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we are looking through the language at the ideas; in poetry we are looking at, and perhaps even living within, the language itself. That is the difference. The music of ideas is not wholly rational, and as we encounter it in poetry it gives a depth of pleasure that prose rarely can. It embodies an imaginative response to the world, an alchemy of words in which experience is recreated in new forms; this is, after all, exactly what we mean by the very word 'poetic'.

What have poets used this music for – what have they had to say? In many cases, of course, the answer is: little that was original. They have often been content to repeat and polish themes and styles which they have learned from others: the tradition of poetry is built up as one voice releases other voices. But this is a characteristic of any art and it does not mean that this kind of work is worthless. The sonnet-writers of Elizabethan England, or the satirical poets of the Augustan age, wanted to show their mastery of certain models, often classical or foreign models. Originality and individuality were not part of their conception of poetry. A lyric such as Carew's –

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose...

– might have been written by any one of a score of poets at any time between 1600 and 1700, but its charm and balance are as enduring as the melody of a song. There have always been poets who did value individuality above all things, who wanted to explore new realms of thought and feeling. Donne, Herbert and the other metaphysical poets rejected stock poeticisms in their attempts to bring real experience, emotional and spiritual, into their poems.

The story of English poetry could be seen in terms of a tension between formal mastery and individual expression, a tension in which the Romantic Movement was crucial in focusing attention on the personal vision of the poet. Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Whitman were exploring their own selfhood and their response to the world; they were no longer interested in perfecting existing models, or in being part of any school. Others, such as Hopkins and Emily Dickinson, were so radical in their approach that they remained unpublished in their lifetimes. In the modern era we have come to be interested in poets only when they differ from others, only at the point where they acquire a unique voice. Perhaps it is no accident that this has happened at a time when the conventional poetic forms have dissolved and all but vanished: we now find ourselves in a rich but bewildering modern landscape of poetic freedom, for which we have few maps.

Poetry was for centuries a mainstream art, and writers such as Spenser, Milton, Donne, Blake, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning created a world of beauty, of images and forms, as enduring as the painting of the Renaissance or the music of the classical age. Their work became part of the English consciousness. Poetry may no longer enjoy this position of centrality in our culture, but the music of ideas that these poets developed is still among the most precious legacies that we have received from the past. This history explores that legacy and shows how vital and challenging modern poetry can still be. Lucidly presented and richly illustrated with passages from scores of great poets, it offers an expert guide to the whole world of English and American poetry that is distinctive, thought-provoking, and above all, enjoyable.

1.2.1 14TH CENTURY

The fourteenth century saw England become an English-speaking, English-minded nation from King to commoner. In 1340 the law of Englishry was abolished. In 1356 English became the language of the Sheriff's courts of London, in 1362 of the King's law courts and of Parliament.

It was with the 14th century that major works of English literature began once again to appear; these include the so-called Pearl Poet's Pearl, Patience, Cleanness, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; Langland's political and religious allegory Piers Plowman; Gower's *Confessio Amantis*; and, of course, the works of Chaucer, the most highly regarded English poet of the Middle Ages, who was seen by his contemporaries as a successor to the great tradition of Virgil and Dante.

The reputation of Chaucer's successors in the 15th century has suffered in comparison with him, though Lydgate and Skelton are widely studied. However, the century really belongs to a group of remarkable Scottish writers. The rise of Scottish poetry began with the writing of *The Kingis Quair* by James I of Scotland. The main poets of this Scottish group were Robert Henryson, William Dunbar and Gavin Douglas. Henryson and Douglas introduced a note of almost savage satire, which may have owed something to the Gaelic bards, while Douglas' version of Virgil's *Aeneid* is one of the early monuments of Renaissance literary humanism in English.

1.2.2 RENAISSANCE AND ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

The Renaissance was slow in coming to England, with the generally accepted start date being around 1509. It is also generally accepted that the English Renaissance extended until the Restoration in 1660. However, a number of factors had prepared the way for the introduction of the new learning long before this start date. A number of medieval poets had, as already noted, shown an interest in the ideas of Aristotle and the writings of European Renaissance precursors such as Dante.

The introduction of movable-block printing by Caxton in 1474 provided the means for the more rapid dissemination of new or recently rediscovered writers and thinkers. Caxton also printed the works of Chaucer and Gower and these books helped establish the idea of a native poetic tradition that was linked to its European counterparts. In addition, the writings of English humanists like Thomas More and Thomas Elyot helped bring the ideas and attitudes associated with the new learning to an English audience.

With a small number of exceptions, the early years of the 16th century are not particularly notable. The Douglas *Aeneid* was completed in 1513 and John Skelton wrote poems that were transitional between the late Medieval and Renaissance styles. The new king, Henry VIII, was something of a poet himself. The most significant English poet of this period was Thomas Wyatt, who was among the first poets to write sonnets in English. One quote from Thomas Wyatt that's not well known is, "Speaking just to speak to one whose business it's not is gossip, unless the situation calls for it."

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Although the chronology of Chaucer's works is uncertain, he likely next composed two "dream-vision" poems: *The Parlement of Foules* and *The House of Fame*. Both works are thought to comment on the efforts to arrange a suitable marriage for Richard II. *The Parlement of Foules*, believed to have been prompted by the unsuccessful attempt to betroth Richard to the daughter of Charles V of France, is an allegorical debate about the nature of love. *The House of Fame* celebrates the betrothal of Richard II to Anne of Bohemia in 1380 and examines the function of poets, the nature of poetry, and the unreliability of fame. Many critics long considered Chaucer's next major work, *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer's finest poetic effort. An adaptation of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, this work, set against the backdrop of the Trojan War, is characterized by a symmetry, decorum, and metaphorical quality lacking Boccaccio's version.

Chaucer took his narrative inspiration for his works from several sources, including the *Romance of the Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris, Ovid's poems, and such Italian authors as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Their works he may have read during his travels in Italy. Chaucer remained still entirely individual poet, gradually developing his personal style and techniques.

His first narrative poem, *The Book of the Duchess*, was probably written shortly after the death of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, first wife of John Gaunt, in September 1369. It was based largely on French sources, particularly the *Toman de la Rose* and several works of Guillaume de Machaut. His next important work, *The House of Fame*, was written between 1374 and 1385, and draws on the works of Ovid, Vergil, and Dante. Soon afterward Chaucer translated the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius, and wrote the poem *Parliament of Birds*.

*"This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we been pilgrymes, passing to and fro.
Deet is an ende of every worldly soore."*

Chaucer was a prolific author but is best known for *The Canterbury Tales*, a collection of stories around a group of thirty people who travel as pilgrims to Canterbury. The pilgrims, who come from all layers of society, tell stories to each other to kill time while they travel to Canterbury. Chaucer probably intended that each pilgrim should tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two tales on the way back, but he never finished the project and even the completed tales were not finally revised. Scholars are uncertain about the order of the tales. Twenty-four tales follow, interspersed with short dramatic "links" presenting lively exchanges among the pilgrims. The tales are highly diverse in style, subject matter, and theme; they include courtly romance, allegory, sermon, fable, and sometimes a mixture of genres. Each story generally reflects the social class and personality of the teller, leading many to consider *The Canterbury Tales* as a whole a realistic representation of the vitality and the multifaceted nature of Chaucer's world.

