Cridest - cried
Crossed - opposed

D
Dar'st - dare
Diest - die
Distract - mad/upset
Dost - do
Doth - does
Dropping fire - thunder
Durst not - dare not

E
Envy - malice
Ere - before
Erns - grieves
Even - evening
Exeuent - plural of "exit"
Exit - one person when leaves

F
Factious - active
Fain - gladly
Falling Sickness - epilepsy
Favour - feature
Fond- foolish
Forth - out
Fleering - the Elizabethan meaning combined of our "fawning" and "sneering"
Flourish - loud sound
Fly - escape
Furthest - farthest

G
Gamesome - sportive
Glazed - a combination of glared and gazed
Go to (IV,iii,33) - nonsense

H
Hail - welcome
Hark - listen
Hart - deer (pun heart)
Hast - has
Hath - has
Hence - go away
Hie - hurry
Hinds - deer
Hither - here
Humour - influence/mood/manner

I
Ides - the 15th day of the month
Increasth - increases
Ingrafted - deep-rooted
Insuppressive - unsuppressable, indomitable
Intermit - hold off

K
Knave (I,i,16) - rascal
(IV,iii,240) - fellow
(IV,iii,268) - boy

L
Lethe - according to mythology Lethe was a river in Hades, the waters of which induced forgetfulness. Here death.
Like - likely
Lo - look
Lover - friend
Lov'st - love

M
Marry - an oath
Masters - friends
Mayest - may
Meanest - mean
Meet - fitting
Merrily - happily
Methinks - I think
Moe - more

N
Naughty - insolent, wicked
Nay - no
Niggard - satisfy economically
Nor ... nor - neither ... nor

O
Oft - often
Ope - open
Or ... or - either ... or

P
Palter - quibble or deceive
Partake - share
Praetor - magistrate
Prick - spur
Prithee - request you
Prodigies - unnatural events
Put on - incite, reveal
Put to silence - execution

Q
Quick mettle - mentally sharp

R
Rated - upbraided
Rheumy - moist
Riv'd - torn

S
Saucy - cheeky
Save except
Say'st - say
Sick offence - harmful illness
Sirrah - fellow
Soft You! - Hold on, wait
Sounded - proclaimed
Stricken - struck
Strucken - struck
Suitor - practitioner
Sufficeth - sufficient
Swounded - fainted

T
Tapers - candles
Tarry - wait
Thee - you
Therein - in this
Thither - there
Thorough - through
Thou - you
Three-and-thirty - three-thirty
Thy - your
Thyself - your self
Tidings - news

Train - followers
Trod - walked
'Twixt - between

U
Unbraced - with doublet untied, open
Ungently - discourteously
Unto - to
Untrod - unknown
Useth - uses
Uttermost - uppermost

V
Vexeth - vex
Vouchsafe - allow/accept
Vulgar - the common people

W
Wafter - wave
Want - lack
Wast - was
Wenches - young women
Wert - were
Whe'r - frequent in Shakespeare for whether
Wherefore - why
Whilst - where
Whither - where
Wilt - will
Withal - also
Wont - used to
Would he were - I wish he were
Wrought - worked

Y
Ye - you
Yea - yes
Yesternight - last night
Yon - those
Yond - over there
Yonder - that/those

15.4 Important Quotes From The Play

Act 1 Scene 1

Line 35-59

MARULLUS

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome,

To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks,
To hear the replication of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood? Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

The play opens with Flavius and Marullus noting the fickle nature of the public's devotion—the crowd now celebrates Caesar's defeat of Pompey when once it celebrated Pompey's victories—loyalty to Caesar nonetheless appears to be growing with exceptional force.

The two Tribunes scold Roman citizens for worshipping Caesar almost blindly. Their conversation reveals deep-seated fears that Caesar is growing too powerful, too arrogant and must be stopped. Hoping to reduce the blind worship of Caesar by Roman citizens, the two men remove scarves off Caesar's images or statues despite the obvious danger.

Marullus in this speech, sums up the fear other tribunes and officials like himself are having of Caesar's growing popularity. He reminds the commoners of the days when they used to gather to watch and cheer for Pompey's triumphant returns from battle. Now, however, due to a mere twist of fate, they rush out to celebrate his downfall. Marullus scolds them further for their disloyalty. He asks why the people of Rome should be rejoicing, asking, "What conquest brings he home? What tributaries follow him to Rome / To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?" He then asks why the people of Rome have so quickly forgotten Pompey, remarking on how so many a times, these very same citizens would climb walls, their infants in their arms, waiting to hear this great man speak. Marullus then recalls how Roman citizens would roar their approval so loudly of Pompey, that the "Tiber [a river inside Rome] trembled underneath her banks," and yet these same people now come out in their best attire or best clothes to "strew flowers" in the way of the man who killed Pompey, i.e. Julius Caesar. Marullus says such people should be gone and that these cruel Romans should run to their houses and fall upon their knees and beg to the gods for mercy and to hold off the spread of plague. That needs must light on this act of ingratitude.

Act 1 Scene 2

Line 18

Soothsayer

Beware the ides of March.

In another public place in Rome, Caesar, accompanied by his followers, encounters a soothsayer who makes a prophecy, which is dismissed.

While Caesar leads a procession through the streets of Rome, the Soothsayer or fortune-teller tells Caesar to beware the "ides of March" i.e. the 15th of March, a warning that Caesar will die on this day. It is ignored. Casca immediately dismissed these prophetic words as the words of a "dreamer;" and the procession continues along its way.

Line 86-89

Brutus

Set honor in one eye and death i' th' other,
And I will look on both indifferently;
For let the gods so speed me, as I love
The name of honor more than I fear death.

After Caesar and his entourage exit, leaving Cassius and Brutus to engage in conversation, Cassius mentions that recently Brutus has not seemed so friendly towards him as he usually is. Brutus replies that it is nothing personal; he is troubled by some private business and this is affecting his behavior towards others. Cassius hints that he knows Brutus better than Brutus himself does. He suggests that others in Rome who are suffering under Caesar's oppression have wished that Brutus would open his eyes to their plight and (Cassius implies) do something about it. He promises to tell Brutus something about himself that he is as yet unaware of. As shouts are heard from the crowd offstage, Brutus says he fears that the people will choose Caesar for their king. Even though he loves Caesar, Brutus does not want him to be crowned king.

When Cassius asks, Brutus affirms that he would rather that Caesar not assume the position. The above speech, gives a major insight into the character of Brutus. He says that if the assassination or removal of Caesar from a powerful position is for the common good, he is supportive. Brutus says, that he loves Caesar but that he also loves honor, and that he loves honor even more than he fears death.

Line 139-142

Cassius

Men at times are masters of their fates:
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

When Brutus conveys his fears related to the rising power of Caesar, Cassius gives a long speech in which he explains that Caesar is not fit to hold the great office that he does. He expresses his frustration at the inferior position he occupies in relation to Caesar, even though he was born just as free as the man who now rules.

In the above lines Cassius tells Brutus not to blame fate. Caesar stands like a Colossus

over the world, Cassius continues, while Cassius and Brutus creep about under his legs. He tells Brutus that they owe their underling status not to fate but to their own failure to take action. He says it does not matter what you believe, but what forces are in effect in the universe of the play. He says that the fault does not lie in their stars or their fate or destiny but in themselves that they have agreed to become underlings or subordinates to Caesar.

Line 192-195

Caesar

Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

Caesar and his entourage return. Caesar tells Mark Antony that Cassius is a dangerous man, although he hastens to add that he is not afraid of him, since he fears no one. But men like Cassius, Caesar observes, are never at rest while someone else holds power over them.

In the above lines Caesar conveys his wish to have fat and sleek headed men around him. He sees Cassius and comments to Antony that Cassius looks like a man who thinks too much; such men are dangerous, he adds noting that Cassius has a lean and hungry look. He feels that he thinks too much and such men could cause harm. This is important, since it shows that even Caesar has reason to fear Cassius. Interestingly, in the next few lines, Brutus assures his friend Caesar that this is not the case.

Line 201-210

Caesar

He reads much;
He is a great observer and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit
That could be moved to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.

Caesar shows much more perceptiveness in his analysis of Cassius; he observes both Cassius's private and public personas and notices a discord. He is made uneasy by what appears to be Cassius's lack of a private life—Cassius's seeming refusal to acknowledge his own sensibilities or nurture his spirit suggest a coldness, a lack of human warmth.

Caesar says these lines to Antony in which he expresses his opinion about Cassius. He says that he prefers to avoid Cassius: Cassius reads too much and finds no enjoyment in plays or music, he never smiles and if he does it seems he is mocking or making fun—such men are never at ease while someone greater than themselves holds the reins of power, thus they are dangerous. Thus, Cassius remains merely a public man, without any suggestion of a private self. Such a man, Caesar properly recognizes, is made uncomfortable by others' power.

Line 284

Casca

Nay, an I tell you that, Ill ne'er look you i' the face again: but those that understood him smiled at one another and shook their heads; but, for mine own part, it was Greek to me. I could tell you more news too: Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Caesar's images, are put to silence. Fare you well. There was more foolery yet, if I could remember it.

After Caesar exits, Brutus and Cassius take Casca aside to ask him what happened at the procession.. Casca explains that Antony just offered Caesar a crown three times. Each time Caesar rejected it, but each time he did so with greater reluctance. While the crowd cheered for him, Caesar fell to the ground in a fit. Brutus speculates that Caesar has "the falling sickness" (a term for epilepsy in Elizabethan times). Casca notes, however, that Caesar's fit did not seem to affect his authority: although he suffered his seizure directly before the crowd, the people did not cease to express their love. Later, when Caesar regained his composure, he told Casca to write off his actions to the people as infirmity.

In the above lines Casca adds that the great orator Cicero spoke in Greek, but that he couldn't understand him at all, saying "it was Greek to me". But he said that those who understood his speech smiled at each other. He concludes by reporting that Flavius and Marullus were deprived of their positions as civil servants for removing decorations from Caesar's statues. Casca's mention of Caesar's hesitation suggests that, no matter how noble his motivations, Caesar is capable of being seduced by power and thereby capable of becoming a dictator. Casca then departs, followed by Brutus.

Act II Scene 1

Line 32-34

BRUTUS

……And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

Cassius's words to Brutus in Act I, scene ii have proved powerful in turning him against Caesar. While alone in his garden, Brutus has come to the conclusion that Caesar must be killed

Brutus cannot sleep, revealing for the first time his own true fears that Caesar may be growing too powerful. He knows with certainty that Caesar will be crowned king; what he questions is whether or not Caesar will be corrupted by his power. Although he admits that he has never seen Caesar swayed by power in the past, he believes that it would be impossible for Caesar to reach such heights without eventually coming to scorn those lower in status. Brutus compares Caesar to the egg of a serpent "which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous"; thus, he determines to "kill him in the shell". Thus, he conveys that if Caesar attains power, he might misuse it and therefore should be killed before he grows more powerful.

Act II Scene 2

Line 33-38

Caesar

Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard.
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

This scene emphasizes the many grave signs portending Caesar's death, as well as his stubborn refusal to heed them. Initially, Caesar does agree to stay home in order to please Calpurnia. Calpurnia, who has never heeded omens before, speaks of the strange things that happened in the city earlier that night which were signs of true danger, she says; Caesar cannot afford to ignore them. Caesar counters that nothing can change the plans of the gods. Calpurnia says that the heavens proclaim the death of only great men, so the omens must have to do with him.

In the above lines, Caesar replies that while cowards imagine their death frequently, thus dying in their minds several times over, brave men, refusing to dwell on death, die only once. He cannot understand why men fear death, which must come eventually to all.

Act III Scene 1

Line 58-65

Caesar

I could be well moved if I were as you.
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me.
But I am constant as the Northern Star,
Of whose true fixed and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumbered sparks;
They are all fire, and every one doth shine;
But there's but one in all doth hold his place.

These lines are a part of Caesar's speech just before his assassination. The conspirators have come to Caesar in the Senate under the pretense of pleading for amnesty for Metellus's banished brother, Publius Cimber. Caesar replies that he will adhere to his word and not change his earlier decision.

Comparing himself to the North Star, Caesar boasts of his constancy, his commitment to the law, and his refusal to waver under any persuasion. This comparison implies more than steadfastness, however: the North Star is the star by which sailors have navigated since ancient times, the star that guides them in their voyages, just as Caesar leads the Roman people. So, too, is the North Star unique in its fixedness; as the only star that never changes its position in the sky, it has "no fellow in the firmament." Thus, Caesar also implies that he is peerless

among Romans. Caesar declares that he alone remains "unassailable" among men, and his strictness in Publius Cimber's case illustrates this virtue.

As it comes mere moments before the murder, the speech adds much irony to the scene: having just boasted that he is "unassailable," Caesar is shortly assailed and killed. In announcing his "constancy," Caesar claims permanency, immortality even. The assassins quickly prove Caesar mortal, however. But as the later events of the play reveal, Caesar's influence and eternality are undeniable. His ghost seems to live on to avenge the murder: Brutus and Cassius directly attribute much of their misfortune to Caesar's workings from beyond the grave; so, too, does the name "Caesar" undergo metamorphosis from an individual man's name to the title of an institution—the empiric rule of Rome—by the end of the play. In these more important ways, Caesar's lofty estimation of himself proves true.

Act III Scene 1

Line 76

Caesar

"Et tu, Brute!"

In the murder scene Decius and Ligarius, followed by Casca, come forward to kneel at Caesar's feet. Casca stabs Caesar first, and the others quickly follow, ending with Brutus. Recognizing that Brutus, too, has joined with the conspirators, Caesar speaks his last words: "Et tu, Brute?—Then fall Caesar". Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans served as Shakespeare's source. It was Plutarch who asserted that Caesar ceased to defend himself upon recognizing Brutus among the conspirators, and Plutarch who first gave Caesar his famous last words, which Shakespeare preserves in the original Latin, "Et tu, Brute?" ("And you, Brutus?". With these words, Caesar apprehends the immensity of the plot to kill him—a plot so total that it includes even his friends—and simultaneously levels a heartbroken reproach at his former friend.

Act III Scene 2

Line 75-254

Mark Antony

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears……..

Brutus and Cassius explain to the Citizens of Rome why they killed Caesar, gaining their support. Mark Antony turns the citizens of Rome against Brutus and Cassius by making the Citizens feel remorse for Caesar's cruel death and by bribing then with the news that Caesar's will gives each citizen a share in his wealth. Mark Antony uses this fact to suggest Caesar was a great man who should not have been murdered. The crowd, now an angry, crazed mob, go after the conspirators including Brutus and Cassius who flee in fear.

Explanation of some lines from this famous speech

Line 82-96

He was my friend, faithful and just to me.
But Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honourable man.
...
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept.
...
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honourable man.
...

I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And sure he is an honourable man.

Antony speaks these lines in his funeral oration for Caesar. He has asked Brutus's permission to make the speech, and Brutus foolishly allows him the privilege, believing that the boost in image that he and the conspirators will receive for this act of apparent magnanimity will outweigh any damage that Antony's words might do. Unfortunately for the conspirators, Antony's speech is a rhetorical tour de force, undermining the conspirators even while it appears deferential to them.

Antony ascends to the pulpit while the plebeians discuss what they have heard. They now believe that Caesar was a tyrant and that Brutus did right to kill him. But they wait to hear Antony. He asks the audience to listen, for he has come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. He acknowledges Brutus's charge that Caesar was ambitious and maintains that Brutus is "an honourable man," but he says that Caesar was his friend. He adds that Caesar brought to Rome many captives, whose countrymen had to pay their ransoms, thus filling Rome's coffers. He asks rhetorically if such accumulation of money for the people constituted ambition. Antony continues that Caesar sympathized with the poor: "When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept". He reminds the plebeians of the day when he offered the crown to Caesar three times, and Caesar three times refused. Again, he ponders aloud whether this humility constituted ambition. He claims that he is not trying to disprove Brutus's words but rather to tell them what he, i.e. Antony, knows; he insists that as they all loved Caesar once, they should mourn for him now. Antony pauses to weep. The plebeians are touched; they remember when Caesar refused the crown and wonder if more ambitious people have not stepped into his place. Antony speaks again, saying that he would gladly stir them to mutiny and rebellion, though he will not harm Brutus or Cassius, for they are—again—honorable men.