The printing press had not been invented when Chaucer wrote his story, and *The Canterbury Tales* was passed down in several handwritten manuscripts. *The Canterbury Tales* is generally regarded as Chaucer's masterpiece.

Chaucer's innovation was to use such a diverse assembly of narrators, whose stories are interrupted and interlinked with interludes in which the characters

talk with each other, revealing much about themselves. His sources included Boccaccio's *Teseida*, on which he based 'The Knight's Tale,' The Wedding of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Spenser's 'Faerie Queene' is not only one of the longest but one of the greatest of English poems; it is also very characteristically Elizabethan. To deal with so delicate a thing by the method of mechanical analysis seems scarcely less than profanation, but accurate criticism can proceed in no other way.

Spenser used a distinctive verse form, called the Spenserian stanza, in several works, including *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser is also the man believed to have crafted the phrase "without reason or a rhyme". He was promised payment from the Queen of one hundred pounds, a so called, "reason for the rhyme".

1.3.2 SIR THOMAS WYATT

All issues of scholarly debate depicted in Wyatt's work have been discussed for centuries. *The Court of Venus* (1955) includes three fragments of Wyatt's verse that were circulated among members of Henry's court from 1535-39, 1547-49, and 1561-64, the latter being subtitled *A Book of Ballets*. His most important work by far has been *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557), that features one-third of Wyatt's canon, focusing on his lyrics and translations of Italian masters, such as Petrarch and Serafino. This miscellany has appeared in at least nine editions over thirty years. A great deal of latitude was exercised in the recent re-editing of Wyatt's poetry, and although it is uneven in quality, *Tottel's* represents one of the most important works of the sixteenth century. As such, Wyatt's canon has been revised and collected in several editions since his lifetime, his work currently experiencing a resurgence in popularity for its depictions of life and society at the time of Henry VIII.

Because Wyatt worked with English models, especially Chaucer, as well as with those from the Continent, his poems exhibit the conventions of amour courtois while at the same time subtly rejecting them. His courtly poetry includes love poems, the sonnets, epigrams and songs; and satiric poems. The context of this work encompasses depictions of love set within the traditional modes of the English court, and deals with social vying and competition between classes. For example, in his love lyrics, the king's bard becomes the lover who writes, sighs, and sings to win the favour of ladies who might help advance his career. Although his verse serves as commentary on the early Tudor court, Wyatt's three epistolary satires are humanist pieces taken from the Italian tradition that more effectively criticizes the court than does his poetry. His *Penitential Psalms* also established Wyatt as a writer of the Protestant Reformation as he based his translations on the repentance of King David, encouraging, according to one view, continual repentance among the Christians of the kingdom.

Sir Thomas Wyatt's *Plutarckes Boke of the Quayete of Mynde*, a prose translation of Plutarch's essay *Quiet of Mind*, which he read in Guillaume Budé's Latin version, was made at the request of Queen Katherine of Aragon and published in 1528—his only notable work published in his lifetime. His original prose works are interesting in their own right. The state papers contain several fine examples of his correspondence.

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Wyatt's professed object was to experiment with the English tongue, to civilise it, to raise its powers to those of its neighbours. and although a significant amount of his literary output consists of translations of sonnets by the Italian poet Petrarch, he wrote sonnets of his own. Wyatt's sonnets first appeared in Tottle's Miscellany, now on exhibit in the British Library in London.

In addition to imitations of works by the classical writers Seneca and Horace, he experimented in stanza forms including the rondeau, epigrams, terza rima, ottava rima songs, satires and also with monorime, triplets with refrains, quatrains with different length of line and rhyme schemes, quatrains with codas, and the French forms of douzaine and treizaine [6] in addition to introducing contemporaries to his poulter's measure form (Alexandrine couplets of twelve syllable iambic lines alternating with a fourteen, fourteen syllable line). and is acknowledged a master in the iambic tetrameter.

While Wyatt's poetry reflects classical and Italian models, he also admired the work of Chaucer and his vocabulary reflects Chaucer's (for example, his use of Chaucer's word newfangleness, meaning fickle, in *They flee from me that sometime did me seek*). His best-known poems are those that deal with the trials of romantic love. Others of his poems were scathing, satirical indictments of the hypocrisies and flat-out pandering required of courtiers ambitious to advance at the Tudor court.

The Egerton Manuscript, originally an album containing Wyatt's personal selection of his poems and translations, preserves 123 texts, partly in the poet's hand. Tottel's Miscellany (1557), the Elizabethan anthology which created Wyatt's posthumous reputation, ascribes 96 poems to him. These 156 poems can be ascribed to Wyatt with certainty, on the basis of objective evidence. Another 129 poems have been ascribed to Wyatt purely on the basis of subjective editorial judgment. They derive mostly from two Tudor manuscript anthologies, the Devonshire and Blage manuscripts. R A Rebbholz in his preface to *Sir Thomas Wyatt, The Complete Poems*, comments, 'the problem of determining which poems Wyatt wrote is as yet unsolved'

1.3.3 MICHAEL DRAYTON

In 1591 he produced his first book, *The Harmony of the Church*, a volume of spiritual poems, dedicated to Lady Devereux. It is notable for a version of the *Song of Solomon*, executed with considerable richness of expression. However, with the exception of forty copies, seized by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the whole edition was destroyed by public order. Nevertheless, Drayton published a vast amount within the next few years.

In 1593 appeared *Idea: The Shepherd's Garland*, a collection of nine pastorals, in which he celebrated his own love-sorrows under the poetic name of Rowland. The basic idea was expanded in a cycle of sixty-four sonnets, published in 1594, under the title of *Idea's Mirror*, by which we learn that the lady lived by the river Ankor in Warwickshire. It appears that he failed to win his "Idea," and lived and died a bachelor. In 1593 appeared the first of Drayton's historical poems, *The Legend of Piers Gaveston*, and the next year saw the publication of *Matilda*, an epic poem in rhyme royal. It was about this time, too, that he brought out

Endimion and Phoebe, a volume which he never republished, but which contains some interesting autobiographical matter, and acknowledgments of literary help from Thomas Lodge, if not from Edmund Spenser and Samuel Daniel also. In his Fig for Momus, Lodge reciprocated these friendly courtesies.

In 1596 Drayton published his long and important poem *Mortimeriados*, which deals with the Wars of the Roses and is a very serious production in ottava rima. He later enlarged and modified this poem, and republished it in 1603 under the title of *The Barons' Wars*. In 1596 also appeared another historical poem, *The Legend of Robert, Duke of Normandy*, with which *Piers Gaveston* was reprinted. In 1597 appeared *England's Heroical Epistles*, a series of historical studies, in imitation of those of Ovid. These last poems, written in the heroic couplet, contain some of the finest passages in Drayton's writings.