The speech draws much of its power from repetition. Each time Antony cites Brutus's claim that Caesar was "ambitious," the claim loses force and credibility. Similarly, each time Antony declares how "honourable" a man Brutus is, the phrase accrues an increasingly sarcastic tone until, by the end of the speech, its meaning has been completely inverted. The speech wins over the crowd and turns public opinion against the conspirators; when Antony reads Caesar's will aloud a few moments later, the dead Caesar's words join with Antony's in rousing the masses against the injustice of the assassination.

Line 263-264

Antony

Now let it work: Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt.

Antony says these words after the mob has left. These lines give an isight into the heart of Antony. He has set chaos to work and he does not care what happens. The mob was only a tool achieve his ends. The very next scene is about the death of Cinna the poet. Shakespeare is placing the responsibility for the actions of the crowd with Antony. Everyone feared Caesar's ambition, but everyone else had ambitions of his own. Here Antony nakedly shows a callous disregard for the actions of a violent mob that he has created. Not only does he watch, but he takes pleasure in watching.

Act IV Scene 1

Line 31-40

Antony

[My horse*] is a creature that I teach to fight,*
To wind, to stop, to run directly on,
His corporal motion governed by my spirit;
And in some taste is Lepidus but so.
He must be taught, and trained, and bid go forth—
A barren-spirited fellow, one that feeds
On objects, arts, and imitations,
Which, out of use and staled by other men,
Begin his fashion. Do not talk of him
But as a property.

The Triumvirs (Octavius, Mark Antony and Lepidus also known as The Second Triumvirate) decide which of the conspirators shall live and which shall die. Mark Antony assures Octavius that Lepidus does not and will not ever have any serious power. The two men start planning their attack on Brutus' and Cassius' forces.

In this passage Antony and Octavius (with Lepidus, who has just left the room) are making plans to retake Rome, the audience gains insight into Antony's cynicism regarding human nature: while he respects certain men, he considers Lepidus a mere tool, or "property," whose value lies in what other men may do with him and not in his individual human dignity. Comparing Lepidus to his horse, Antony says that the general can be trained to fight, turn, stop, or run straight—he is a mere body subject to the will of another.

The quote raises questions about what qualities make for an effective or valuable military man, politician, and ally. By this criticism he means that Lepidus centers his life on insubstantial things, prizing what other men have long since discarded as "stale" or devoid of flavor and interest; that is, Lepidus lacks his own will and convictions. He on to compares Lepidus to a mere animal, calling him a "barren-spirited fellow" and a mere tool. While Lepidus's weak sense of selfhood means that he can easily be used as a tool by other men, it also means that he can be counted on to be obedient and loyal. Lepidus is thus absorbed into the threesome (with Antony and Octavius) that rules Rome after Caesar's death, ultimately coming into power and political prestige with little effort or sacrifice. In *Julius Caesar,* men such as Brutus and Caesar are punished in the mortal realm for their inflexible commitment to specific ideals. Though Antony criticizes Lepidus, perhaps Shakespeare is subtly suggesting that a man such as Lepidus, "barren-spirited" and seemingly lacking in ambition, will be as satisfied in the political realm as his more directed counterparts. Antony then turns the conversation to Brutus and Cassius, who are reportedly gathering an army; it falls to Octavius and Antony to confront them and halt their bid for power.

Act IV Scene 2

Line 269-276

Brutus

We at the height are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures

Brutus learns that Cassius has finally arrived. Brutus is angry with Cassius. He says he has done his friend no wrong. Brutus wanting privacy from his troops, tells Cassius to step into his tent where he will discuss the issue further.

Brutus's words to Cassius proclaiming their readiness for battle are significant in that they emphasize Brutus's belief in the power of the will over fate. Throughout the play, the theme of fate versus free will proves important. In the above lines, Brutus suggests that both exist and that one should take advantage of fate by asserting one's will. While subsequent events demonstrate that the force of fate (or perhaps just Antony and Octavius's superior maneuvering) is stronger than Brutus's individual actions, his speech still makes for a graceful, philosophic axiom, showing Brutus to be a man of deep reflection. He speaks these words in order to convince Cassius that it is time to begin the battle against Octavius and Antony. He speaks figuratively of a "tide" in the lives of human beings. If one takes advantage of the high tide, one may float out to sea and travel far; if one misses this chance, the "voyage" that one's life comprises will remain forever confined to the shallows, and one will never experience anything more glorious than the mundane events in this narrow little bay. Brutus reproaches Cassius that if they do not "take the current" now, when the time is right, they will lose their "ventures," or opportunities.

The passage elegantly formulates a complex conception of the interplay between fate and free will in human life. Throughout the play, the reader frequently contemplates the forces of fate versus free will and ponders whether characters might be able to prevent tragedy if they could only understand and heed the many omens that they encounter. This musing brings up further questions, such as whether one can achieve success through virtue, ambition, courage, and commitment or whether one is simply fated to succeed or fail, with no ability to affect this destiny. Here, Brutus conceives of life as influenced by *both* fate and free will: human beings must be shrewd enough to recognize when fate offers them an opportunity and bold enough to take advantage of it. Thus, Brutus believes, does man achieve a delicate and valuable balance between fate and free will.

This philosophy seems wise; it contains a certain beauty as well, suggesting that while we do not have total control over our lives, we do have a responsibility to take what few measures we can to live nobly and honorably. The only problem, as the play illustrates over and over again, is that it is not always so easy to recognize these nudges of fate, be they opportunities or warnings. The characters' repeated failures to interpret signs correctly and to adapt themselves to events as they unfold form the basis for most of the tragedy that occurs in the play.

Act V Scene 5

Line 68-75

ANTONY

This was the noblest Roman of them all:
All the conspirators save only he

Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;
He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world 'This was a man!'

These are the last memorable lines of the play. Brutus preserves his noble bravery to the end: unlike the cowardly Cassius, who has his slave stab him while he, i.e., Cassius, covers his face, Brutus decides calmly on his death and impales himself on his own sword. Antony's speech over Brutus's body, it finally becomes clear who the true hero—albeit a tragic hero—of the play is.

In the above lines, Antony speaks over the body, stating that Brutus was the noblest Roman of all: while the other conspirators acted out of envy of Caesar's power, Brutus acted for what he believed was the common good. Brutus was a worthy citizen, a rare example of a real man. Thus, Brutus kills his friend and later dies himself. But in the end, Antony, the master rhetorician, with no trace of the sarcasm that suffuses his earlier speech about Brutus, still honors him as the best Roman of them all.

As Antony observes, Brutus's decision to enter into the conspiracy does not originate in ambition but rather in his inflexible belief in what the Roman government should be. His ideal proves too rigid in the political world of the play, in which it appears that one succeeds only through chameleon like adaptability, through bargaining and compromise—skills that Antony masterfully displays.

Brutus's mistake lies in his attempt to impose his private sense of honor on the whole Roman state. In the end, killing Caesar does not stop the Roman republic from becoming a dictatorship, for Octavius assumes power and becomes a new Caesar. Brutus's beliefs may be a holdover from earlier ideas of statesmanship. Unable to shift into the new world order, Brutus misunderstands Caesar's intentions and mistakes the greedy ambition of the conspirators for genuine civic concern.

15.5 Act Wise Questions

Act 1

1) Why are the tribunes Flavius and Marullus so upset at the opening of the play?
2) What holiday are the Roman masses celebrating at the time of Caesar's return?
3) Describe Caesar's encounter with the soothsayer.
4) What is most significant about the meeting between Cassius and Brutus in Act1 Scene2?
5) How does Cassius trick Brutus into joining the conspirators?

Act 2

6) How does Portia prove she is worthy to hear the plans of her husband, Brutus?
7) After an ominous dream, Calpurnia begs Caesar to stay away from the senate and, at first, he agrees. But soon he changes his mind?

Act 3

8) What is the significance of Caesar's dying words, "Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Caesar!"?
9) Who turns the people of Rome against Brutus?

10) Describe the encounter between Brutus and Caesar's ghost.

Act 5

11) Cassius asks Brutus what he plans to do if they should lose the battle. What is Brutus's response?

12) How does Cassius die?

13) Explain the significance of Antony's finals speech, beginning with the line, "This was the noblest Roman of them all" (Act 5 Scene5).

15.6 Let us Sum up

In this unit we have made you familiar with some important scenes from the play. These scenes will enable you to:

- understand the play in a better way.
- makes you familiar with the Style of Shakespeare.
- understand the meaning of the vocabulary used by Shakespeare in the play
- understand the meaning of the important quotations
- understand the reference in which the speeches occur in different acts
- understand the characters in a better way

15.7 Answers

Act 1

Ans1. Flavius and Marullus are angry that the working class citizens of Rome gather to celebrate Caesar's victory, while forgetting Pompey, the Roman hero (and a part of the First Triumvirate that ruled Rome) who was killed in battle alongside Caesar. Their hostility toward Caesar serves to introduce the deep political divide that will become the central issue of the play.

Ans2. Caesar's triumph coincides with the feast of Lupercal, which was celebrated on February 15th.

Ans3. As Caesar passes through the crowd the soothsayer cries out to him, warning him to "beware the ides of March." Caesar dismisses the soothsayer as a dreamer and continues on. Caesar's encounter with the soothsayer foreshadows his assassination in the senate which would take place soon.

Ans4. Cassius presents his best argument to convince Brutus, his close friend and brother-in-law, to conspire with him to assassinate Caesar. Brutus reveals he has concerns about the state of the Republic, but will not commit outright to join with Cassius.

Ans5. Cassius fabricates a petition, pretending it is from the angry citizens demanding Caesar's removal, and he throws it in Brutus's window. The welfare of Rome drives Brutus, and Cassius knows Brutus will give the people what they desire.

Act 2

Ans6. Portia cuts herself in the thigh and suffers the pain of both the wound and the infection it causes in silence. Her show of bravery and self-control convinces Brutus she is "stronger than her sex" (Act2 Scene1) and he agrees to confide in her, only to be interrupted before he has a chance.

Ans7. Decius, a conspirator whose role is to guarantee Caesar is in the Capitol that day, favorably interprets Calpurnia's dream and then chides Caesar for yielding to his wife's whims. Decius adds that the senate is planning again to offer Caesar a crown, and Caesar gives in to vanity. He leaves Calpurnia and accompanies Decius to the Capitol.

Act 3

Ans 8. The conspirators gather around Caesar and he sees his trusted friend Brutus among them. Stunned that Brutus is among his assassins, Caesar cries out, "and you too, Brutus?" This famous line is important because it sets Brutus apart from the other conspirators. There is no doubt that Brutus's self-serving and ambitious accomplices have committed an indefensible act, but with Caesar's final utterance we recognize that the self-sacrificing and noble Brutus has perpetrated the same heinous crime – his motivation is rendered immaterial. For this moment, Brutus the idealist becomes Brutus the murderer.

Ans 9. After Brutus addresses the Plebeians, successfully assuring them that Caesar's murder was necessary to preserve their freedoms (3.2.13-37), Antony delivers his cleverly crafted speech in defense of Caesar. While making sure not to condemn Brutus and the conspirators, he argues that Caesar had no plan to turn Rome into a dictatorship. He reminds the crowd that Caesar was offered a "kingly crown" (Act3 Scene2) three times and refused each time.

Ans10. Cassius retires for the evening and Brutus calls two of his servants, Claudio and Varro, to stay with him through the night. The boys quickly fall asleep and Brutus starts to read. With the flicker of the candle Brutus's eyes are distracted upward, to see the ghost of Caesar standing beside him. The ghost tells Brutus that they will meet again at Philippi and vanishes.

Act 5

Ans11. Brutus says that, since he finds the act of suicide cowardly and vile (5.1.104), he will have little choice but to be patient and yield to whatever fate dictates (Act5 Scene1). He adds that he will never return to Rome as a prisoner. That Brutus nevertheless dies by his own hand at the end of the play adds to his tragedy.

Ans12. Cassius knows that he too will soon be captured by Antony and Octavius, and will certainly be dragged through the streets of Rome in chains. He orders Pindarus to hold his sword while he impales his chest on the blade.

Ans13. Antony's speech serves to restore Brutus to the position of tragic hero. Antony can see in Brutus the morality he does not himself possess - the capability to act selflessly for the common good. Brutus's pride and political naivety have led to his destruction, but his ideals are etched into the memory of his enemies.

Unit – 16

Shakespeare Julius Caesar

Structure

16.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to-

-understand the issues presented in the play

-understand the characters of the play

-understand the significance of the play

-understand the theme of the play

-understand the important scenes of the play

16.1 Introduction

In Unit 14 you have been given an insight into the author and his works with special emphasis on Julius Caesar. You have also read a brief summary of the play *Julius Caesar*. In Unit 15 you have read some important passages from the play along with their explanations. Now in Unit 16 you will study the theme, significance, the important characters and the important scenes of the play. Thus, this Unit will reinforce your understanding of Units 14 and 15 and enhance your understanding of the play further. It consists of essay type note on the various aspects considered.

16.2 Critical Analysis of the Play by: H.S. Taylor

Julius Caesar marks an interesting stage in the evolution of Shakespeare's style. In no other play, perhaps, does he show such a relaxed command of the blank verse form, originally inherited from Marlowe and now considerably refined and sophisticated in the course of writing some fifteen plays, that is, about half of his work. The verse runs smoothly in the pentameter form, without any sense of forcing : ideas and imagery remain well within the dramatist's control. There is no grasping after the inexpressible, or bursting through the limitations of syntax and usage such as characterize the most powerful passages of the later work. In Julius Caesar we have the style of limited perfection, as Bradley observed : fluent, lucid and flexible, responding easily to a wide range of rhetorical and dramatic demands.

Sir Thomas North published his version of Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans in 1579. This collection of historical biographies, widely read in Elizabethan England, provided the raw material from which Shakespeare constructed his Roman plays, in this instance from the lives of Caesar, Brutus and Antony. The Penguin

Shakespeare's Plutarch, or the extracts in. the appendix to the Arden edition of the play, render this source material easily available to the student, who might well begin by comparing the original material for the Forum scene with what Shakespeare eventually makes of it, as a measure of the dramatist's creative genius. In some parts, the debt to Plutarch is much greater, and occasionally even extends to phrasing, Because he had recently completed his study of a successful general and politician in the name-part in Henry V, Shakespeare may well have welcomed the chance to make Brutus, rather than Caesar, the protagonist of his first Roman tragedy. The idea of a man of thoughtful disposition and good intentions caught up in a current of violent political action clearly interested Shakespeare, who had begun to explore the theme in Henry V1 and (minus the good intentions) Richard II, and was, of course, to crown his study of it in Hamlet. As he read through the life of Brutus in North's book, he must have seen at once that here was a situation not only interesting as a study in human nature, but wonderfully suited to dramatization, both in terms of conflict within the mind of the 'hero', and of the external conflicts naturally surrounding a political assassination. I use the term 'hero' because, whatever the title may appear to say on the subject, the play is more rightly understood as the tragedy of Brutus than of Caesar. The criteria of Shakespearian tragedy synthesized by Bradley are entirely applicable : a man with enormous potential for good brought to an evil and through some weakness in his own temperament, coupled with the implication of man's nobility and worth even when thus driven to self-destruction. Furthermore, it is largely in Bradley's terms of character issuing in action that this play may most profitably be studied.