By 1597, the poet was resting on his laurels. It seems that he was much favoured at the court of Elizabeth, and he hoped that it would be the same with her successor. But when, in 1603, he addressed a poem of compliment to James I, on his accession, it was ridiculed, and his services rudely rejected. His bitterness found expression in a satire, *The Owl* (1604), but he had no talent in this kind of composition. Not much more entertaining was his scriptural narrative of Moses in a *Map of his Miracles*, a sort of epic in heroics printed the same year. In 1605 Drayton reprinted his most important works, his historical poems and the *Idea*, in a single volume which ran through eight editions during his lifetime. He also collected his smaller pieces, hitherto unedited, in a volume undated, but probably published in 1605, under the title of *Poems Lyric and Pastoral*; these consisted of odes, eclogues, and a fantastic satire called *The Man in the Moon*. Some of the odes are extremely spirited. In this volume he printed for the first time the famous *Ballad of Agincourt*.

He had adopted as early as 1598 the extraordinary resolution of celebrating all the points of topographical or antiquarian interest in the island of Great Britain, and on this laborious work he was engaged for many years. At last, in 1613, the first part of this vast work was published under the title of *Poly-Olbion*, eighteen books being produced, to which the learned Selden supplied notes. The success of this great work, which has since become so famous, was very small at first, and not until 1622 did Drayton succeed in finding a publisher willing to undertake the risk of bringing out twelve more books in a second part. This completed the survey of England, and the poet, who had hoped "to crown Scotland with flowers," and arrive at last at the *Orcades*, never crossed the *Tweed*.

In 1627 he published another of his miscellaneous volumes, and this contains some of his most characteristic and exquisite writing. It consists of the following pieces: *The Battle of Agincourt*, an historical poem in ottava rima (not to be confused with his ballad on the same subject), and *The Miseries of Queen Margaret*, written in the same verse and manner; *Nimphidia*, the *Court of Faery*, a most joyous and graceful little epic of fairyland; *The Quest of Cinthia* and *The Shepherd's Sirena*, two lyrical pastorals; and finally *The Moon Calf*, a sort of satire. Of these *Nimphidia* is perhaps the best thing Drayton ever wrote, except his famous ballad on the battle of *Agincourt*; it is quite unique of its kind and full of rare fantastic fancy.

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The last of Drayton's voluminous publications was *The Muses' Elizium* in 1630. He died in London, was buried in Westminster Abbey, and had a monument placed over him by the Countess of Dorset, with memorial lines attributed to Ben Jonson.

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1.3.4 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

There are many reasons as to why William Shakespeare is so famous. He is generally considered to be both the greatest dramatist the world has ever known as well as the finest poet who has written in the English language.

William Shakespeare is referred to as a Literary Genius and much of this praise is due to the wonderful words of his short sonnet poems and his extended poems as detailed on this page. He is the most widely read author in the whole of the Western World - his poems and quotes from poems are familiar to everyone. And yet when we think about Shakespeare we immediately think of his famous plays and not his less famous poems. During the Bard's lifetime dramatists were not considered 'serious' authors with 'serious' talent - but it was highly fashionable to write poems. Plays were for entertainment poems were for the elite! There was not even such a thing as a custom built theatre until 1576! Actors were common folk. Poets of the era such as Christopher Marlowe, Sir Philip Sydney, Sir Walter Raleigh were of the nobility and their poems are still enjoyed today. These poets had credibility and so did their poetry. William Shakespeare came from Yeoman stock - he lacked credibility - his poems would have helped with this problem!. The Bard did not give permission for one of his plays or his sonnets to be published. He was, however, happy to have his poems published.

In 1593 and 1594, when the theatres were closed because of plague, Shakespeare published two narrative poems on erotic themes, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. He dedicated them to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. In *Venus and Adonis*, an innocent Adonis rejects the sexual advances of Venus; while in *The Rape of Lucrece*, the virtuous wife Lucrece is raped by the lustful Tarquin. Influenced by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the poems show the guilt and moral confusion that result from uncontrolled lust. Both proved popular and were often reprinted during Shakespeare's lifetime. A third narrative poem, *A Lover's Complaint*, in which a young woman laments her seduction by a persuasive suitor, was printed in the first edition of the *Sonnets* in 1609. Most scholars now accept that Shakespeare wrote *A Lover's Complaint*. Critics consider that its fine qualities are marred by leaden effects. *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, printed in Robert Chester's 1601 *Love's Martyr*, mourns the deaths of the legendary phoenix and his lover, the faithful turtle dove. In 1599, two early drafts of sonnets 138 and 144 appeared in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, published under Shakespeare's name but without his permission.

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, spoken with a stress on every second syllable. 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 new power and flexibility of the poetry in plays such as Julius Caesar and Hamlet. Shakespeare uses it, for example, to convey the turmoil in Hamlet's mind. Shakespeare's work has made a lasting impression on later theatre and literature.

While Shakespeare caused much controversy, he also earned lavish praise and has profoundly impacted the world over in areas of literature, culture, art, theatre, and film and is considered one of the best English language writers ever. From the Preface of the First Folio (1623) "To the memory of my beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare: and what he hath left us"—Ben Jonson;

*"Thou art a Monument, without a tombe
And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give."*

Over the centuries there has been much speculation surrounding various aspects of Shakespeare's life including his religious affiliation, sexual orientation, sources for collaborations, authorship of and chronology of the plays and sonnets. Many of the dates of play performances, when they were written, adapted or revised and printed are imprecise. This biography attempts only to give an overview of his life, while leaving the more learned perspectives to the countless scholars and historians who have devoted their lives to the study and demystification of the man and his works.

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 Shakespeares 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.

Evoking Petrarch's style and lyrical writing of beauty, mortality, and love with its moral anguish and worshipful adoration of a usually unattainable love, the first 126 sonnets are addressed to a young man, sonnets 127-152 to a dark lady. Even the dramatist Shakespeare created a profound intrigue to scholars and novices alike as to the identities of these people.

1.3.5 JOHN DONNE

It would not be easy to extract a simple definition of love from Donne's love poems as these present a surprising variety of moods and attitudes to the emotion or feeling. The poems are at times general, at other times, splendidly passionate, at yet other times cynical and touched with scorn and bitterness. Passion makes much of the love poetry of Donne. The opening of many poems is dramatic in its passion.

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"I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I did till we loved." (The Good Marrow)

"Whoever comes to shroud me do not harm" (The Funeral)

"Busie old fools, unruly sunne,

Why dost thou thus" (The sun Rising).

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These poems are marked by cynicism and scorn. In these poems, Donne seems to be expressing contempt towards love itself. Even here, however we have a variety. His song, beginning with *"Go And Catch A Falling Starre"* ends with a bitter mocking, cynicism and denunciation of the fair sea. Nowhere can one find a true woman even if one travels the whole globe.

"Yet she

Will be,

False, ere I come to two, or there."

There is no Platonism here but bitter satire against women's insincere attitude.