A general word of caution, however. This is a political play, and it is therefore appropriately constructed in terms of propaganda and subjective comment, which we must beware of taking at its face value. Cassius' passionate condemnation of Caesar in the second scene, for instance, where the speaker is pressing all his rhetorical art into service to win Brutus over to his cause, yields negligible motives for assassination when the passion is filtered off and the residue subjected to logical analysis -as Cassius goes more than half way towards confessing, in his short soliloquy after Brutus' exit. The reader must constantly consider the motives behind each speech, as well as the surface meaning. With this proviso in mind, let us consider some of the major actors in this political drama.

Widely differing accounts of Shakespeare's Caesar have been given. It is possible, by selecting only details that fit the case and ignoring other evidence, to show the Caesar of this play as physically decrepit, superstitious, vacillating, vain and bombastic; in other words, a Caesar in decline. However, an overall consideration of his actions in the play reveal a magnanimous leader whose authority rests on competence, but is human enough to share some of the common failings of mankind. The opening speeches of Flavius and Marullus are, of course, loaded against him, as these two are strong adherents of the recently defeated Pompey. Caesar has little chance, in his short first appearance in procession, of establishing a very positive image of himself, although Shakespeare is at pains to make clear his absolute authority in Antony's words : 'When Caesar says "Do this," it is performed', and in the instant response of the procession to Caesar's wishes. After Caesar has moved off, it is Cassius' turn to paint a Picture of him in a series of passionate tirades, as brilliant in their way as anything that Shakespeare has written. Stripped of their passion and rhetoric, however, what remains? That Cassius was a better swimmer than Caesar, and that once when

Caesar was lying fever-stricken, he felt thirsty. We really learn more of the true nature of Cassius than of Caesar from this invective, and he comes very near to an explicit admission of his jealousy in the speech beginning, 'Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world...' Indeed, Brutus' failure to penetrate to the hollow core of this argument is a severe comment on his powers of reasoning, and Cassius in his final soliloquy declares that he would not have been moved by such argument if the situations were reversed.

Meanwhile Caesar returns from the games, and in ten lines or so to Antony tells us more truth about Cassius than the latter gave us about Caesar in nearly a hundred. It is a penetrating analysis, worth careful study, not less because it rounds off with a characteristic touch of vanity

I always tell thee what is to be feared

Than what I fear, for always I am Caesar.

At the same time, we must recognize that Caesar's belief in his courage is nowhere at variance with his conduct. Again, however, he is only given the barest chance to establish himself before the procession passes on, and it is now Casca's turn to paint him in an unfavourable, even ludicrous, light which, by means of his blunt and highly subjective account, he does superbly enough. We should not be deceived by this tart humour into thinking other than that a man suffering from epilepsy had one of his accustomed bouts at a very awkward moment, from which he recovered to make a public apology which was well received.

Up to this point I have considered Shakespeare's presentation of Caesar in some detail in order to demonstrate the discriminatory technique required to form a fair estimate, but I must now pass on to his final appearance in the Senate, where a different question is at issue. The charge here is that of an extreme arrogance, almost amounting to megalomania. His last two speeches certainly show that he had a very high opinion of his own determination and are couched in grandiloquent, if poetically very effective, terms:

But I am constant as the northern star...

and so forth. Here I think a different sort of allowance must be made, arising from two factors. The first is a dramatic one : Shakespeare had to combine suspense with the arousal of a certain sympathy for the conspirators, if the full emotional possibilities of the situation were to be realized. Secondly, a dislike for flattery is in keeping with Caesar's character (I place little weight on Decius' cheap sneer) and Shakespeare certainly makes Metellus Cimber in his florid address and prostrated attitude, go out of his way to earn the rebuke that he receives in such heavy measure.

So Caesar dies, but not his influence, which remains dominant until the end of the play. Even while the assassins stand round him with their weapons thick with Caesar's blood, Antony cannot forbear reminding them of his former triumphs, and he later apostrophizes the corpse as 'the ruins of the noblest man that ever lived. . .'. His prophecy that Caesar's spirit shall return from Hades to inflict a bitter revenge is entirely true of the remainder of the action, for it can be argued that Caesar dead, dramatically speaking, has a greater influence than Caesar living. His name is constantly invoked during the rest of the play ; even Brutus and Cassius in their private bickering, for instance, find occasion to make appeal to his memory three times. Brutus' first words on learning of Cassius' death are

Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet I

Thy spirit walks abroad...

and he himself dies with Caesar's name upon his lips.

Brutus wins our admiration by the unquestioned sincerity of his regard for honour and the welfare of the Roman state. Even the cynical cases does not imply that his reputation among the Romans is anything but deserved : 'O, he site high in all the people's hearts. . .'. He is an idealist, unsuited to the world of *realpolitik*; once he assumed direction of the conspirators his idealism ceased to be a source of strength and became a disability, leading him to make two disastrous decisions: first, allowing Antony to live, and second, letting him speak at the funeral. Idealism, however, was not the quality that led to his downfall, but rather a failure to reason clearly, and to see that he was being manipulated by others to serve their own private ends. In the important soliloquy 'it must be by his death...' no adequate reason is given for killing Caesar, the whole basis of the argument is hypothetical. The speech is eloquent, perhaps at first sight plausible, but it cannot bear analysis: it is as if Brutus' own powers of reasoning were blinded for the moment by his clever use of imagery and rhetoric. He even admits that he has never known Caesar's emotions to get the better of his reason, in the light of which his conclusion, 'Then lest he may, prevent...' is pitifully inadequate. It is not disputed that he thinks he is choosing the more honourable alternative in killing his friend : the tragic error is that he should make the wrong choice. Nor is he always even consistent in the high moral attitude that he adopts ; in the quarrel scene, for instance, he chides Cassius for raising money by corrupt methods, and in the next breath upbraids him for not sending him funds to pay his soldiers, because he, Brutus, cannot bring himself to raise the money;

By heaven. I had rather coin my heart,

And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring

From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash

By any indirection.

Later, he makes some moving observations about the cowardice of suicide, and then tells Cassius that he has determined to kill himself rather than face capture and disgrace. A certain complacency in his rectitude apparently blinds him to the bitter irony of his own last words,

My heart doth joy that yet, in all my life,

I found no man but he was true to me...

a complacency which may be observed earlier in his taking for granted that he knows best ('Good reasons must of force give way to better. . .'), and which becomes irritatingly obtrusive in the attitude he adopts towards Cassius in the quarrel scene.

Considered in the mass in this way, these shortcomings might seem to discount the feeling of pity for Brutus which is essential if the emotions proper to tragedy are to be generated, but in the context of the play they are continually mitigated by our sympathy for the dilemma of divided loyalty, regard for his motives, admiration for his kindly solicitude in his relations with Portia and the boy Lucius, and commiseration towards the end of the play when he has to beer the loss of his wife among so many other blows of fortune, Shakespeare leaves us in no doubt as to where he wishes Brutus to stand in our final estimation when, taking a hint from Plutarch, he gives Antony his final lines:

This was the noblest Roman of them all;
All the conspirators save only he
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;
He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man I'

Until Caesar's death, Antony is deliberately held in the background. The few lines he speaks give nothing away, but Shakespeare is careful to distribute hints in the mouths of others as to what kind of man this is, for he is hoping to create a powerful effect when Antony is launched into the action of the drama, and anticipation is a useful weapon.

Shakespeare's mastery of the dramatic craft is nowhere better illustrated then in the consummate skill with which Antony is introduced as a figure to be reckoned with in the power contest, from the point of his arrival among the conspirators to the end of the Forum scene. Ignoring the sequence of events in Plutarch, he brings the introduction forward to create a second major wave of tension after the excitement of the murder, and he increases the suspense by preceding Antony's entry with the arrival of his messenger, whose words in some measure outline the nature of the dramatic situation: if Antony is to live, how is he to reconcile his love of Caesar with friendship for his murderers? He has, however, one strong card in addition to his own native-wit : Brutus has sent assurance of safe-conduct. This allows Antony, Immediately on his appearance, to establish his sincerity towards the conspirators by an outburst of implied protest at what they have done. even offering himself as a second sacrifice upon their swords. This is a calculated risk, as he cannot be certain that Brutus, in such a crisis, is in a position to enforce his promise, and he softens the request with a subtle appeal to their self-esteem in the last line: '. . by you cut off, The choice and master spirits of the age'. The bluff works, and Brutus characteristically offers to appease Antony with reason, and Cassius with an offer of a place in the cabinet. The complex three-cornered relationship between the principals is brilliantly presented, adding its own tensions to those already implicit in the situation. Antony, having established that the conspirators are willing to accept him, has now to win consent to the request that will eventually lead to their downfall. He cleverly makes this point almost as an afterthought, something so much to be taken for granted that no reasonable person could refuse:

That's all I seek;
And am moreover suitor that I may
Produce his body to the market-place
And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,
Speak in the order of his funeral.

Never can those simple words 'and am moreover' have been used to carry greater weight. The opportunist in Antony has saved him for the moment: it now remains to see what he can make of his chance. He is also, however, a warm-hearted human figure, as Shakespeare allows us to see in his soliloquy over Caesar's body when the conspirators have withdrawn. These two qualities added to a powerful command of rhetoric, will presently enable him to get his way with the crowd. First, however, there is Brutus' speech, which gives an excellent illustration of Shakespeare's ability to suit

the manner to the man. It is in prose, the language of reason, and reason is, as we have seen, everything to Brutus. Here again the reasoning is unimpressive, objectively considered, but it is good enough for the crowd, and, working rapidly through tersely-worded antitheses and climaxes to a series of unanswerable rhetorical questions, gains the required effect. It is typical of Brutus to consider that that is the end of the matter: his line 'Then none have I offended' has the conclusive certainty of a geometrical theorem: I have given them reasons; they have accepted these reasons; there is no more to be said; and he is sufficiently confident to depart and leave the stage to Antony, a mistake that one cannot imagine Cassius making, Antony begins slowly; after all, he does not know whether he can sway the crowd against the conspirators or not and, if he cannot, then he had better not say anything to make his position in post Caesarian Rome any more desperate than it is. His chief weapons are irony, logic and appeal to emotion, always supported by a sure feeling for rhetoric form. The logic is reasonable as far as it goes, but it is in reality nothing more than a polished demonstration of argument from selected instances. The two-sided weapon of irony enables him to feel his way without committing himself: there is nothing in his long first speech that he will have to retract if his audience remains loyal to Brutus. Indeed, with a skill in manipulation that outshines even that of Cassius, he is able to play on the emotions of the crowd for a further seventy lines or so, without actually involving himself in accusations against the conspirators. Up to line 165, 'Room for Antony; most noble Antony' he could still withdraw if it seemed tactically expedient. But as he steps down preparatory to making play with Caesar's mantle, he knows that he is not going to withdraw: he senses strongly that the mood of the crowd is now ready for anything that he will give them, and he has a master-stroke in hand. Lifting a corner of the mantle, he moves insidiously past the implications of such terms as 'envious' Casca, 'cursed' steel, ,ingratitude more strong than traitors' arms' to an inspired climax in which he tears off the robe to reveal the mutilated body, and in the shock of silence which follows, pours out his message with all the power he can command: marred, as you see, with traitors'. There is no going back from this.

Space forbids consideration of how much of Antony's rhetoric derives from calculation and how much from genuine emotion for his friend : clearly there are strong elements of both, and the two flowing in the same direction give enormous power to Antony's persuasion. His words to himself as the citizens stream off in a mutinous mob should not be overlooked, and at the beginning of the next act we gain a further insight into his nature as he coldly trades his nephew's life against that of Lepidus' brother, and later confesses to Octavius his cynical proposal to get what he can out of Lepidus and then discard him. Here is the naked heart of revolutionary politics crystallized for all time. Can we draw any conclusion about Shakespeare's own attitude to politics from the fact that not one of the characters in this play who are drawn into the political arena emerges from the experience unsullied?

16.3 Shakespeare's Soliloquies

A soliloquy is a dramatic or literary form of discourse in which a character talks to himself or herself or reveals his or her thoughts without addressing a listener it is a specific speech or piece of writing in this form of discourse. In Shakespeare's plays it is a part of the dramatization of consciousness, especially the turning point passage in which the character finally admits culpability. Usually it is the dramatization of consciousness—what a character on the stage reveals. Shakespeare made the soliloquy

more of a psychological device than an expository one. A soliloquy may be addressed to the audience, a thing ,nature, or another character. It may be in the form of a mediation and the expression of emotion, it is a reflection of the inner conflict. A soliloquy helps in the identification of the personality.

Shakespeare's soliloquies became an organic part of his dramatic compositions. The soliloquy expresses something which has all the appearance of inevitability and credibility. Shakespeare lets his soliloquies confirms what the audience and reader already know, fulfilling at once the expectations of the audience and the demands of dramatic art. Shakespeare's soliloquies were designed to be interior monologues or audience addresses, performers and critics have had to disregard the conspicuous evidence in Shakespeare's plays themselves clearly demonstrating that soliloquies represented self-addressed speeches. Instead, performers and critics have relied on the fact that interior monologues or audience addresses seem natural to them and to their audiences.

Relevance of some important soliloquies of Julius Caesar

Act 2 Scene 1

Brutus

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar,
I have not slept.
Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream:
The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection

Cassius tries to convince Brutus to join too. Cassius's words to Brutus in Act I, scene 2 have proved powerful in turning him against Caesar: while alone in his garden he thinks about him. He knows with certainty that Caesar will be crowned king; what he questions is whether or not Caesar will be corrupted by his power. Although he admits that he has never seen Caesar swayed by power in the past, he believes that it would be impossible for Caesar to reach such heights without eventually coming to scorn those lower in status. Brutus, unable to sleep, tells himself that he fears Caesar will become a tyrant if crowned king. In the above soliloquy he thinks about the dreadful consequences of the act which have left him sleepless. The period between the actual act and the planning seems like a horrible dream to him.

Act 3 Scene 1

Antony

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,—
Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue—

A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;

Antony mourns Caesar's murder. He pretends to support the clan, yet yearns for great havoc to occur as a result of the death. Antony addresses Caesar's departed spirit, asking to be pardoned for making peace with the conspirators over his dead body. In his soliloquy in the Capitol, Antony reveals that he intends to create civil strife throughout Italy, and in his oration he sets it off to a promising start. He is a thoroughly the politically expedient man in his speech. He wants to create rebellion and overthrow the republicans so that he and Octavius can fill the vacuum, and he succeeds to the fullest measure. From his soliloquy in the Capitol until the end of the play, he is constantly ambitious, confident, successful, and exceptionally ruthless. He has no concern for the welfare of the citizens of Rome who will suffer in the civil strife he has instigated, he is willing to have a nephew put to death rather than argue for his life, he seeks to keep as much as he can of Caesar's legacy to the poor of Rome, and he openly acknowledges that he will remove Lepidus from power as soon as Lepidus is no longer of use to him.

16.4 Theme Analysis of Julius Caesar

The main focus of Julius Caesar is on political power and how it may be legitimately and illegitimately wielded. The play reflected the general anxiety of England due to worries over succession of leadership. It also portrays the role of public opinion, which in this play is embodied in the gut responses of the common folk. The play leaves the readers wondering about who may be the play's central character and whether it is Caesar, the great leader; Brutus, the idealist and man of honor who faces an ethical dilemma or Antony, the loyal henchman and brilliant manipulator of the mob. It also raises questions like whether the conspirators were justified in their actions or not? Or how should Rome-or any other society-be governed?

Shakespeare presents a many-sided picture in which all the characters' strengths and weaknesses are clearly shown. Caesar is the authoritarian, arrogant leader, who rules with a firm although not unjust hand; Brutus is the man of conscience, concerned about his public duty and willing to take action that he feels is for the common good. But he is not suited to running a government; he is too concerned with upholding his sense of his own nobility and honor, and he makes many tactical errors. Cassius is the intellectual who is aware of the dangers presented by an authoritarian leader who concentrates power in his own hands, yet Cassius is also tainted by the ignoble sentiment of envy. As for Antony, he is loyal to his friend Caesar, but he is also ruthless and cunning. Today we might call him a demagogue, willing and able to use his oratorical powers to fire up the mob and get them to do what he wants.

If the major characters are all flawed in one way or another, Shakespeare also shows the fickleness of public opinion. One moment the crowd is cheering Caesar, but it does not take long for Brutus to persuade them that Caesar was too hungry for power and deserved his fate. But then Antony soon manipulates the crowd into the opposite belief, and the mob goes on a rampage against the conspirators. This shows how politicians may shape and use the sentiments of ordinary people in service of their own goals. No one in the play shows any respect for the common people.

It is noted that Cassius and Brutus commit an act of violence to keep Rome free; they end up with chaos and civil war. In effect, they go to war (by killing Caesar) to keep the peace, which when used by politicians is usually a specious argument. Although Caesar is presented as arrogant, and he shows no mercy or flexibility when petitioned by responsible Romans to end banishment, he is also a man who knows how to wield power. He is a formidable military commander, and most people, except for Cassius, respect him. Brutus himself can think of no accusation to charge Caesar with, except an imagined fear of what Caesar might do if his power continued to grow. This is surely a weak argument. And Brutus, for all his nobility, does not seem to realize that he continually allows himself to be manipulated by stronger or more ruthless personalities, first Cassius and then Antony.

As so often in such situations, the conspirators fall victim to what is called the law of unintended consequences. No one can predict with certainty the consequences of such a momentous act as the assassination of a powerful political and military leader. Certainly, history has judged Brutus and Cassius harshly as traitors. But then, as someone once remarked, the winners write history. No one knows, of course, how Caesar would have behaved had he lived. And Shakespeare leaves us with such a full sense of the humanity of all the characters that definitive judgments about who is right and who is wrong may not do justice to the complexities of life, politics, and human motivation.

Throughout the play, the theme of **fate versus free will** proves important. The various omens and portents in Julius Caesar also raise questions about the force of fate versus free will. The function and meaning of omens in general is puzzling and seemingly contradictory: as announcements of an event or events to come, omens appear to prove the existence of some overarching plan for the future, a prewritten destiny controlled by the gods. On the other hand, as warnings of impending events, omens suggests that human beings have the power to alter that destiny if provided with the correct information in advance. This is evident in Caesar's refusal to heed to the warnings of the Soothsayer and his wife. In Brutus's case it is evident in his easily being manipulated by the conspirators and not going into the reality behind the letters posted to him by the citizens. At the end of the play, in, Act IV, Scene2,Line 269-276, Brutus suggests that both fate and will exist and that one should take advantage of fate by asserting one's will. While subsequent events demonstrate that the force of fate (or perhaps just Antony and Octavius's superior maneuvering) is stronger than Brutus's individual actions. His speech still makes for a graceful, philosophic axiom, showing Brutus to be a man of deep reflection.

Another aspect that comes forth in the play is that both Cesar and Brutus are perceived to be **heroes and villains** in Julius Caesar. At the opening of the play, Caesar is hailed for his conquests and is admired for his apparent humility upon refusing the crown. However, once murdered, Caesar is painted (by Brutus et al) as a power hungry leader with the intentions of enslaving all of Rome. Brutus' speech, which follows Caesar's death, successfully manipulates the plebeian perspective. By the end of his speech, the crowd is hailing Brutus for killing Caesar, whom they now perceive as a great villain. But, the crowd is easily swayed once again when Antony speaks. Following Brutus' remarks, Antony gives Caesar's eulogy, manipulating the crowd with stories of Caesar's kindness, and sharing the details of Caesar's will, which leaves money to every Roman. At the end of Antony's speech, the crowd is once

again supportive of Caesar, mourns his death, and seeks to kill Brutus, Cassius, and the other murderers. The swaying opinions of the plebeians, and the great differences in opinion that the play presents leave the audience to determine who, if anyone, is the hero of the play, and who, if anyone, is the villain.

The **omens** brought forth in the play reveal the seriousness with which Romans looked to them and they are evident throughout Julius Caesar; however ominous warnings and negative omens are often overlooked or misinterpreted. For example, Caesar ignores the soothsayer's warning to "beware the ides of March", ignores Calpurnia's detailed dream of his death, and ignores the negative omen of the sacrificial animal who has no heart. After ignoring these omens, Caesar dies.

In addition, after the festival of Lupercalia, Casca sees many strange omens, such as a man with a burning hand, a lion roaming the streets, and an owl screeching during the day time. Cicero, with whom Casca confers regarding these matters, explains that people with interpret omens as they see fit, inventing their own explanations. True to form, Casca interprets these strange omens as warnings of Caesar's wish to rule all of Rome with an iron hand, and to destroy the Republic. Other omens that play important roles in the play include the appearance of Caesar's ghost and when eagles abandon Cassius' and Brutus' camp and are replaced by vultures.

The **idealism** portrayed in the character of Brutus is another relevant aspect of the play. Brutus wishes for an ideal world. He is happily married, lives in a beautiful home, and is successful according to all measures of Roman living. However, Brutus wishes for perfection in his life, and although he loves Caesar, Brutus fears Caesar is too power hungry, and might possibly destroy the Republic. Cassius understands Brutus' idealism and takes advantage of it in order to manipulate Brutus into joining the conspiracy against Caesar. At heart, it is Brutus' idealism that causes his ultimate downfall. Antony recognizes this fact when addressing Brutus' dead body at the conclusion of the play, saying "This was the noblest Roman of them all".

The **public and private identities** of the characters are important in the play. In Julius Caesar, the audience is able to see both the private and public sides of Caesar and Brutus. Caesar is a powerful confident man who leads great armies and effectively rules the Roman empire, yet he is not without weakness. He is highly superstitious, suffers from epilepsy, and ultimately proves to be human when murdered by his closest friends. Similarly, Brutus is strong and refuses to show weakness when in public, whether it be speaking to the plebeians or leading an army into battle. However, we see through his intimate conversations with his wife Portia and with Cassius, that Brutus is often unsure and greatly pained. Specifically, after fleeing Rome, Brutus learns that his wife has committed suicide, and is heartbroken when discussing it with Cassius. However, as soon as soldiers enter his tent, he pretends to not know of her death, and when told of it, does not react with great emotion. The role of Caesar is a great man, and an ambitious man. His ambition is what worries Brutus, and ultimately leads to Brutus joining the conspiracy to murder Caesar. Cassius is also a very ambitious man, and because he is so jealous of Caesar's power, wishes to kill him to gain more power for himself. Ultimately, the ambition of these two men leads to their downfalls and to virtual anarchy in the streets of Rome. Great ambition leads to great conflict.

16.5 Analysis of important characters of the play

Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar is one of the important characters. The great conqueror Julius Caesar is shown here as a pompous autocrat, a man weak both in body and mind. He is only the titular hero of the play. Although the title of the play is "Julius Caesar", he is not the central character in the action of the play, appearing in only three scenes and dying at the beginning of the third Act. In Act 1 Scene 2, Cassius compounds Brutus's alarm about Caesar's growing power with references to his weak physical state: he lacks stamina and is probably epileptic. Cassius recalls a windy day when he and Caesar stood on the banks of the Tiber River, and Caesar dared him to swim to a distant point. They raced through the water, but Caesar became weak and asked Cassius to save him. Cassius had to drag him from the water. Cassius also recounts an episode when Caesar had a fever in Spain and experienced a seizure. Cassius marvels to think that a man with such a feeble constitution should now stand at the head of the civilized world. He swoons, his left ear is deaf. He is haughty and braggart. He is devoid in physical powers. Caesar is also superstitious. He instructs Antony to touch Calphurnia so that she may shake off sterility. The conspirators charge Caesar with ambition, and his behavior substantiates this judgment: he does vie for absolute power over Rome, reveling in the homage he receives from others and in his conception of himself as a figure that will live on forever in men's minds. However, his faith in his own permanence-in the sense of both his loyalty to principles and his fixture as a public institution-eventually proves his undoing. At first, he stubbornly refuses to heed the nightmares of his wife, Calphurnia, and the supernatural omens pervading the atmosphere. Though he is eventually persuaded not to go to the Senate, Caesar ultimately lets his ambition get the better of him, as the prospect of being crowned king proves too glorious to resist. Julius Caesar was also full of arrogance and pride. Caesar's conflation of his public image with his private self helps bring about his death, since he mistakenly believes that the immortal status granted to his public self somehow protects his mortal body. Still, Caesar was the darling of the citizens. Still, in many ways, Caesar's faith that he is eternal proves valid by the end of the play: by Act V, scene iii, Brutus is attributing his and Cassius's misfortunes to Caesar's power reaching from beyond the grave. Caesar's aura seems to affect the general outcome of events in a mystic manner, while also inspiring Octavius and Antony and strengthening their determination. As Octavius ultimately assumes the title Caesar, Caesar's permanence is indeed established in some respect.

Brutus

The central protagonist of the play is Marcus Brutus and the central psychological drama is his struggle between the conflicting demands of honour, patriotism, and friendship. Brutus emerges as the most complex character in Julius Caesar and is also the play's tragic hero. Marcus Brutus is Caesar's close friend; his ancestors were famed for driving the tyrannical King Tarquin from. Brutus allows himself to be cajoled into joining a group of conspiring senators because of a growing suspicion—implanted by Gaius Cassius—that Caesar intends to turn republican Rome into a monarchy under his own rule. The growing tide of public support soon turns Brutus against Caesar. In his soliloquies, the audience gains insight into the complexities of his motives. He is a powerful public figure, but he appears also as a husband, a master to his servants, a dignified military leader, and a loving friend. The conflicting value systems

that battle with each other in the play as a whole are enacted on a microcosmic level in Brutus's mind. Even after Brutus has committed the assassination with the other members of the conspiracy, questions remain as to whether, in light of his friendship with Caesar, the murder was a noble, decidedly selfless act or proof of a truly evil callousness, a gross indifference to the ties of friendship and a failure to be moved by the power of a truly great man. Brutus's rigid idealism is both his greatest virtue and his most deadly flaw. In the world of the play, where self-serving ambition seems to dominate all other motivations, Brutus lives up to Antony's elegiac description of him as "the noblest of Romans." However, his commitment to principle repeatedly leads him to make miscalculations: wanting to curtail violence, he ignores Cassius's suggestion that the conspirators kill Antony as well as Caesar. In another moment of naïve idealism, he again ignores Cassius's advice and allows Antony to speak a funeral oration over Caesar's body. As a result, Brutus forfeits the authority of having the last word on the murder and thus allows Antony to incite the plebeians to riot against him and the other conspirators. Brutus later endangers his good relationship with Cassius by self-righteously condemning what he sees as dishonorable fund-raising tactics on Cassius's part. In all of these episodes, Brutus acts out of a desire to limit the self-serving aspects of his actions; ironically, however, in each incident he dooms the very cause that he seeks to promote, thus serving no one at all.

Antony

Antony is a sportsman turned statesman and proves strong in all of the ways that Brutus proves weak. He is an eloquent orator and a quick witted schemer. He has a great knowledge of men and affairs. There can be no doubt about his love towards Caesar. His impulsive, improvisatory nature serves him perfectly, first to persuade the conspirators that he is on their side, thus gaining their leniency, and then to persuade the plebeians of the conspirators' injustice, thus gaining the masses' political support. Not too scrupulous to stoop to deceit and duplicity, as Brutus claims to be, Antony proves himself a consummate politician, using gestures and skilled rhetoric to his advantage. After Caesar's murder he disposes off the threat of Cassius by directing his attention to the more powerful and gullible Brutus, whom he keeps on the defensive by repeating that he will be friends if he receives a satisfactory explanation. He disposes of the remaining conspirators by boldly raising the subject of his apparent hypocrisy in making friends with his friend's murderers and by then shrewdly diverting his comments to the nobility of Caesar. This is much in the manner that he later turns the citizens to rebellion by professing that he does not want to stir them up. Antony, in reality, wants two things: to avenge Caesar's murder and to rule Rome. In order to do both, he first undermines public confidence in the republicans, and second, he drives them from power by creating a chaotic situation that will allow him to seize power in their place.

He responds to subtle cues among both his nemeses and his allies to know exactly how he must conduct himself at each particular moment in order to gain the most advantage. In both his eulogy for Caesar and the play as a whole, Antony is adept at tailoring his words and actions to his audiences' desires. After Caesar's death, however, Mark Antony, with a subtle and eloquent speech over Caesar's corpse—the much-quoted *Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears...*—deftly turns public opinion against the assassins by manipulating the emotions of the common people, in contrast to the rational tone of Brutus's speech. Antony rouses the mob to

drive the conspirators from Rome. Antony, each with the aim of persuading the crowd to his side. We observe the effect of his witty speech on the crowd and see the power that words can have—how they can stir emotion, alter opinion, and induce action. Unlike Brutus, who prides himself on acting solely with respect to virtue and blinding himself to his personal concerns, Antony never separates his private affairs from his public actions. He is the "masker and a reveler." (Cassius ActV. Scene1.) He has passion and can go to excesses and still remain in character. He is underestimated by everyone and therefore can blossom in plain view of the audience. Brutus is the difficult, but thankless part of the play. He is full of inner struggle and his philosophy is that of a man whose believes his emotions must never show. Yet, he must have enough weight behind him to make the audience believe that he could be a central figure in a government and be able to sway a crowd with force of words and personality. At the conclusion of the play, when Brutus and Cassius are dead and the republicans thoroughly defeated, he publicly praises Brutus in order to set about healing the political wounds of Rome.

The question is, How to judge Marc Antony? He has admirable loyalty to Julius Caesar. He bravely meets the conspirators and offers his life at their hands. Yes, he did send a servant first to ask permission to come, but it was still a brave act. Moreover, he has genuine regard for the safety of Octavius. He tells Octavius' servant to tell Octavius not to come into the city because it is not safe. (Act III Scene1) His sadness at the death of Caesar is real and so is his anger. And yet, . . . is he noble? By the end of the speech to the Romans, he has set a wild and murderous mob out to create the havoc he sought. He knows the mob may do "mischief," but he cares not. (Act III, Scene2) When scene four begins, we see a cold, calculating Antony who damns his nephew "with a spot." (Act IV Scene1) He happily cuts Lepidus out of the political pie all the while confidently teaching Octavius the ways of politics. (Act IV Scene1) Antony is nakedly ambitious. Caesar dies for his ambition, yet every man in the play has to suffer the consequences of the actions.

Cassius:

Cassius is clearly a contradictory character. He is envious of Caesar and wants to move up in the Roman world by eliminating Caesar and putting in the more malleable Brutus into power. He is deceitful and lying and he knows it. If he were Brutus and Brutus Cassius, he would not listen to Cassius. And yet, weak of moral character though he is, he does seem to love Brutus and admire him. With Brutus he feels noble and brave. Cassius is a man who thought he could manipulate Brutus, but it turns out that Brutus turns on him and contradicts every one of Cassius' decisions from March 14 on to the end of the play. Yet he seems to truly love Brutus and wants his good opinion. He is one of Shakespeare's great complicated characters.

Casca:

Shakespeare presents different visions of Casca to the audience and then leaves them to imagine what it might mean to play this character on stage. In Act I, Scene 2, Casca shouts for the crowd to be quiet when Caesar speaks. He is an obsequious courtier that an Elizabethan audience would have recognized. He kisses up to Caesar at every chance. "Peace, ho, Caesar speaks!" he shouts. Later in that same scene Cassius gets his attention and speaks to him privately and we learn that Casca hates Caesar and scorns him to his friends. Thus a dual personality is revealed by his

actions. Casca brags that he wishes he could have cut Caesar's throat when he had the chance. With his friends he is cynical and sarcastic and no longer the toady. The Elizabethans would recognize this character also. In Act I, Scene 3, Casca is afraid of the lightening and tells mad and wild stories about what he has seen that night. He is craven and cowardly, yet by the end of the scene he tells Cassius, "I will set this foot of mine as far/As who goes farthest." This is the third personality of a character in one act. They are all consistent with a type of person that Casca is, but they are each different from the others. When we next see Casca, he is with the conspirators at Brutus' house. There he is confident and brave, though they talk of killing the emperor. Finally, Casca is the first to stab Caesar.