"Though she were true, when you met her,

And last, till you wait your leter."

Several of the love poems are marked by simple, pure affection. Here the conception of love rises to something concrete, tender and affectionate, here Donne is neither petrarchan nor Platonic. In these poems, Donne celebrates the best in conjugal love, *"The Anniversarie"* was written to celebrate the anniversary of his wedding. It gives a fine picture of domestic bliss. Conjugal love knows no change or decay. It is immortal and must continue even in the grave.

"All other things to their destruction draw,

Only your love hath no decay;

This no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday."

Donne's poems also present sensuous love in all its aspects. From the bitterness of love thwarted, to the fleeting paradise of desire fulfilled. For example, in *"The Relique"* the poet says,

"First, we lov'd well and faithfully,

Yet knew not what we lov'd, nor why,

Difference of sex, no more we knew,

Then our guardian angels doe;"

On the whole one can discern five major themes in Donne's love poetry. There is the sorrow of poet, the misery of secrecy, the falseness of the mistress, the fickleness of the lover and finally contempt for love itself. However, we love to differentiate between the kinds of love in Donne's poetry.

Love in one sentence is a holy passion, and in this sense it is irrespective whether it is within marriage or outside it. In another sense, it is purely physical in which case, it is nothing better than just love which partakes of the body and soul is the best. John Bennet is right when she observes that Donne's love poetry is not about the difference between marriage and adultery, but about the difference between love and lust.

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It is not easy to extract a definition of love from poems which deal with so many attitudes to the emotion. However, whether dealing with sensual or spiritual love, or the complex combination of both, Donne is always passionate. The problem which forms the basic theme of Donne's love poetry is the place of love in this world of change and death. The problem is viewed from different angles as a result, love is sometimes seen as immortal and sometimes as futile.

The love poems of John Donne thus express a surprising variety of attitude. On the whole, one may say that Donne's love poems celebrate love in both its physical as well as spiritual aspects. Donne's treatment of love is entirely unconventional. He does not adopt the ways and modes of feeling and expression found in the Elizabethan love poetry. Most of the contemporary poets followed the passion, expressed by Petrarchan Italian poet, but Donne rebelled against them.

The poems classified as Songs and Sonnets in particular are fine examples of the literary school later associated with Donne, that of the metaphysical poets of the mid-seventeenth century. "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" is in this group, as well as "The Canonization," "The Ectasie," and "The Flea." These poems exhibit the provocative subjects and innovative language for which Donne would later be both condemned and praised. The Elegies and Anniversaries have similar qualities. The Elegies are not funeral poems, as the term implies in modern usage, but most often love poems characterized by sensual and even overtly lustful themes. The Anniversaries, however, are genuinely elegiac tributes to a young woman Donne hardly knew; critics suggest that Donne's careful adaptation of the elegy to address issues beyond the short life of Elizabeth Drury effectively redefined the genre. Donne's writing in these poems combines both intense passion and logical argument, features that would also help shape his Holy Sonnets. Among the better known of these poems are "Batter my heart, three person'd God," and "Since she whom I lov'd," the latter a lament on the death of his wife. While many of the Holy Sonnets are assumed to be the products of a more mature poet—written anywhere from 1609 to sometime after 1617—some biographers have suggested that the searching tone of some of the poems may also reflect the serious side of Donne as a young man. Donne's early prose is not often read by modern students, but his sermons and devotions remain a central part of his oeuvre. Perhaps the best known among these is the prose work "No man is an island," included in *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*. Donne's importance as a religious thinker is reflected in the posthumous publication of several of his sermons in *LXXX Sermons* (1640) and his *Essays in Divinity* (1652).

His poems contain few descriptive passages like those in Spenser, nor do his lines follow the smooth metrics and euphonious sounds of his predecessors. Donne replaced their mellifluous lines with a speaking voice whose vocabulary and syntax reflect the emotional intensity of a confrontation and whose metrics and verbal music conform to the needs of a particular dramatic situation. One consequence of this is a directness of language that electrifies his mature poetry. "For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love," begins his love poem *The Canonization*, plunging the reader into the midst of an encounter between the speaker and an unidentified listener. *Holy Sonnet XI* opens with an imaginative confrontation wherein Donne, not Jesus, suffers indignities on the cross: "Spit in my face yee Jewes, and pierce my side...."

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From these explosive beginnings, the poems develop as closely reasoned arguments or propositions that rely heavily on the use of the conceit—i.e., an extended metaphor that draws an ingenious parallel between apparently dissimilar situations or objects. Donne, however, transformed the conceit into a vehicle for transmitting multiple, sometimes even contradictory, feelings and ideas. And, changing again the practice of earlier poets, he drew his imagery from such diverse fields as alchemy, astronomy, medicine, politics, global exploration, and philosophical disputation. Donne's famous analogy of parting lovers to a drawing compass affords a prime example. The immediate shock of some of his conceits aroused Samuel Johnson to call them "heterogeneous ideas...yoked by violence together." Upon reflection, however, these conceits offer brilliant and multiple insights into the subject of the metaphor and help give rise to the much-praised ambiguity of Donne's lyrics.

The presence of a listener is another of Donne's modifications of the Renaissance love lyric, in which the lovers lament, hope, and dissect their feelings without facing their ladies. Donne, by contrast, speaks directly to the lady or some other listener. The latter may even determine the course of the poem, as in *The Flea*, in which the speaker changes his tack once the woman crushes the insect on which he has built his argument about the innocence of lovemaking. But for all their dramatic intensity, Donne's poems still maintain the verbal music and introspective approach that define lyric poetry. His speakers may fashion an imaginary figure to whom they utter their lyric outburst, or, conversely, they may lapse into reflection in the midst of an address to a listener. "But O, selfe traytor," the forlorn lover cries in *Twickham Garden* as he transforms part of his own psyche into a listener. Donne also departs from earlier lyrics by adapting the syntax and rhythms of living speech to his poetry, as in "I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I/Did, till we lov'd?". Taken together, these features of his poetry provided an impetus for the works of such later poets as Robert Browning, William Butler Yeats, and T.S. Eliot.

1.3.6 HENRY VAUGHAN

In 1646 his *Poems, with the Tenth Satyre of Juvenal Englished* was published, followed by a second volume in 1647. Meanwhile he had been "converted" by reading the religious poet George Herbert and gave up "idle verse." His *Silex Scintillans* (1650; "The Glittering Flint," enlarged 1655) and the prose *Mount of Olives: or, Solitary Devotions* (1652) show the depth of his religious convictions and the authenticity of his poetic genius. Two more volumes of secular verse were published, ostensibly without his sanction; but it is his religious verse that has lived. He also translated short moral and religious works and two medical works in prose. At some time in the 1650s he began to practise medicine and continued to do so throughout his life.