16.6 Important Scene of the Play

Scene of Caesar's Murder

Act III Scene 1

Caesar's assassination is perhaps the most famous part of the play, about halfway through. After ignoring the soothsayer as well as his wife's own premonitions, Caesar comes to the Senate. The conspirators create a superficial motive for the assassination by means of a petition brought by Metellus Cimber, pleading on behalf of his banished brother. His refusal to pardon Metellus's banished brother serves to show that his belief in the sanctity of his own authority is unwavering up to the moment that he is killed. Caesar, predictably, rejects the petition, Casca grazes Caesar in the back of his neck, and the others follow in stabbing him; Brutus is last. At this point, Caesar utters the famous line "*Et tu, Brute?*" ("And you, Brutus?", *i.e.* "You too, Brutus?"). Shakespeare has him add, "Then fall, Caesar," suggesting that Caesar did not want to survive such treachery. The conspirators make clear that they did this act for Rome, not for their own purposes and do not attempt to flee the scene but act victorious.

This scene begins with Caesar's refusal to Artemidorus's pleas to speak with him, saying that he gives last priority to his nearest, most personal concerns. He thus again demonstrates a split between his public and private selves, endangering himself by believing that his public self is so strong that his private self cannot be harmed. This sense of invulnerability manifests itself clearly when Caesar compares himself to the North Star, which never moves from its position at the center of the sky: "constant as the Northern Star, / Of whose true fixed and resting quality / There is no fellow in the firmament. / [the] one in all [that] doth hold his place" (Line 60-65). He not only considers himself steadfast but also infallible, beyond the questioning of mortal men, as he compares the foolish idea of him being persuaded of something to the impossible act of hefting the weight of Mount Olympus. In positioning himself thus as a divine figure (the Romans deified certain beloved figures, such as popular leaders, and believed that, upon dying, these figures became ensconced in the firmament), Caesar reveals his belief that he is truly a god. His refusal to pardon Metellus's banished brother serves to show that his belief in the sanctity of his own authority is unwavering up to the moment that he is killed. Cassius suggests that future generations will remember, repeat, and retell the conspirators' actions in the years to come. The statement constitutes a self-referential moment in the play, since Shakespeare's play itself is a retelling of a retelling. It was Plutarch who asserted that Caesar ceased to defend himself upon recognizing Brutus among the conspirators, and Plutarch who first gave Caesar his famous last words, which Shakespeare preserves in the original

Latin, "Et tu, Brute?" ("And you, Brutus?" [Line76]). With these words, Caesar apprehends the immensity of the plot to kill him—a plot so total that it includes even his friends—and simultaneously levels a heartbroken reproach at his former friend. By Shakespeare's time, Plutarch's lines had already achieved fame, and an Elizabethan audience would likely have anticipated them in the murder scene. It is Shakespeare's deft hand of creation, however, that brings Antony to the scene. Despairing over Caesar's death, Antony knows that he poses a danger to the conspirators and that he must pretend to support them if he wants to survive. He assures them that they have his allegiance and shakes their hands, thus smearing himself with Caesar's blood and marking Trebonius with blood as well. By marking Trebonius, Antony may be silently insisting on Trebonius's guilt in the murder, even if his part was less direct than that of the other conspirators. Yet he does so in a handshake, an apparent gesture of allegiance. While the blood on Trebonius's hands marks him as a conspirator, the blood on Antony's hands, like war paint, marks him as the self-appointed instrument for vengeance against Caesar's killers. Cassius's worries about Antony's rhetorical skill prove justified. The first scene of the play clearly illustrates the fickleness of the multitude, which hastens to cheer Caesar's triumph over a man whom it once adored. Surely the conspirators run a great risk by letting such a fickle audience listen to the mournful Antony. Yet, blinded by his conception of the assassination as a noble deed done for the people and one that the people must thus necessarily appreciate, Brutus believes that the masses will respond most strongly not to Antony's words but to the fact that the conspirators have allowed him to speak at all. Because he feels that he himself, by helping to murder a dear friend, has sacrificed the most, Brutus believes that he will be respected for giving priority to public matters over private ones. We will see, however, that Brutus's misjudgment will lead to his own downfall: he grossly underestimates Antony's oratorical skill and overestimates the people's conception of virtue.

16.7 Julius Caesar's Rise To Power and Elizabethan Age

Caesar's meteoric rise to power reflects English sentiment during the Elizabethan age about the consolidation of power in other parts of Europe. The strengthening of the absolutist monarchies in such sovereignties as France and Spain during the sixteenth century threatened the stability of the somewhat more balanced English political system, which, though it was hardly democratic in the modern sense of the word, at least provided nobles and elected representatives with some means of checking royal authority. Caesar's ascendance helped to effect Rome's transition from republic to empire, and Shakespeare's depiction of the prospect of Caesar's assumption of dictatorial power can be seen as a comment upon the gradual shift toward centralization of power that was taking place in Europe. In addition, Shakespeare's illustration of the fickleness of the Roman public proves particularly relevant to the English political scene of the time. Queen Elizabeth I was nearing the end of her life but had neither produced nor named an heir. Anxiety mounted concerning who her successor would be. People feared that without resort to the established, accepted means of transferring power—passing it down the family line—England might plunge into the sort of chaotic power struggle that had plagued it in the fifteenth century, during the Wars of the Roses. In the play, Flavius and Marullus's interest in controlling the populace lays the groundwork for Brutus's and Antony's manipulations of public opinion after Caesar's death. Shakespeare thus makes it clear that the struggle for power will involve a battle

among the leaders to win public favor with displays of bravery and convincing rhetoric. Considering political history in the centuries after Shakespeare wrote Julius Caesar, especially in the twentieth century, when Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler consolidated their respective regimes by whipping up in the masses the overzealous nationalism that had pervaded nineteenth-century Italy and Germany, the play is remarkably prescient.

16.8 Let us Sum up

In this unit you have acquired knowledge and have been given practice :

- to know about the various issues presented in the play
- to know about the important characters of the play
- to know and understand the important soliloquies in the play
- to understand relevance of Julius Caesar with respect to Elizabethan Age
- to understand the Most important scene of the play
- to deal with the essay type questions related to the topics considered.

Unit - 17

Social and Cultural History from Caroline to Reformation

Structure

17.0 Objectives

In this unit you are going to know

- about the social and cultural history of Puritan period,
- about restoration period,
- about the important movements and events and
- about the important literary writings of both the period

17.1 Introduction

In this unit you are going to study literary, social and cultural history of the puritan age and Restoration age. These two periods mark an important place in the history of England.

17.2 General Characterstics Of The Age

1. **Civil War:** The entire period was dominated by the civil war, which divided the people into two fractions, one loyal to the King and the others opposed him. English people had remained one and united and loyal to sovereign. The crisis began when James I, who had recoined the right of royalty from an Act of Parliament, gave too much premium to the Divine Right and began to ignore Parliament which had created him. The Puritans, who had become a potent force in the social life of the age, heralded the movement for constitutional reforms. The hostilities which began in 1642 lasted till the execution of Charles I in 1649. There was a little political stability during the interrenum of eleven years which followed. These turbulent years saw the establishment of Commonwealth, the rise

of Oliver Cromwell, the confusion which followed upon his death, and finally, the restoration of monarchy in 1660.

2. **The Puritan movement:** The Renaissance, which exercised immense influence on Elizabethan literature, was essentially pagan and sensuous. It did not concern the moral nature of man; it brought little from the despotism of rulers. The Puritans were the members of that party of English Protestants who regarded the reformation of the church under Elizabeth as incomplete, and called for further purification. Puritanism had two main aims: the first was individual and civil liberty and the second was personal righteousness. "The Puritan Movement", says W.J. Long, "may be regarded a second and greater Renaissance, a rebirth of the moral nature of man following the intellectual awakening of Europe in the 15th and the sixteenth centuries."

3. **Changing Ideals:** The political upheaval of the period is summed up in the terrible struggle between the king and parliament, which resulted in the death of Charles at the block and the establishment of the common wealth under Cromwell. For centuries the English people had been wonderfully loyal to their sovereigns but deeper than their loyalty to kings was the Old Saxon love for personal liberty. At times, as in the day of Alfred and Elizabeth, the two ideals went hand in hand but more often they were in open strife, and a final struggle for supremacy was inevitable. The crisis came when James I, who had received the right of royalty from an act of Parliament, began, by the assumption of "divine right", to ignore the Parliament which had created him. The blasphemy of a man's divine right to rule his fellow men was ended.

4. **Religious Ideal:** Religiously the age was one of even greater ferment than that which marked the beginning of the Reformation. A great ideal, the ideal of a national church, was pounding to pieces, like a ship in the breakers, and in the confusion of such an hour action of the various sects was like that of frantic passengers, each striving to save his possessions from the wreck. It is intensely interesting to note that Charles called Irish rebels and Scotch Highlanders to his aid by promising to restore their national religions and that the English Puritans, turning to Scotland for help, entered into the solemn Covenant of 1643, establishing a national Presbyterianism.

17.3 Literary Charcterstics Of The Age

In the literature also the Puritan age was one of confusion, due to breaking up of old ideals. Medieval standards of chivalry, the impossible loves and romances of which Spencer furnished the types, perished no less surely than the ideal of a national church; and in the absence of any fixed standard of literacy criticism there was nothing to prevent the exaggeration of the "metaphysical" poets, who are the literary parallels to religious sects like the Anabaptists. Poetry took a new and starling forms in Donne and Herbert, and prose became as somber as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy.* The spiritual gloom which sooner or later fastens upon all the writers of this age, and which is unjustly attributed to Puritan influence, is due to the breaking up of all standards in government and religion. This so called gloomy age produced some minor poems of exquisite workmanship, and one great master of verse whose work would glorify any age or people,-John Milton, in whom the in dominate Puritan spirit finds its noblest expression.

(i) The influence of Puritanism; The influence of the Puritanism upon English life and literature was profound. The spirit which it introduced was fine and noble but it was hard and stern. The Puritan's integrity and uprightness is unquestionable but

his fanaticism, his moroseness and the narrowness of his outlook and sympathies were deplorable. In his over-enthusiasm to react against prevailing abuses, he denounced the good things of life, condemned science and art, ignored the appreciation of beauty, which invigorates secular life. Puritanism destroyed human culture and sought to confine human culture with in the circumscribed field of its own particular interests. It was fatal to both art and literature.

(**ii) Want of Vitality and Concreteness:** The literature of this period lacks in concreteness and vitality. Milton is concerned rather with theorizing about life, his lines roll over the mind with sonorous majesty, now and again thrilling us as Shakespeare did with the fine excess of creative genius, but more often impressing us with their Stateline and power, than moving us by their tenderness and passion.

(iii) Want of the Spirit of Unity: During this period James I and Charles II were hostile to the interests of the people. The country was divided by the struggle for political and religious liberty; and the literature was as divided in spirit as were the struggling parties.

(iv) Dominance of Critical and Intellectual Spirit: In the literature of the Puritan period one looks in vain for romantic ardor.Even in the lyrics and love poems a critical, intellectual spirit takes its place, and whatever romance asserts itself is in form rather than in feeling, a fantastic and artificial adornment of speech rather than the natural utterance of a heart in which sentiment is so strong and true that poetry is its only expression.

(v) Decay of Drama: This period is remarkable for the decay of drama. The civil disturbances and the strong opposition of the Puritans was the main cause of the collapse of drama. The actual dramatic work of the period was small and unimportant. The closing of the theatres in 1642 gave a final jolt to the development of drama.

17.4 Puritan and Elizabethan Literature: Differences

There are three main characteristics in which Puritan literature differs from that of the preceding age :(1) Elizabethan literature, with all its diversity, had a marked unity in spirit, resulting from the patriotism of all classes and their devotion to a queen who, with all her faults, sought first the nation's welfare. Under the Stuarts all this was changed. The kings were the open enemies of all the people; the country was divided by the struggle for political and religious liberty; and the literature was as divided in spirit as were the struggling parties. (2) Elizabethan literature is generally inspiring; it throbs with youth and hope and vitality. That which follows speaks of age and sadness; even its brightest hours are followed by gloom and by the pessimism in separable from the passing of old standards. (3)Elizabethan literature is intensely romantic the romance springs from the heart of youth, and believes all things even impossible. The great schoolman's *credo*, "I believe because it is impossible", is a better expression of Elizabethan literature than of mediaeval theology. In the literature of the Puritan period one looks in vain for romantic ardor.

17.5 Literature Of The Puritan Period

The Transitional Poets: When one attempts to classify the literature of the first half of the seventeenth century, from the death of Elizabeth (1603) to the Restoration (1660), he realizes the impossibility of grouping poets by any accurate standard. The

classifications attempted here have small dependence upon dates or sovereigns, and are suggestive rather than accurate. Thus Shakespeare and Bacon wrote largely in the reign of James I, but their work is Elizabethan in spirit; and Bunyan is no less a Purtain because he happened to write after the Restoration. The name Metaphysical poets, given by Dr. Johnson, is somewhat suggestive but not descriptive of the followers of Donne; the name Caroline or Cavalier poets brings to mind the careless temper of the Royalists who followed King Charles with a devotion of which he was unworthy; and the name Spenserian poets recalls the little band of dreamers who clung to Spenser's ideal, even while his romantic medieval castle was battered down by Science at one gate and Puritanism at the other. At beginning of this bewildering confusion of ideals expressed in literature, we note a few writers who are generally known as Jacobean poets, but whom we have called the Transition poets because, with the later dramatists, they show clearly the changing standards of the age.

Samuel Daniel (1562-1619) :- Daniel, who is often classed with the first Metaphysical poets, is interesting to us for two reasons - for his use of the artificial sonnet, and for his literary description of Spenser as a model for poets. His *Delia*, a cycle of sonnets modeled, perhaps, after Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, helped to fix the custom of celebrating love or friendship by a series of sonnets, to which some pastoral pseudonym was affixed. In his sonnets, many of which rank with Shakespeare's and in his later poetry, especially the beautiful *Complaint of Rosamond* and his *Civil Wars* he aimed solely at grace of expression and became influential in giving to English poetry a greater individuality and independence that it had been ever known.

17.6 Metaphysical Poets

The Metaphysical Poets: - This name - which was given by Dr. Johnson in derision because of the fantastic form of Donne's poetry - is often applied to all minor poets of the Puritan Age.

Donne and Herbert, who in different ways are the types of revolt against earlier forms and standards of poetry, in feeling and imagery both are poets of a high order, but in style and expression they are the leaders of the fantastic school whose influence largely dominated poetry during the half century of the Puritan period. Dr. Jonson borrowed this term from the phrase of Dryden 'He affects the metaphysics'. Two things were common among all the Metaphysical poets, learning with a kind of misplaced wit and the desire to say something which had never been said before and in their poetry we find a very fine blend of intellect and emotion but artificiality and hyperbolic expression could not keep itself away from this Metaphysical poetry.

1. **John Donne (1537-1631):** John Donne was the founder of the metaphysical school of poetry, and he is the greatest of the poets of this school. His works include Satires, Songs and Sonnets, Elegies, which were published posthumously about 1633. His poetry falls naturally into three divisions:

   (I) **Love poetry**: Donne's love poetry was written in his brilliant and turbulent youth. His love poems, the *Songs and Sonnets*, are intense and subtle analyses of all the moods of a lover, expressed in vivid and startling language which is colloquial rather than conventional. A vein of satire runs even in his love poetry. His best known love poems are *Aire and Angels, A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day, A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning and Extasie.*

   (ii) Religious Poems: Donne's religious poetry was written after 1610. *Holy*

Sonnets and lyrics such as a *hymn to God* the *Father* are his memorable religious poems. His religious or devotional poems, though they probe and question, are nonetheless never sermons, but rather confessions or prayers. His love poems are noticeable for intellectual subtlety, the scholastic learning, and the "wit" and "conceits "of the love poems.