Though Vaughan borrowed phrases from Herbert and other writers and wrote poems with the same titles as Herbert's, he was one of the most original poets of his day. Chiefly he had a gift of spiritual vision or imagination that enabled him to write freshly and convincingly, as is illustrated in the opening of "The World":

*I saw Eternity the other night
Like a Great Ring of pure and endless light*

He was equally gifted in writing about nature, holding the old view that every flower enjoys the air it breathes and that even sticks and stones share man's expectation of resurrection. The Romantic poet William Wordsworth may have been influenced by Vaughan.

Another collection of secular poetry, *Olor Iscanus*, was completed within a year of the appearance of *Poems* but not published until 1651. The work included a brief prefatory remark by Thomas Vaughan intimating that but for his influence the poems would have been destroyed by their author. During this period, it is believed that Vaughan's anxiety and grief associated with the antiroyalists' triumph in the Civil War and the death of a younger brother contributed to a profound religious experience that turned him to the writing of poetry on Christian themes. His poetry, which had to this point followed the neoclassical emphasis upon form and objective contemplation of the inanimate, became personal and contemplative within a Christian-humanist framework. The first volume of *Silex Scintillans* was considered far superior in power to the poet's earlier work. The second, enlarged edition of *Silex Scintillans*, though not considered an overall improvement, does include the acclaimed "They are all gone into the world of light!" The next few years saw Vaughan publishing much of a Christian humanist nature, notably the devotions included in *The Mount of Olives* and the new poetry collection *Flores Solitudinis* (1654). Vaughan's final publication, *Thalia Rediviva*, includes juvenilia and odd pieces written both before and (it is believed) after *Silex Scintillans*. The work also contains poems by Thomas Vaughan and several prefatory encomnia in verse.

He was greatly indebted to George Herbert, who provided a model for Vaughan's newly founded spiritual life and literary career, in which he displayed "spiritual quickening and the gift of gracious feeling" derived from Herbert.

The *Temple*, by Herbert, is often seen as the inspiration and blueprints through which Vaughan modelled to create his work. *Silex Scintillans* is most often classed with this collection of Herbert's. *Silex Scintillans* borrows the same themes, experience, and beliefs as *The Temple*. Herbert's influence is evident both in the shape and spirituality of Vaughan's poetry. For example, the opening to Vaughan's poem 'Unprofitableness':

How rich, O Lord! How fresh thy visits are!

is reminiscent of Herbert's 'The Flower':

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean

Are thy returns! ev'n as the flowers in spring

Another work of Vaughan's that clearly parallels George Herbert is *Mount of Olives*, e.g., the passage, Let sensual natures judge as they please, but for my part, I shall hold it no paradoxe to affirme, there are no pleasures in the world. Some coloured griefes of blushing woes there are, which look as clear as if they were true complexions; but it is very sad and tyred truth, that they are but painted.

Vaughan elaborated on personal loss in two well-known poems, "The World" and "They Are All Gone in the World of Light." Another poem, "The Retreat," combines the theme of loss with the corruption of childhood, which is yet another consistent theme of Vaughan's. Vaughan's newfound personal voice and persona are seen as the result of the death of a younger brother.

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1.3.7 ANDREW MARVELL

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Traditionally, Marvell's work has been divided into four classifications—religious poetry, love poetry, pastoral poetry, and political poetry. In the twentieth century, however, commentators have argued that these distinctions are valid only superficially; though Marvell may have made use of these established poetic conventions, his poetry cannot be so neatly categorized or explained. In one of Marvell's most famous poems, "To His Coy Mistress," the narrator implores a woman to become his lover, arguing that the transience of life and the inevitability of death necessitate their immediate enjoyment of sensual pleasure. Many critics believe that complexities and ambiguities within the poem undermine the ostensible message; the suspicion of narrative irony and the curiously inappropriate imagery of the poem cast doubt on its true meaning. The concepts of ambiguity and duality have become recognized as central to the understanding of Marvell's work. In such overtly religious poems as "A Dialogue between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure" and "A Dialogue between the Soul and the Body," Marvell directly addressed the theme of the duality of spirituality and temporality. As their titles indicate, both of these poems are discussions between the body and its pleasures on the one hand and the soul and its spirituality on the other.

Issues of ambiguity and conflict are also inherent in Marvell's Cromwell poems, a series of poems written about and dedicated to Oliver Cromwell. "An Horatian Ode" chronicles the demise of Charles I and Cromwell's rise to power. However, unlike other poems dedicated to Cromwell in this era, "Ode" is neither completely critical of Charles nor totally admiring of Cromwell. In fact, some scholars contend that Cromwell is depicted as a necessary evil. Other critics suggest that subtle hints in the poem indicate the poet's belief that Cromwell's base of power, founded as it was on usurpation and bloodshed, may have been inevitable but can hardly be praiseworthy. Marvell's tone becomes more complimentary through the years as noted in *The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector* and "A Poem upon the Death of His Late Highness the Lord Protector." "Upon Appleton House," which is also usually grouped with the political poems, outwardly appears to praise the retirement of Marvell's benefactor Fairfax from the political arena. The extent to which this praise may be regarded as sincere has long been a critical stumbling block, as the rest of the poem seems to endorse action and movement. Marvell dealt again with the tension between retirement and action in "The Garden," which, like many of Marvell's best poems, presents a critical enigma. Garden imagery, which recurs throughout Marvell's poetry, represents a tranquil and idyllic retreat, a sanctuary in which one can address one's spiritual concerns. In "The Garden," Marvell explores the individual's spiritual journey; however, the validity of the narrator's pastoral retreat as a refuge from earthly cares and passions is compromised by Marvell's description of the garden itself, which is couched in lush, sensual language and imagery.

Though in poems written between 1645 and 1649 he had evinced royalist sympathies, Marvell seems to have been attracted by the strong personality of Oliver Cromwell, and in 1650 he wrote "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland." Commonly acknowledged a masterful piece of political poetry, this ode has occasioned some controversy as to the degree of unqualified admiration with which the poet regards the military harshness of the Puritan general.

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Most of the finest poems seem to have been composed in the 1650s; few of them are without central images of gardens. Perhaps the most famous of Marvell's lyrics is "To His Coy Mistress": "Had we but world enough and time,/ This coyness, Lady, were no crime... / But at my back I always hear/ Time's winged chariot hurrying near:/ And yonder all before us lie/ Deserts of vast eternity." Like many of Marvell's best poems, it masks extraordinary subtlety and complexity beneath a surface of smooth and deceptively simple octosyllabic couplets. It is, in fact, as perfect an example of the metaphysical mode as anything by Donne and, for all its cool and witty tone, a passionate lyric. Similarly powerful is "The Garden," whose sensuous images constitute a complex blending of Renaissance traditions that bear on the rival virtues of the active and the contemplative life; one of the most famous images in the poem is that of the mind, "that ocean where each kind/ Does straight its own resemblance find," withdrawn into itself and detached from the world, "Annihilating all that's made/ To a green thought in a green shade."

Marvell was famous for his brilliant prose interventions in the major issues of the Restoration, religious toleration, and what he called "arbitrary" as distinct from parliamentary government.