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

(iv) **Philosophical Poems**: These reveal a depth of philosophy, a subtlety of reasoning, a blend of thought and devotion, a mingling of the homely and the sublime, the light and the serious, which make them full of variety and surprise. Donne's poetry bears the stamp of his scholarship. His images are far-fetched, obscure, unusual and striking.

2. **George Herbert (1593-1633):** Herbert's Chief work, *The Temple*, consists of over one hundred and fifty short poems suggested by the Church, her holidays and ceremonials and the experiences of the Christian life. The first poem, *The Church Porch*, is the longest and though polished with a care that foreshadows the classic school, the least poetical. It is a wonderful collection of condensed sermons wise precepts and moral lessons suggesting Chaucer's *Good Counsel* Pope's *Essay on Man*, and Polonius 's advice to Laerters, in Hamlet; only it is more packed with thought than any of these. Along with the delicate didactic vein, he shows a quaintness and daintiness characteristic of the time. He preferred simple, homely, racy language and naturalness of expression.

3. **Richard Crawshaw (1613-49):** Richard crawshaw's best work is in *Steps to the Temple (1646*). Some of his poems are secular but he is at his best in his religious poems. To him religion meant everything. Crawshaw's poetry is noticeable for striking but fantastic conceits, for its religious fire and fervor.

4. **Henry Vaughan (1622-95):** His books include *Poems* (1646), *Olor Iscanus* (1651), *Silex Scintillans* (1650) and *Thalia Rediviva* (1678). In the beginning Vaughan composed secular poems under the influence of Ben Jonson. They are *Poems* and *Silex Scientillons.* Vaughan like Crawshaw was at heart a mystic. He was more at home in sacred than in secular verse. His poems reveal his good intellectual power and originality.

5. **Abraham Cowley (1618-67):** Cowley distinguished himself as a classical scholar. He was a man of versatile literary interests, who wrote poems, plays, essays and histories. He wrote an epical romance *Pyramus and Thisbe* (1628) at the age of ten, and two years later he wrote *Constantia and Philatus*. His well known poems are *The Mistress* (1647), a collection of love poems, *The Davidie* (1656) and the *Pindaric Odes*. Cowley is important as a transitional poet of this period. He was the last of the metaphysical poets and in many respects he foreshadows the English classicists. He deserved to be numbered among the disciples of Donne. His knowledge of the ancients whom he imitated, entitles him to be considered a humanist. With all his piety, his fantasy, his conceits and his Pindaric, Cowley is, first of all, an intellectual.

6. **Andrew Marvell (1621-78):** Marvell's poems, which were circulated in

manuscript during his life, have been described, says Edward Albert,"as the finest flower of serious and secular verse. Marvel's work has the subtlety of wit, the passionate argument and learned imagery of the metaphysical, combined with the clarity and control of the classical followers of Jonson and the gracefulness of Cavaliers. His rhythms are flexible, his melody delicate. He loved nature and the freshness of gardens and in all his work there is a high seriousness and absolute sincerity.

The Cavalier Poets: In the literature of any age there are generally found two distinct tendencies. The first expresses the dominant spirit of the times; the second, a secret or an open rebellion. So in this age, side by side with the serious and rational Puritan lives the gallant and trivial Cavalier. The Puritan finds expression in the best poetry of the period, from Donne to Milton and in prose of Baxter and Bunyan, the Cavalier in a small group of poets - Herrick, Lovelace, Suckling, and Care, who write songs generally in lighter vein, gay, trivial, often licentious, but who cannot altogether escape the tremendous seriousness of Puritanism.Caveliers lyrics were notable for sweetness and charm and the cavalier poets most dealt with the themes of love and war and like Ben Jonson were always concise lucid and polished

Thomas Carew (1598 - 1639): -Carew may be called the inventor of Cavalier love poetry and to him, more than to any other, is due to peculiar combination of the sensual and the religious which marked most of the minor poets of the seventeenth century. As a lyric poet he is the first of his age.

Robert Herrick (1591-1674): The country life caught its spirit in many of his lyrics, a few of which, like, *Corinna Maying* "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,' and *To Daffodils*, are among the best known in our language. His poems cover a wide range, from trivial love songs, pagan in spirit, to hymns of deep religious feeling.

Suckling and Lovlace: Sir John Suckling (1609-1642) was one of the most brilliant wits of the court of Charles I, who wrote poetry as he exercised a horse or fought a duel, because it was considered a gentleman's accomplishment in those days. Sir Richard Lovelace (1618-1658) offers a remarkable parallel to Suckling, and the two are often classed together as perfect representatives of the followers of King Charles. Lovelace's *Lucasta*, a volume of love lyrics is generally on a higher plan than Suckling's work and a few of the poems like. *To Lucasta* and *To Althea from Prison* deserve the secure place they have won.

17.7 John Milton

Shakespeare and Milton are the two figures that tower conspicuously above the goodly fellowship of men who have made our literature famous. Each is representative of the age that produced him, and together they form a suggestive commentary upon the two forces that rule our humanity, the force of impulse and the force of a fixed purpose. Shakespeare is the poet of impulse of the loves, hates, fears, jealousies, and ambitious that swayed the men of his age. Milton is the poet of steadfast will and purpose who moves like a god amid the fears and hopes and changing impulses of the world, regarding them as trivial and momentary things that can never swerve a great soul from its course.John Milton was the first English poet who gave a new conception of poetic art - sublimity and purity. For him poetry was a high and grave thing. Byron said that Miltonic meant sublime. He chose grand themes for his poetry.

Life and works of John Milton: Born on December 9, 1608 in London, Milton

spent most of his boyhood in this city. His father was a remarkable man and had considerable musical talents. It was from his father that John Milton inherited love for music. In the spring of 1625 Milton went to Cambridge for study and spent there seven years. He was educated in Christ's college and had a successful academic career. From the very beginning he had the passion of the student. The young Milton showed signs of remarkable literary promise. Proud and austere even at college, he conceived as lofty a view of the poet's calling a said Wordsworth two centuries later, and like Wordsworth, felt himself to be a consecrated spirit.Milton's foreign tour and his stay in Italy proved of very great significance in his life and in his life and his poetic career. Milton's desire to write something that "the world would not let willingly die", was prevented from being fulfilled for twenty years owing to his absorption in his political affairs and in the religious controversies of the day. During the twenty year of civil commotion, he wrote, except a few sonnets, no poetry, but was fertile in controversial prose. These twenty years (1640-1660) constitute a significant phase of his personal life in as much as his attitude towards the question of divorce and marriage was formed during this period. During the whole of the period from 1639 to 1649 Milton devoted himself entirely to politics and what he believed to be the call of duty to his country. In 1658 he began work on Paradise lost and thus abandoning politics he returned finally to poetry. At the Restoration in 1660, Milton was arrested but was subsequently released after which he lived a quiet life at Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields. He finished the published the composition of *Paradise Lost* in 1664 which was published three years later. In 1671, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonists* were published. Milton got sufficient recognition of and renown for his poetical achievements.

Those best known and most frequently quoted of Milton's odes are *On His Deceased Wife*, *To the Nightingale*, *On Reaching the Age of Twenty Three*, *The Massacre in Piedmont* and the *On His Blindness*.

OF Milton Prose *Areopagitica* has perhaps the most permanent interest and is best worth reading. In Milton's time there was a law forbidding the publication of books until they were indorsed by the official censor. Needless to say, the censor, holding his office and salary by favor, was naturally more concerned with the divine right of kings and bishops than with the delights of literature, and many books were suppressed for no better reason than that they were displeasing to the authorities. Milton protested against this as against every other form of tyranny and his *Areopagitica*- so called from the *Areopagus* or *Forum of Athens,* the place of public appeal, and the Mars Hill of St. Paul's address-is the most famous plea in English for the freedom of the press.

17.8 Prose Writers of Puritan Age

As there is but one poet great enough to express the Puritan spirit, so there is but one commanding prose writer:

John Bunyan(1628-1688) : Sir, John Bunyan was the greatest prose writer of the age of Milton. Bunyan was born in 1628 and died in 1688. Bunyan is remarkable for his simple and homely style, which can be at times, both forceful and eloquent, in English Literature. His name has been included among the greatest writers of English and his works are of a permanent humanity.Milton was the child of he Renaissance, inheritor of all its culture, and the most profoundly educated man of his age. Bunyan

was a poor, uneducated thinker. From the Renaissance he inherited nothing but from the Reformation he received an excess of that spiritual independence which has caused the Puritan struggle for liberty. These two men, representing the extremes of English life in the seventeenth century, wrote the two works that stand to-day for the mighty Puritan spirit. One gave us the only epic since *Beowulf:* the other gave us our only great allegory, which has been read more than any other book in our language save the Bible.

Robert Burton (1577-1640) :- Burton is famous chiefly as the author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* one of the most astonishing books in all literature, which appeared in 1621. Burton was a clergyman of the Established Church, an incomprehensible genius, given to broodings and melancholy and to reading of every conceivable kind of literature.

Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682) Browne's great work is the Religio Medici, i.e. The Religion of a Physician (1642), which met with most unusual success. He is the first poet to use the couplet form consistently in the bulk of his poetry.

17.9 The Restoration Period

1. **The Restoration (1660) :** The Restoration of Charles II brought about a revolutionary change in life and literature. During this period gravity, spiritual zeal moral earnestness and decorum in all things, which distinguished the commonwealth period were thrown to winds. The natural instincts that were suppressed during the Puritan period came to violent excesses. The Restoration encouraged a levity that often became immoral and indecent. Along with much that is same and powerful this latter tendency is prominent in the writing of the time, especially in the comedies."

   The king, a thorough debauch, had a number of mistresses and numerous children. Corrupt and degenerate courtiers surrounded him. Profligacy was glorified in the royal court. Corruption was rampant in all walks of life. The great Fire of 1665 and the Plague that followed were popularly regarded as suitable punishments for the sins of the profligate and Selfish king. While London was burning and the people were suffering the King and his nobles kept up their revels.

2. **Religious and Political Quarrels :** This era also witnessed the rise of two political parties - the Whigs and the Tories, which were to play a significant role in English politics. The Whigs sought to limit the royal power in the interests of the people and the Parliament. The Tories supported the "Divine Right" theory of the king, and strove to restrain the growing power of the people in the interest of the hereditary rulers. The rise of these political parties gave a fresh importance to men of literary ability, for both parties tried to enlist their support with bribes and pensions. Almost all the writers of this period had political affiliations. Dryden was a Tory.

3. **The Revolution (1688) :-** James II ascended the throne in 1685. He soon revealed his Roman Catholic prejudices and by underhand means he tried to establish Catholicism in the country. He became unpopular within three years and the nation as a whole rose against him.The bloodless revolution of 1688 called the Protestant William and Mary of Orange to the throne. The country was once again restored to health and sanity. The religious passions diminished in intensity. The literature of the succeeding years tended to emphasize the political rather

than the religious side of public affairs.

17.10 Literary Characterstics Of The Age

In the literature of the Restoration we note a sudden breaking away from old standards, just as society broke away from the restrains of Puritanism. Many of the literary men had been driven out of England with Charles and his court or else had followed their patrons into exile in the days of the common wealth. On their return they renounced old ideals and demanded that English poetry and drama should follow the style to which they had become accustomed in the gayety of Paris.

The writers of the age developed two marked tendencies of their own, - the tendency to realism, and the tendency to that preciseness and elegance of expression which marks our literature for the next hundred years.

In realism -that is, the representation of men exactly as they are the expression of the plain, unvarnished truth with out regard to ideals or romance-the tendency was at first thoroughly bad. The early Restoration writers sought to paint realistic pictures of a corrupt court and society.

The second tendency of the age was toward directness and simplicity of expression and to this excellent tendency our literature is greatly indebted.

It is largely due to Dryden that writers developed that formalism of style, that precise, almost mathematical elegance, miscalled which ruled English Literature for the next century. Another thing about Restoration Literature is the adoption of the heroic couplet that is two iambic pentameter lines, which rime together as the most suitable form of poetry. Waller who began to use it in 1623 is generally regarded as the father of the heroic couplet.

(i) **Social and Literary Changes**: The Restoration says Matthew Arnold marks the real moment of birth of our modern English prose. It is by its organism-an organism opposed to length and involvement and enabling us to be clear plain and short - that English prose after the Restoration breaks with the style of the times preceding it, finds the true law of prose and becomes modern, becomes, in spite of superficial differences the style of our own day. From the historical point of view the establishment of modern English prose is the greatest single fact in the literary annals of the Age of Dryden.

(ii) **The Growth of Science:** The growing interest in rationalism and the advancement of science greatly aided the general movement towards precision and the lucidity of expression which are the essential qualities of good prose style. The foundation of the Royal Society (1662), which was restricted in the beginning to physical, and natural sciences aimed at evolving clearness plainness conversational ease and directness of expression for their members as far as their writing is concerned.

(iii) **Rise of Journalism:** It was an age of unceasing political and religious excitement. Various groups and sects pioneered the development of that sort of evanescent literature, which we now class under the head of journalism, so air their opinions on various topics of current interest. Numerous pamphlets were written and many periodicals came into existence. For the first time the general reader and the ready writer appeared together, each reacting upon the other. This change of reading public means those things, which had formerly been treated in a dry, pedantic and difficult way, had to be made simple and pleasant.

(iv) **French Influence**: In advance of all other European countries, France had already evolved a kind of prose which in its clearness, flexibility, plainness and good taste was admirably adapted for all the purposes of ordinary exposition, discussion and social intercourse. This prose provided just the model that the English prose writers needed for their guidance.

17.11 Prose Writers of Restoration Period

1. **Dryden:-**John Dryden was born in 1631, at Aldwinkle, Northampton shire. He was the son of the Rev. Erasmus Dryden and Mary Pickering his wife both of whom belonged to old country families with strong Puritan tendencies. He has his early education at Westminster school where he made his first attempt at verse making in an elegy to the memory of a school fellow. In 1650 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge where he wrote some ordinary verse. Though of remarkable literary taste, he showed little evidence of literary ability up to the age of thirty. By his training and family connections, he was allied to the Puritan Party

   The Preface to Fables is generally regarded as a splendid example of the new prose style developed by Dryden and his followers.

2. **Samuel Butler (1612-1680) :—** Butler's *Hudibras*, a pointed satire on Puritans, was published respectively in 1663, 1664 and 1668. It is an lineal descent from the comic doggerel of Skelton who indeed paved the way for Restoration Satirists. It is a long savage attack on the Parliamentary party and pleased the fancy of the time. The name "Hudibras" comes from the Faerie Queens."

17.12 Restoration Drama

The theatres which were closed in 1642 were opened during the Restoration. The theatre had degenerated completely in to a thing of the court. The middle classes for the most parts kept away from the theatre. The playhouse had become the riotous haunt of the upper classes and as a sequence, the plays written for the playhouse were distinctly calculated by the authors to appeal to a courtly and cavaliers audience. It is this that explains both the rise of the heroic tragedy and the development of the comedy of manners. They appealed to artificial aristocratic sentiments on the subject of honor; the other reflected the morally vicious but intellectually brilliant atmosphere of the saloons and the chocolate houses. Restoration affected the revival of Drama especially the comedy; in the sphere of Tragedy heroic plays were produced and the imitative works of the new school were of a rigid nature and they evolved a number of rules purporting to the avoidance of enthusiasm, strict care and accuracy in poetical technique and humble imitation of the style of the Latin classics.

17.13 The Restoration Tragedy Or The Heroic Play

The heroic tragedy, often but not always written in rhymed couplets and always dealing in a high rhetorical manner with the conflict between love and honor or love and duty, is a characteristic phenomenon of 1660s and 1670s. Both foreign and native influences contributed to the rise of the heroic tragedy.

1. **The Foreign Influences:** The plays of Corneille and Racine, the French dramatists, were translated into English and they exercised great influence on the dramatists of the Restoration England. The introduction of the new style by Roger Boyle, that is, the employment of rime in place of blank verse in these heroic plays was due to the influence of France.

2. **The Native Influences:** The influence of the Royal Court of Charles II was paramount on dramatists and actors alike. It reflects the changing mortal, spiritual and social conditions of the time.

3. **Superb Characters:** The stress on velour, beauty and love necessitated the introduction of the wonderfully brave hero and the virtuously fair heroine. Antony in Dryden's *All For Love* is a typical hero of the Restoration Tragedy.

4. **Treatment of Love :** Love is the central factor in the Restoration Tragedy. It was not a normal kind of love. It was a legacy perhaps from the platonic love. It was considered superior to all virtues. Antony in *All for Love* renounces all - family, friends, country and kingdom - for love's sake. Love is depicted as a perfect virtue.

5. **The Classical Form :** The classical form implied the style which was employed by Ben Jonson and Racine. The three classical unities were observed. There was no intermixture of the comic and the tragic elements. The Restoration writers regarded plot as the "soul of the tragedy". The object of the plot was to make the fable pleasing and to endow it with verisimilitude and decorum.

6. **Heroic Couplet and the Blank Verse :** Lee's *The Tragedy of Nero* and Dryden's *Don Sebastian and Tyrannical Love*, which are written in the heroic couplet, could not attain great dramatic height and excellence.

7. **Sensationalism, Violence and Bloodshed :** Sensation is an important feature of the heroic play. Themes are taken from the past, and the action is laid in some far-off place to provide the charm of novelty and to make the "great actions 'credible. This helped admiration and remoteness cause willing suspension of disbelief. The setting is always foreign and unfamiliar, and the time remote, and in this way the dramatist try to procure "willing suspension of disbelief "for the incredible in their pl**Conclusion :** Heroic tragedy, though it kept free from the profligacy of comedy, was equally artificial. For a time its most popular form was that of the Heroic Drama,in which love, gallantry and courage were depicted on a gigantic scale with little reference to life, and the dialogue of which was filled with sonorous rant and bombastic extravagance.

Development Of Restoration Tragedy

1 **Dryden :-**John Dryden was born in 1631, at Aldwinkle, Northampton shire. He was the son of the Rev. Erasmus Dryden and Mary Pickering his wife both of whom belonged to old country families with strong Puritan tendencies. He has his early education at Westminster school where he made his first attempt at verse making in an elegy to the memory of a school fellow. In 1650 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge where he wrote some ordinary verse. Though of remarkable literary taste, he showed little evidence of literary ability up to the age of thirty. By his training and family connections, he was allied to the Puritan Party and his only well known work of this period the Heroic Stanzas was written on the death Cromwell.

From 1663-1681 Dryden devoted his energies to the field of drama because it was the most lucrative branch of the literary profession at that time. His first effort, *The Wild Gallant* (1663) was an absolute failure. *The Rival Livlies* (1664) was well received but *The Indian Emperor* in 1667 established his

reputation as a play Wright. In 1665 when London was in the grip of the Great Plague, Dryden left London for Charlton his father in law's house. Here he wrote his first poem *Annus Mirabilis* (1667) a narrative poem describing the terrors of the great fire in London and the war with Holland. In 1669 appeared the critical *Essay on Dramatic Poesy,* a prose work written in the form of dialogue a work which attempts to lay a foundation for all literary criticism. In 1670 he was asked to accept the appointments of Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal in recognition of his valuable intellectual activity. *The Medal*, appeared in 1682. It is a bitter invective against Shaftsbury, its theme the medal which his partisans had very naturally struck upon the occasion of his acquittal in the preceding autumn.

The second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* appeared in November 1682. Simultaneously with the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* appeared *Religio Laici* an argument for the faith of the Church of England. In one respect this takes the highest place among the works of Dryden, for it is the most perfect example he has given of that reasoning in rhyme of which he was so great a master.

Only a month before the appearance of the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* Dryden had devoted an entire poem to Shadwell who had just provoked him by a scandalous libel. The poem was entitled *Mac Flecknoe.* It is a vigorous attack and chiefly memorable in as much as the machinery evidently suggested that of Pope's *Dunciad*. Dryden's next important poem *The Hind and the Panther* appeared in 1683. Dryden was also a lyric poet of considerable merit. The Odes and lyrical poems of the last fifteen years (1685 to 1700) form a last outstanding group. *The Song for Saint Cecilia's Day* (1687) composed in all the heat of his recent conversion to Roman Catholicism is of remarkable musical beauty and sweetness. *The Ode to the Pious Memory of Mrs. Anne Kilhgrew is* more dignified. In this poem Dryden, expresses loud repentance for his part in augmenting the fat pollutions of the state. Dryden's most enduring poem, the splendid Ode called *Alexander's Feast* was written in 1697. Three years later he published his last work, Fables containing poetical paraphrases of the tales of Boccaccio and Chaucer and the miscellaneous poems of his last years. Throughout the eighteenth century the Fables were apparently the most popular of Dryden's poems. *The Preface to Fables* is generally regarded as a splendid example of the new prose style developed by Dryden and his followers.

At the revolution of 1688, Dryden refused allegiance to William of Orange. He was deprived of all his offices and pensions and in his old age, he was thrown back on literature as his only means of livelihood. Defying the hard strokes of fare, he worked with redoubled energy, writing everything that men would pay for Dryden's translations, the most successful work at this time, would give him a conspicuous place in English Literature. Had he never translated Virgil, his renderings or imitations of Juvenal, Horace and others would suffice to entitle him to the greatest rank among those who have enriched the native literature from foreign sources. His principle of translation was correct and accords with that of the greatest of English critics.

From the literary point of view the last troubled years were the best of Dryden's life. He died in 1700 and was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

2. **Thomas Otway (1651-85).**Otway wrote *Alcibiades* (1675), *Don Carlos (1676), The Orphan (1680) and Venice Preserv'd (1682*). The first two plays are written in rhymed couplets. His reputations rest, however, on two plays -*The Orphan and the Venice Preser'd.*

3. **Nathaniel Lee (1653-92) :** He wrote many tragedies, of which the prominent ones are *Nero (1676), The Rival Queens (1677) and Mithridates* (1678).In Lee's plays the construction is weak, and the style is full of bombast and conceit.

17.14 Restoration Comedy

"Restoration comedy ", according to Moody and Lovett, " is a genuine reflection of the temper, if not actual life, of the upper classes of the nation, and as such it has a sociological as well as literary interest." Unlike the Shakespearean comedy, which is romantic in spirit, it is devoted specially to picturing the external details of life, the fashions of the time, its manners, its speech, and its interests. The dramatists confine their scenes to the familiar places, and not to remote and far -off places. They confine themselves to the drawing rooms, the coffee houses, the streets, and gardens of London. The characters, which are mainly types, represent chiefly people of fashion. The plots of restoration comedies are mainly love intrigues. They are remarkable for a neat, precise, witty, balanced and lucid prose style.

Influences on Restoration Comedy: The restoration comedy of manners was shaped both by native and French influences. It drew its main inspiration from the native tradition which had flourished before the closing of the theatres in 1642. In particular it was indebted to Beaumont and Fletcher and to Ben Jonson.

Eminent Writers Of The Restoration Comedy Of Manners

1. **William Congreve (1670-1729):** Congreve is the best and finest writer of the comedy of manners. He wrote all his comedies before he was thirty His first play was *The Old Bachelor*. His next play was *The Double Dealer* (1693).His next play, *Love For Love* (1695) is wholly comic from start to finish. It was much more successful when it was staged in 1695. His next play *The Mourning Bride* was tragedy which proved popular when it was staged in 1697. *The Way of the World* (1700) is considered by common consent as a work of art and as a pure comedy of manners.

2. **George Etherege (1635 ?-91) :** His three plays are *The Comic Revenge or Love in A Tub (1664*), *She Wou'd if She Cou'd (1668), and The Man of the Mode or Sir Fopling Flutter (1676*). His plays established the comedy of manners, and paved the way for Congreve.

3. **Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726):** His best three comedies are *The Relapse (1696), The Provok'd Wife (1697) and Confederacy (1705)*.

4. **George Farquhar(1678-1707) :** A man of versatile genius, George Farquhar was in turn a clergyman, an actor, and soldier, and died when he was twenty-nine years old. His plays are *Love and a Bottle, The Constant Couple, Sir Harry Wildair, The Inconstant (1703), The Way to Win Him, The Recruiting Officer (1706) and The Beaux' Stratagem (1707).*

17.15 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit we have

- discussed Puritan age to Restoration age,
- literary characteristics of the age,
- prominent writers of both the ages.

17.16 Books Suggested

J.W.H. Atking : *English Literary Criticism*, 17th & 18 th Centuries (195)

George Saintsbury : *A History of Criticism*

Legious and Cazamion : *History of English Literature* - Macmillian India Ltd. 2002,

William J. Long : *English Literature* : *Its History and its Significance for the Life of English Speaking World* :A.I.T.B.S. Publishers & Distributors : 2006

Daichus, David : *Milton London* : Hut chrism University Library (1957)

SELF CHECK

1. What do you know about the Puritans?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What is Puritanism?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Was Milton also a Puritan?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Who was the greatest prose writer of the Age of Milton?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. What do you know about Cavalier Lyrics?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Who were the other Cavalier lyrists?

7. What were the distinctive characteristics of the Cavalier?

8. Who were the Metaphysical poets?

9. What do you know about the Restoration Tragedy?

10. What do you know about the Restoration Comedy?

11. Name some Restoration Tragedies?

12. How did the Restoration affect English Literature?

13. Name some important Restoration writers?

14. What do you know about Restoration Period?

15. What were the chief characteristics of the Restoration Age?

16. What type of plays was dominant during the Restoration Age ?

17. What was Dryden's contribution to Restoration Literature?

18. Who was the first man to use the term Metaphysical?

19. What were the main characteristics of the Metaphysical poets ?

ANSWERS

1. The members of that party of English Protestants who regarded the reformation of the Church under Elizabethan as incomplete, and called for its further purification, were known as the puritans.
2. Puritanism was a reaction against the excesses of the post-Shakespearian dramatist and as a result of this reaction the theatres in 1642 were closed.
3. Milton had a very puritanical attitude towards life and in this connection Tillyard has observed," you cannot ignore him any more than you can ignore Alexander the Great, or Cromwell or Napoleon, " Milton regarded the people as..... But a herd confus'd.
4. Sir, John Bunyan was the greatest prose writer of the age of Milton. Bunyan was born in 6128 and died in 1688.
5. It was a term applied to the lyrical poetry of which there was remarkable outburst during the reign of Charles I and of which the court was the centre though Robert Herrick, the chief of these Lyrists was not a courtier.
6. Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling and Richard Love -lace were the chief Cavalier poets.
7. Cavalier lyrics were notable for sweetness and charm and the Cavalier poets mostly dealt with the themes of love and war and like Ben Jonson were always concise, lucid and also polished.
8. Crashaw, Herbert, Vaugham and Donne were the Metaphysical poets.
9. The tragedy during the restoration times was uncommon. In Otway and Dryden we find the exponents of the Restoration tragedy, better known as the Heroic tragedy. Dryden's All for Love' written incidentally in blank verse displays real feeling of tragedy.
10. It is par-excellence a kind copied to some extent from the French and Spanish originals. The dramatists like Dryden, Devenant, Wycherlev vanbrugh and Shadwell were all indebted, for plot and dialogue, to the contemporary French comedy.
11. Dryden's *The Maiden Queen* and *The Conquest of Granada*; Thomas O way's *The Orphan*; Congreve's *The Mourning Bride* and Johnson's *Irene* are the most famous tragedies of the Restoration period.
12. Restoration affected the revival of Drama especially the comedy; in the sphere of Tragedy heroic plays were produced and the imitative works of the new school (the restoration school) were of a rigid nature and they evolved a number of rules purporting to the avoidance of enthusiasm, strict care and accuracy in poetical technique and humble imitations of the style of the Latin classics.

    Heroic couplet dominated poetry, and prose had an outstanding feature- the emergence of the middle style (discovered by Addison), Swift and Defoe adopted a plainer style and ornate prose disappeared for the time being.
13. Dryden, Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh Forqughar, Rochester, Bunyan, Pepys and Locke were the chief literary figures of the restoration period.
14. The period after the restoration of Charles II in 1660 and the re-establishment of monarchy in England is known as the Restoration period.

15. Love of wit and gaiety often of immortality; but at the same time a genuine revival of interest particularly of scientific discovery.
16. Heroic plays were common and dominant during the Restoration Age.
17. Dryden's contribution to Restoration literature was of no mean value and he shall be rembered in the history of English literature for the ages to come -for his contribution to English prose and criticism His best to poems are -'Ode St.Cecillia 'and 'Alexander 's Feast.Both these poems brought him immense fame. He wrote many other poems satiric, argumentative and philosophical veins. But as one of the founders of the modern English prose, John Dryden has become immortal in the history of literature.
18. Dr. Johson first of all applied the term' Metaphysical' to the poetry of Donne. Dr. Johson borrowed this term from the phrase of Dryden 'He affects the metaphysics'.
19. Two things were common among all the Metaphysical poets, learning with a kind of misplaced wit and the desire to say something which had never been said before and in their poetry we find a very fine blend of intellect and emotion but artificially and hyperbolic expression could not keep itself away from this Metaphysical poetry.

Unit 18

English History and Literature from Elizabethan to the Age of Sensibility

Structure

18.0 Objectives

In this unit you are going to know

- about the social and cultural history of Elizabethan period,
- about Jacobean period,
- about the important movements and events and
- about the important literary writings till the period of Sensibility

18.1 Introduction

In this unit you are going to study literary, social and cultural history of the Elizabethan age to the Neoclassical period. These periods mark an important place in the history of England.For the convenience of scholars,literary history is divided into periods often named after the reigning kings and queens or some political event (Elizabethan,Jacobean,Restoration,Victorian,etc.) or after some predominant style or

mode of thought (Romantic,Augustan,etc.). A widely accepted chronological order is listed into this unit.

A. c.1066-c.1500	Middle English Period
(c.1100-c.-1350)	Anglo-Norman Period
B. c.1500-c.1660	The Renaissance
1500-1557	Early Tudor Age
1558-1603	Elizabethan Age
1603-1625	Jacobean Age
1625-1649	Caroline Age
1649-1660	Commanwealth Peroid
	(Puritan Interregnum)
C. c.1660-c.1800	Neoclassical Period
1660-1700	The Restoration
1700-1750	Augustan Age(Age of Pope)
1750-1798	Age of Sensibility(c.1800Age of Johnson)
D. 1798-1870	Romantic Period
1798-1832	The Triumph of Romanticism
1832-1870	Early Victorian Age
E. 1870-1914	Realistic Period
1870-1901	Late Victorian Period
1901-1914	Edwardian Period
F. 1914--	Modern Period
1914-1940	Georgian Period
1940-1965	Age of Interrogation
	(Diminishing Values)
1965-1970	Early Modernist Period
1970--	Post Post-Modernist Period

18.2Elizabethan Age (1558-1603)

The period of the reign of Elizabeth-I. It was a time of rapid development in English commerce, maritime power and nationalist feeling. The defeat of the Spanish Armada occured in 1588. It was a great (in drama the greatest) age of English literature. The age of Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Shakespeare, Sir Walter Raleigh, Francis Bacon, Ben Johnson and many other extraordinary writers of prose and of dramatic, lyric and narrative poetry.