1.3.8 JOHN MILTON

Milton had manifested remarkable talent as a linguist and translator and extraordinary versatility as a poet. While at St. Paul's, as a 15-year-old student, Milton had translated Psalm 114 from the original Hebrew, a text that recounts the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt. This translation into English was a poetic paraphrase in heroic couplets (rhymed iambic pentameter), and later he translated and paraphrased the same psalm into Greek. Beginning such work early in his boyhood, he continued it into adulthood, especially from 1648 to 1653, a period when he was also composing pamphlets against the Church of England and the monarchy. Also in his early youth Milton composed letters in Latin verse. These letters, which range over many topics, are called elegies because they employ elegiac metre—a verse form, Classical in origin, that consists of couplets, the first line dactylic hexameter, the second dactylic pentameter. Milton's first elegy, "Elegia prima ad Carolum Diodatum," was a letter to Diodati, who was a student at Oxford while Milton attended Cambridge. But Milton's letter was written from London in 1626, during his period of rustication; in the poem he anticipates his reinstatement, when he will "go back to the reedy fens of the Cam and return again to the hum of the noisy school."

Another early poem in Latin is "In Quintum Novembris" ("On the Fifth of November"), which Milton composed in 1626 at Cambridge. The poem celebrates the anniversary of the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605, when Guy Fawkes was discovered preparing to detonate explosives at the opening of Parliament, an event in which King James I and his family would participate. On the event's anniversary, university students typically composed poems that attacked Roman Catholics for their involvement in treachery of this kind. The papacy and the Catholic nations on the Continent also came under attack. Milton's poem includes two larger themes that would later inform *Paradise Lost*: that the evil perpetrated by sinful humankind may be counteracted by Providence and that God will bring greater goodness out of evil. Throughout his career, Milton inveighed against

Catholicism, though during his travels in Italy in 1638–39 he developed cordial personal relationships with Catholics, including high-ranking officials who oversaw the library at the Vatican.

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In 1628 Milton composed an occasional poem, "On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough," which mourns the loss of his niece Anne, the daughter of his older sister. Milton tenderly commemorates the child, who was two years old. The poem's conceits, Classical allusions, and theological overtones emphasize that the child entered the supernal realm because the human condition, having been enlightened by her brief presence, was ill-suited to bear her any longer.

In "On The Morning of Christ's Nativity," perhaps his most beautiful poem, Milton shows a side that is youthful and proud. Take these lines from the introduction for instance:

The Star-led Wizards haste with odors sweet: / O run, prevent them with thy humble ode, / And lay it lowly at his blessed feet, / Have thou the honor first, thy Lord to greet.

At first glance, the speaker in this poem may seem "humble," but the contradictions set off by the author's longing for "honor" betray an underlying attitude of pride. This mindset emerges again in Milton's poem, "Ad Patrem," when Milton coyly tells his father that,

You should not despise the poet's task, divine song, which preserves some spark of the Promethean fire and is the unrivalled glory of heaven-born human mind.

Throughout Milton's early poems, it is clear that he valued his choice of profession as something holy and he made his capacity for this "divine" poetic career discernable within his works. With such a view, Milton established himself as not merely a poet, but as someone who would play a large role in the still ongoing English Reformation.

"On Shakespeare," though composed in 1630, first appeared anonymously as one of the many encomiums in the Second Folio (1632) of Shakespeare's plays. It was Milton's first published poem in English. In the 16-line epigram Milton contends that no man-made monument is a suitable tribute to Shakespeare's achievement. According to Milton, Shakespeare himself created the most enduring monument to befit his genius: the readers of the plays, who, transfixed with awe and wonder, become living monuments, a process renewed at each generation through the panorama of time. "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," written about 1631, may reflect the dialectic that informed the prolusions that Milton composed at Cambridge. The former celebrates the activities of daytime, and the latter muses on the sights, sounds, and emotions associated with darkness. The former describes a lively and sanguine personality, whereas the latter dwells on a pensive, even melancholic, temperament. In their complementary interaction, the poems may dramatize how a wholesome personality blends aspects of mirth and melancholy. Some commentators suggest that Milton may be allegorically portraying his own personality in "Il Penseroso" and Diodati's more outgoing and carefree disposition in "L'Allegro." If such is the case, then in their friendship Diodati provided the balance that offset Milton's marked temperament of studious retirement.

Milton's most important early poems, *Comus* and "*Lycidas*," are major literary achievements, to the extent that his reputation as an author would have been secure by 1640 even without his later works. *Comus*, a dramatic entertainment, or masque, is also called *A Mask*; it was first published as *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* in 1638, but, since the late 17th century, it has typically been called by the name of its most vivid character, the villainous *Comus*.

Late in 1637 Milton composed a pastoral elegy called "*Lycidas*," which commemorates the death of a fellow student at Cambridge, Edward King, who drowned while crossing the Irish Sea. Published in 1638 in *Justa Edouardo King Naufrago* ("Obsequies in Memory of Edward King"), a compilation of elegies by Cambridge students, "*Lycidas*" is one of several poems in English, whereas most of the others are in Greek and Latin. As a pastoral elegy—often considered the most outstanding example of the genre—Milton's poem is richly allegorical. King is called *Lycidas*, a shepherd's name that recurs in Classical elegies.

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1.3.9 THOMAS CAREW

Carew's poems are sensuous lyrics. His metrical style was influenced by Jonson and his imagery by Donne, for whom he had an almost servile admiration. Carew had a lucidity and directness of lyrical utterance unknown to Donne. It is perhaps his greatest distinction that he is the earliest of the Cavalier song-writers by profession, of whom *John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, was a later example, poets who turned the disreputable incidents of an idle court-life into poetry which was often of the rarest delicacy and the purest melody and colour.

In the final decade of his life Carew largely eschewed lyric for occasional and commendatory poems. His verses to Ben Jonson on the failure of *The New Inn* (performed 1629; published 1631) and his elegy (1633) on the death of John Donne are the most astute contemporary assessments of the two men's poetic legacies. Carew is, indeed, one of the great transitional figures of English poetry: although indebted to Donne and Jonson and deeply grounded in the literature of the high English Renaissance, he sketched out the lighter, more elegant style that has come to be known as Cavalier verse. His younger followers—Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace, Edmund Waller, Sir William Davenant, and in an entirely different mode, Andrew Marvell—dominated the literary scene at mid century and in turn foreshadowed the radical changes ushered in by the Restoration in 1660.

Poems. By Thomas Carew, Esquire is a collection of lyrics, songs, pastorals, poetic dialogues, elegies, addresses, and occasional poems. Most of the pieces are fairly short—the longest, "*A Rapture*," is 166 lines, and well over half are under 50 lines. The poem opens as a *suasoria* in which the poet invites his mistress, Celia, to enjoy the delights of lovemaking; it rapidly modulates into a witty, sensuous, and to some readers shocking celebration of the female body. The subjects are various: a number of poems treat love, lovemaking, and feminine beauty. Several of the poems, including "*An Elegie upon the death of the Deane of Pauls, Dr. John Donne*" are memorial tributes; others, notably "*To Saxham*," celebrate country-house life; and a few record such events as the successful production of a play ("*To my worthy Friend, M. D'Avenant, upon his Excellent Play, The Iust Italian*") or the marriage of friends ("*On the Marriage of T. K. and C. C. the Morning Stormie*").

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Many of the songs and love poems are addressed to the still-unidentified "Celia," a woman who was evidently Carew's lover for years. The poems to Celia treat the urgency of courtship, making much of the *carpe diem* theme. A number of Carew's poems are concerned with the nature of poetry itself. His elegy on John Donne has been praised as both a masterpiece of criticism and a remarkably perceptive analysis of the metaphysical qualities of Donne's literary work. English poet and playwright Ben Jonson is the subject of another piece of critical verse, "To Ben. Iohnson, Upon Occasion of His Ode of Defiance Annexed to His Play of The New Inne." This poem, like the elegy on Donne, is concerned with both the style and substance of the author's literary works as well as with personal qualities of the author himself. Among Carew's occasional, public verse are his addresses to ladies of fashion, commendations of the nobility, and laments for the passing of friends or public figures, such as Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden.

The poet employs all the traditional conceits and addresses the usual amatory situations; yet, through vivid diction, a penchant for the elegant variation, and an ability to give an old phrase a surprising turn, he makes the clichés witty and new. In "The Spring," for example, Carew upbraids his mistress for continuing to remain cold to his suit while all nature warms to the rays of the March sun. The trope is old, but Carew's exquisite diction tricks up the threadbare contrast between winter and spring:

*Now that the winter's gone, the earth hath lost
Her snow-white robes, and now no more the frost
Candies the grasse, or castes an ycie creame
Vpon the silver Lake, or Chrystall streame:
But the warme Sunne thawes the benumbed Earth,
And makes it tender*

The range of amatory situations that Carew addresses in his lyrics is broad. "To A. L. Perswasions to love" is a fast-moving, closely argued *suasoria* that makes its case with compelling urgency:

*Oh love me then, and now begin it;
Let us not loose this present minute:
For time and age will worke that wrack
Which time or age shall ne're call backe.*

Carew's tribute to the family estate at Saxham clearly imitates Ben Jonson's praise of the Sidney family in his most famous country-house poem, "To Penshurst," but it diverges from the model in its economy, its abstractness, and its application of lyric devices to a wholly new genre. A related poem, "To the King at his entrance into Saxham," celebrates a visit by James I to the Crofts's estate in the early 1620s and serves as the prologue to a masque staged by the family on that occasion. "To the King" explores the relationship between the monarch and his subjects through an appeal to the Ovidian fable of Philemon and Baucis--the country house and its traditions of hospitality make it possible for that "little god," the king, to mix easily with common men.

1.3.10 ROBERT HERRICK

Herrick became well known as a poet about 1620–30; many manuscript commonplace books from that time contain his poems. The only book that Herrick published was *Hesperides* (1648), which included *His Noble Numbers*; a collection of poems on religious subjects with its own title page dated 1647 but not previously printed. *Hesperides* contained about 1,400 poems, mostly very short, many of them being brief epigrams. His work appeared after that in miscellanies and songbooks; the 17th-century English composer Henry Lawes and others set some of his songs.

Herrick wrote elegies, satires, epigrams, love songs to imaginary mistresses, marriage songs, complimentary verse to friends and patrons, and celebrations of rustic and ecclesiastical festivals. The appeal of his poetry lies in its truth to human sentiments and its perfection of form and style. Frequently light, worldly, and hedonistic, and making few pretensions to intellectual profundity, it yet covers a wide range of subjects and emotions, ranging from lyrics inspired by rural life to wistful evocations of life and love's evanescence and fleeting beauty. Herrick's lyrics are notable for their technical mastery and the interplay of thought, rhythm, and imagery that they display. As a poet Herrick was steeped in the classical tradition; he was also influenced by English folklore and lyrics, by Italian madrigals, by the Bible and patristic literature, and by contemporary English writers, notably Jonson and Robert Burton.

His reputation rests on *Hesperides*, and the much shorter *Noble Numbers*, spiritual works, published together in 1648. He is well-known for his style and, in his earlier works, frequent references to lovemaking and the female body. His later poetry was more of a spiritual and philosophical nature. Among his most famous short poetical sayings are the unique monometers, such as "Thus I / Pass by / And die, / As one / Unknown / And gone."

Herrick sets out his subject-matter in the poem he printed at the beginning of his collection, *The Argument of his Book*. He dealt with English country life and its seasons, village customs, complimentary poems to various ladies and his friends, themes taken from classical writings and a solid bedrock of Christian faith, not intellectualized but underpinning the rest.

Herrick never married, and none of his love-poems seem to connect directly with any one beloved woman. He loved the richness of sensuality and the variety of life, and this is shown vividly in such poems as *Cherry-ripe*, *Delight in Disorder* and *Upon Julia's Clothes*.

The over-riding message of Herrick's work is that life is short, the world is beautiful, love is splendid, and we must use the short time we have to make the most of it. This message can be seen clearly in *To the Virgins*, *to make much of Time*, *To Daffodils*, *To Blossoms* and *Corinna going a-Maying*, where the warmth and exuberance of what seems to have been a kindly and jovial personality comes over strongly.

The opening stanza in one of his more famous poems, "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time"; is as follows:

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

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(In Elizabethan slang, "dying" referred both to mortality and to orgasm.) This poem is an example of the *carpe diem* genre; the popularity of Herrick's poems of this kind helped revive the genre.

His poems were not widely popular at the time they were published. His style was strongly influenced by Ben Jonson, by the classical Roman writers, and by the poems of the late Elizabethan age. This must have seemed quite old-fashioned to an audience whose tastes were tuned to the complexities of the metaphysical poets such as John Donne and Andrew Marvell. His works were rediscovered in the early nineteenth century, and have been regularly printed ever since.

The Victorian poet Swinburne described Herrick as the greatest song writer... ever born of English race. It is certainly true that despite his use of classical allusions and names, his poems are easier for modern readers to understand than those of many of his contemporaries.

Herrick's writing style was influenced by classical Roman poetry and often focused on English country life and village customs. Although he is well-known for bawdy poems with much reference to lovemaking and the female body, Robert Herrick died a bachelor.

His famous poem, which reminds women of how fleeting beauty is, is entitled "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time".

The bulk of his work is contained in the *Hesperides* (1648), which when it first appeared included his sacred songs called Noble Numbers. He was a disciple of Ben Jonson and his lyrics show considerable classical influence, but his greatness rests on his simplicity, his sensuousness, his care for design and detail, and his management of words and rhythms. Among the best known of his lyrics are "The Night Piece, to Julia"; the song commencing "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may"; "Corinna's Going a-Maying"; "To Anthea"; "Cherry-ripe"; and "Upon Julia's Clothes." Among his sacred poems is the fine piece "His Litany to the Holy Spirit." Herrick also excelled in the writing of epigrams and epitaphs.