18.2.1History of Elizabethan Age

Year	Events
1572	St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in Paris
1577	Sir Francis Drake starts his circumnavigation of the globe

1578	James-VI takes over government of Scotland
1580	Performance of plays on Sunday forbidden Sir Fancis Drake returns to England
1581	Laws against Roman Catholics passed
1585	Sir Wlater Raleigh establishes his first colony at Roanoke, Virginia
1586	Mary Queen of Scots condemned to death by Star Chamber and executed in 1987
1588	Spanish Armada defeated in the battle of Gravelines
1603	Queen Elizabeth-I dies and is succeeded James-VI of Scotland as King James-I of England and Ireland

18.2.2 Literature of Elizabethan Age

1557	Tottel's Miscellany
1559	John Knox in Edinburgh
1562	Gammer Gurton'e Needle, Gorboduc
1564	Birth of Shakespeare
1576	First Theatre
1579	Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar, Lyly's Euphues, North's Plutarch
1587	Shakespeare in London. Marlow's Tamburlaine
1590	Spenser's Faerie Queen, Sidney's Arcadia
1590-1595	Shakespeare's Early Plays
1597-1625	Bacon's Essays
1598-1614	Chapman's Homer
1598	Ben Johnson's Every Man in His Humour
1600-1607	Shakespeare's Tragedies

18.3 Jacobean Age (1603-1625)

The reign of James-I (in Latin, "Jacobus") 1603-25, which followed that of Queen Elizabeth was the period in prose writings of Bacon, John Donne's sermons, Robert Berton's Anatomy of Melancholy and the King James' translation of the Bible. It was also the period of Shalespeare's greatest tragedies and tragicomedies and of major writings by other notable poets and playwrights including Donne, Ben Johnson, Michael Drayton, Sir Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, John Webster, George Chapman, Thomas Middleton and Philip Massinger.

18.3.1 History of Jacobean age

Year	Events
1604	Divine Right of Kings proclaimed. James supports new translation of Bible
1606	Suppression of Roman Catholics by English Parliament
1607	New English colony founded in Virginia
1613	Famous Globe Theatre in Southwark burns down
1618	Start of Thirty Years War. Execution of Sir Walter Raleigh
1620	Roman Catholics granted freedom of worship in England in terms of marriage treaty between England and Spain. Pilgrim Fathers depart from Plymouth England, in Mayflower

18.3.2 Literature of Jacobean Age

1605	Bacon's Advancement of Learning
1608	Birth of Milton
1611	Translation (King James version) of Bible
1614	Raleigh's History
1616	Death of Shakespeare
1620-1642	Shakespeare's Successors. End of Drama
1620	Bacon's Novam Organum
1622	First regular news paper, The Weekly News
1626	Death of Bacon
1621	Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy
1623	Wither's Hymn Book

18.4 Caroline Age (1625-1649)

The reign of Charles-I, 1625-49 (the name is derived from "Carolus", the Latin version of "Charles") was the time of the English Civil War fought between the supporters of the King (known as "Cavaliers") and the supporters of Parliament (known as "Roundheads" from their custom of wearing their hair cut short). John Milton began his writing during this period; it was the age also of the religious poet George Herbert and of the prose writers Robert Burton and Sir Thomas Browne.

Associated with the court were the Cavalier poets, writers of witty and polished of courtship and gallantry. The group included Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling and Thomas Carew. Robert Herrick, although a country person, is often classified with the Cavalier poets because, like them, he was a Son of Ben, that is and admirer and follower of Ben Johnson, in many of his lyrics of love and gallant compliment.

18.4.1 History of Caroline Age

Year	Events
1625	Accession of Charles-I
	Marriage of Charles-I and Henrietta Maria.
	Parliament dissolved.
1628	Petition of Right
1630-1640	King Charles-I rules without Parliament. Puritan Migration to New England.
1633	William Laud appointed Archbishop of Canterbury
1640	Long Parliament
1642	Civil War begins.
	Battle of Edgehill.
1643	Censorship imposed on Press
1645	Battle of Naseby; triumph of Puritans
	Prohibition of the Prayer Book by Parliament.
	Execution of Archbishop Laud
1649	Execution of Charles-I
	Abolition of Monarchy
	Cavalier migration to Virginia

Declaration of the Commonwealth

18.4.2 Literature of Caroline Age

1629	Milton's Ode on the Nativity
1630-1633	Herbert's poems
1632-1637	Milton's Horton poems
1642	Browne's Religio Medici
1644	Milton's Aeropagitica
1649	Milton's Tenure of Kings

18.5 Commonwealth Period (1649-1660)

Also known as the Puritan Interregnum, extends from the end of Civil War and the execution of Charles-I in 1649 to the restoration of the Stuart monarchy under Charles-II in 1660. In this period England was ruled by Parliament under the Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell; his death in 1658 marked the dissolution of Commonwealth. Drama almost disappeared for eighteen years after the Puritans, on moral and religious grounds, closed the public theatres in September 1642. It was the age of Milton's political pamphlets, of Hobbes' political treatise Leviathan (1651), of the prose writers Sir Thomas Browne, Thomas Fuller, Jeremy Taylor and Izaak Walton and of the poets Henry Vaughan, Edmund Waller, Abraham Cowley, Sir William Davenant and Andrew Marvell.

18.5.1 History of Commonwealth Period

Year	Event
1651	Battle of Worcester
1653	Long Parliament expelled by Cromwell Establishment of the Protectorate: Oliver Cromwell instituted as Lord High Protector
1654	Union of England, Scotland and Ireland
1658	Death of Oliver Cromwell: succeeded by Richard Cromwell, his son, as Lord Protector
1660	Dissolution of the Long Parliament

18.5.2 Literature of Commonwealth Period

1650	Baxter's Saints' Rest. Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living
1651	Hobbes's Leviathan
1653	Walton's Complete Angler
1663-1694	Dryden's dramas
1666	Bunyan's Grace Abounding
1651	Hobbes's Leviathan
1660	Pepy's Diary

18.6 The Restoration Age (1660-1700)

This period takes its name from the restoration of the Stuart line (Charles-II) to the English throne in 1660, at the end of the Commonwealth; it is specified as lasting until 1700. The urbanity, wit and licentiousness of the life centering on the court, in sharp contrast to the seriousness and sobriety of the earlier Puritan regime, is reflected in much of the literature of this age. The theatres came back to vigorous life after the revocation of the ban placed on them by the Puritans in 1642; Sir George Etherege, William Wycherley, William Congreve and John Dryden developed the distinctive comdey of manners called Restoration Comedy, and Dryden, Thomas Otway and other playwrights developed the even more distinctive tragedy called Heroic Drama.Dryden was the major poet and critic, as well as one of the major dramatists. Other poets were the satirists Samuel Butler and the Earl of Rochester: notable writers, in prose, in addition to the masterly Dryden, were Samuel Papys, Sir William Temple, the religious writer John Bunyan and the philosopher John Locke.

18.6.1 History of The Restoration Age

Year	Event
1660	Restoration of Charles-II
	Charles-II invited to return to England by Convention Parliament
1661	Corporation Act: magistrates' oath of allegiance
1662	Act of Uniformity: reverses Prayer Book; Lecensing Act forbids import of any anti-christian literature.
1665	The Great Plague
1666	Great Fire of London
	War with Holland
1667	Dutch Fleet in the Thames
1674	Rebuilding of the Theatre Royal, Drury Land (destroyed in great fire)
1678	The famous Popish Plot: The Pope, France and Spain are accused of conspiracy to defeat Charles.
1680	Rise of Whigs and Tories in Parliament
1683	Rye House plot to kill Charles-II and his brother, James, Duke of York
1685	Death of Charles-II; succeeded by James-II
	The Mammoth Rebellion
1688	The Glorious Revolution
	William of Orange invited to England by Whig Lords
1689	Abdication of James-II declared by Parliament
	Coromation of William and Mary
	Bill of Rights passed
	Act of Toleration (for Dissenters)
1695	End of Press Censorship

18.6.2 Literature of The Restoration Age

1662	Royal Society founded
1663	Butler's Hudibras
1667	Milton's Paradise Lost. Dryden's Annus Mirabilis
1663-1694	Dryden's dramas

1671	Paradise Regained
1674	Death of Milton
1678	Pilgrim's Progress published
1681	Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel
1687	Newton's Principia proves the Law of Gravitation
1690	Locke's Human Understanding
1698	Jeremy Collier attacks stage
1700	Death of Dryden

18.7 Augustan Age (1700-1750)

The original Augustan age was the brilliant literary period of Virgil, Horace and Ovid under the Roman emperor Augustus (27 B.C.-A.D. 14). In the eighteenth century and later, however the term was frequently applied also to the literary period in England from approximately 1700 to 1745. The leading writers of the time (such as Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and Joseph Addison) themselves drew the parallel to the Roman Augustans, and deliberately imitated their literary forms and subjects, their emphasis on social concerns, and their ideals of moderation, decorum and urbanity. A major representative of popular, rather than classical writing in this period was the novelist, journalist and pamphleteer Daniel Defoe.

18.7.1 History of Augustan Age

Year	Event
1701	Protestant succession to British Throne established by the Act of Settlement
1702	Death of William-III. Accession of Queen Anne
1707	The Union of England and Scotland as Great Britain
1714	Death of Queen Anne; succeeded George-I (Elector of Hanoner)
1727	Death of George-I; succeeded by his son George-II
1715-46	Jacobite Rebellion
	Defeat of the British at the Battle of Lexington. George Washington becomes Commander-in-chief of American Forces

18.7.2 Literature of Augustan Age

1683-1719	Defoe's early writings
1695	Press made free
1702	First daily newspaper
1704	Addison's The Campaign, Swift's Tale of a Tub
1709	The Tatler
	Johnson born (d. 1784)
1710-1713	Swift in London, Journal to Stella
1711	The Spectator
1712	Pope's Rape of the Lock
1719	Robinson Crusoe
1726	Gulliver's Travels
1726-1730	Thomson's The Seasons
1732-1734	Essay on Man

1740	Richardson's Pamela
1742	Fielding's Joseph Andrews
1749	Fielding's Tom Jones

18.8 Age of Sensibility (Age of Johnson) (1750-1798)

Is the period between the death of Alexander Pope (1744) and 178, which was one year after the death of Samuel Johnson and one year before Robert Burn's poems, chiefly in Scottish dialect. (Alternative dates frequently proposed for the end of this period are 1789 and 1798;see Romantic period)

An older name for this half-century, the Age of Johnson, stresses the dominant position of Samuel Johnson (1709-84) and his literary and intellectual circle, which included Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, James Boswell, Edward Gibbon and Hester Lynch Thrale. These authors on the whole represented a culmination of the literary and critical modes of neoclassism and the world view of the Enlightenment. The more recent name, 'Age of Sensibility', puts its stress on the emergence, in other writers of the 1740s and later, of new cultural attitudes, theories of literature and type of poetry, we find in this period, for example, a growing sympathy for the Middle Ages, cultural primitivism, an awakening interest in ballads and other folk literature, a turn from neoclassic'correctness' and its emphasis on judgement and restraint to an emphasis on instinct and feeling, the development of a Literature of Sensibility, and above all the exaltation by some critics of 'original genius' and a 'bardic' poetry of the sublime and visionary imagination. Thomas Gray expressed the anti-neoclassic sensibility and set of values in his 'Stanzas to Mr. Bentley' (1752):

But not to one in this benighted age
Is that diviner inspiration given,
That burns in Shakespeare's or in Milton's page,
The pomp and prodigality of heaven.

Other poets manifesting similar shifts in thought and taste were William Collins and Joseph and Thomas Warton (poets, who together with Gray, began in the 1740s the vogue for what Johnson slightly referred to as 'ode and elegy and sonnet'), Christopher Smart, Robert Burns and William Cowper. Thomas Percy published his influential Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765), which included many folk ballads and a few medival metrical romances, and James Macpherson in the same decade published his greatly doctored (and in considerable part, fabricated) versions of the poems of Gaelic Bard, Ossian (Oisin), which were immensely popular throughout Europe. This was also the period of the great novelists, some realistic and satiric and some sentimental: Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollet and Laurence Sterne. This era also saw Willaim Blake's Songs of Innocense and Experience.

18.8.1 History of Age of Sensibility

Year	Event
1752	Adoption of Gregorian Calendar
1760	Death of George-II: Accession of George-III
1775	American Revolution
1779-99	French Revolution
1800	Union of Great Britain and Ireland

18.8.2 Literature of Age of Sensibility

1750-1752	Johnson's The Rambler
1751	Gray's Elegy
1755	Johnson's Dictionary
1760-1767	Sterne's Tristram Shandy
1764	Johnson's Literary Club
1765	Percy's Reliques
1766	Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield
1770	Goldsmith's Deserted Village
1771	Begining of great newspapers
1774-1775	Burke's American speeches
1776-1778	Gibbon's Rome
1779	Cowper's Olney Hymns
1779-81	Johnson's Lives of the Poets
1783	Blake's Poetical Sketches
1785	Cowper's The Task. The London Times
1786	Burns's first poems (The Kilmarnock Burns). Burke's Warren Hastings
1790	Burke's French Revolution
1791	Boswell's Life of Johnson
1770-1850	Wordsworth
1771-1832	Scott
1796-1816	Jane Austen's novels
1798	Lyrical Ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge

Check Your Progress :

1. Mention some significant implications of the Renaissance.
2. Why did the drama decay in the Post-Elizabethan period ?
3. Who were the cavalier poets ?
4. Why did the satirical spirit prevail in the latter half of 17th Century ?
5. In which period did the first printed collection of Miscellaneous Poems in English appeared under the name Tottel's Miscellany.
6. Which mode of literary creation is considered to be the most complete expressions of human thoughts, feelings and emotions ?
7. Parliament's famous Act of Supremacy marks by the entrance of the Reformation and by the final separation of England from all Ecclesiastical bondage his age. Which ruler of England was this ?
8. What are Herrick, Lovelace, Suckling and Carew collectively known as?
9. Who wrote "The Dunciad" ?
10. The period between 1689-1765 was one of great prosperity for Great Britain. What happened in 1746 ?
11. In which, year 'The Spanish Armada' was defeated ?
12. In whose reign the first regular newspaper was published in England ?

Answers:

1. Renaissance meant new awakening in learning. Its arrival spelled the death of the medieval scholasticism. It involved the raising of a voice against spiritual authority. The Renaissance

also implied a perception of greater beauty and polish in Greek and Latin literature, which was sought to be imitated. It also marked the change from the theocentric to the homocentric conception of the universe with human pursuits, even human body being glorified.

2. There are many reason for the decline of Jacobean drama. After the Elizabethan the old national spirit and patronages were no more. Dramatists borrowed the declamatory themes and the exaggerated sentiments of Spanish drama. They now focused more on crime, and licentiousness and conducted moral laxity in their plots. They started depend on cheap melodramatics sensationalism and sentimentalism. The plays of Webster, Heywood, Chapman etc. all exhibited this declined dramatic spirit.

3. The Cavalier Poets who wrote during the Caroline Period, the age of Charles-I (1625-49) were Herrick, Carew, Suckling and Lovelace. They imitated not merely Donne but also Ben Jonson. Their poetry is marked by a blend of wit and court conventions.
4. 1557
5. Drama
6. Richard III
7. Cavalier Poets
8. Alexander Pope
9. Jacobite Rebellions
10. 1590
11. King James I

18.9 Lets Sum up

In this Unit we have discussed

- about the main characteristics of the Renaissance Age to Neoclassical Age
- prominent events, poets, essayists and novelist of the age

18.10 Books Suggested

1. Daiches, David, *A Critical History of English Literature* Allied, New Delhi, 1984.
2. Sampson, George, *A Cncise Cambridge History of English Literature* CUP, London, 1972.
3. A.N. Jeffares (ed.) *The Macmillan History of Literature* (9 Vols.), Londons : Macmillan, 1982-83.
4. Pat Rogers (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature*, London :Oxford University Press, 1987.