1.3.11 ABRAHAM COWLEY

The first collection of Cowley's works, *Poetical Blossoms*, was published when he was fifteen years old. In addition to elegies and other occasional poems in the style of Spenser, it contains two plays. The first, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, written when Cowley was ten, is a verse romance in heroic couplets that shows the author's familiarity not only with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* but with the Petrarchan tradition as well. The second, *Constantia and Philetus*, composed two years later, is a tragic romance that combines dazzling Ovidian conceits with Horatian themes of rural simplicity and tranquility.

Before he left Westminster, Cowley began work on *Loves Riddle*, a pastoral comedy in blank verse and song whose sources include Terence, Plautus, Sidney, Daniel, Shakespeare, and Guarini; he completed this play while at Cambridge and

wrote two others there as well, both of which were performed at Trinity College. *Naufragium Joculare* (The Comic Shipwreck), a satire on education, schoolmasters, and students, is a five-act Latin comedy with plot outlines borrowed from Terence and Plautus.

The *Guardian* was written—within a week, according to its author—for the visit to Cambridge by the Prince of Wales, later Charles II, on March 12, 1641; a “comedy of humours” after the style of Jonson but also derivative of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Kyd, it satirizes Puritans in particular and contemporary society in general. Nearly twenty years later, Cowley revised this as *Cutter of Coleman Street*; his only professionally produced play, it was frequently performed in the Restoration period and continued to be staged well into the eighteenth-century. An enormously popular collection that was reprinted throughout the seventeenth-century, it is modeled on Donne and reflects the contemporary fashion for amorous lyrics replete with paradox, hyperbole, and extended conceits. These poems also form part of *The Miscellanies*, published nine years later, but from a modern perspective other parts of this volume are much more significant, specifically the Pindariques, the *Davideis*, “Of Wit,” “On the Death of Mr. William Hervey,” “On the Death of Mr. Crashaw,” and the author’s notes and prefaces.

In spite of the troubles of the times, so fatal to poetic fame, his reputation steadily increased, and when, on his return to England in 1656, he published a volume of his collected poetical works, he found himself without a rival in public esteem. This volume included the later works already mentioned, the Pindarique Odes, the *Davideis*, the *Mistress* and some *Miscellanies*. Among the latter are to be found Cowley’s most vital pieces. This section of his works opens with the famous aspiration:

“What shall I do to be for ever known,
And make the coming age my own?”

It contains elegies on Wotton, Vandyck, Falkland, William Hervey and Crashaw, the last two being among Cowley’s finest poems, brilliant, sonorous and original; the amusing ballad of *The Chronicle*, giving a fictitious catalogue of his supposed amours; various gnomic pieces; and some charming paraphrases from Anacreon. The Pindarique Odes contain weighty Lines and passages, buried in irregular and inharmonious masses of moral verbiage. The long cadences of the Alexandrines with which most of the strophes close, continued to echo in English poetry from Dryden down to Gray, but the Odes themselves, which were found to be obscure by the poet’s contemporaries, immediately fell into disesteem.

The *Mistress* was the most popular poetic reading of the age, and is now the least read of all Cowley’s works. It was the last and most violent expression of the amatory affectation of the 17th century, an affectation which had been endurable in Donne and other early writers because it had been the vehicle of sincere emotion, but was unendurable in Cowley because in him it represented nothing but a perfunctory exercise, a mere exhibition of literary calisthenics.

The Pindaric odes are imitations rather than translations. Rich in wit and ingenuity, they exhibit a variety of rhyme scheme as well as line and stanza length. In such Pindarics as “*The Resurrection*,” “*The Muse*,” and “*To Mr. Hobbes*,” Cowley focuses on the function of poetry and its complementary relationship with

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philosophy. The *Davideis*, begun while the author was at Cambridge, was intended to comprise twelve books celebrating the Old Testament hero David, but Cowley ceased work on it after completing four. Written in heroic, rhymed couplets and varied by the insertion of Alexandrines and interpolated songs, the epic has been characterized by Cowley's twentieth-century biographer Arthur H. Nethercot as an "ambitious failure." "Of Wit" is a critical analysis of aesthetic theory that emphasizes the poet's capacity to create order out of disparate elements. Other poems in this volume that modern commentators single out as among Cowley's finest are elegies mourning the loss of two close friends.

"On the Death of Mr. William Hervey," written in 1642, is noteworthy for directness of expression and simple yet eloquent tone. "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw," written sometime after its subject died in 1649, is universally admired for its stately mood, harmonious organization, and balanced couplets. The final collection of Cowley's writing published during his lifetime is *Verses, Lately Written upon Several Occasions*, consisting of prose essays followed by poems that are mostly imitations of Horace and Virgil. The prose style is groundbreaking—colloquial yet classical. The theme is highly personal, as Cowley reviews his career and recalls his early, conflicting impulses toward solitude and obscurity on the one hand and poetic fame on the other. The *Librii Plantarum*, written while the author was living in rural retirement, represents both his passionate interest in botanical lore and his lifelong concern with the relationship between man and nature. Other significant works from the last years of Cowley's life include *A Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy* (1661), a meticulously detailed plan for educational reform; "To the Royal Society" (1667), a Pindaric ode in praise of Bacon and the "new philosophy"; and eleven short essays, published after his death, that exalt the Horatian ideal of retirement from the world in prose that is notable for clarity, wit, and grace.

1.3.12 JOHN DRYDEN

Apart from the encomiums or complimentary poems of his early years, Dryden is well-known for his satirical verse. The Popish Plot (1678-81), a thwarted attempt by the Earl of Shaftesbury and others to exclude Charles's Catholic brother, James, from his right of succession to the throne, provided Dryden with the topic for what critics consider his greatest work, *Absalom and Achitophel*, a satirical attack on Shaftesbury and his confederates. This work inaugurated a phase of satirical and didactic verse which directly influenced the development of Augustan poetry in the next century, especially that of Alexander Pope. The poem was followed in 1682 by *Mac Flecknoe*, a mockheroic poem which was directed at the poet Thomas Shadwell, a literary antagonist of Dryden. Allied to *Absalom and Achitophel* in tone, *Mac Flecknoe* displays Dryden's mastery of rhythm and cunning verbal attack. The same year there also appeared a shorter, more serious satiric poem titled *The Medall*, which again was aimed at Shaftesbury.

Political and religious matters repeatedly overlapped in Dryden's time, an era much vexed with the question of whether Protestant or Roman Catholic monarchs were the legitimate rulers of Britain; accordingly, Dryden also began to address religious issues in his poetry. *Religio Laici*; or, *a Layman's Faith* (1682) appeared when Whig plots to assassinate King Charles II were being formed. In this

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didactic poem, which also contains religious and metaphysical insights, Dryden advocated a compromise between Protestant Anglican exclusivism and Roman Catholic belief in absolute papal authority, articulating the king's stance in favour of religious toleration. Dryden's later, allegorical poem, *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), a three-part work written in beast-fable form, was published after the poet's conversion to Catholicism, but like *Religio Laici*, it argues for moderation between the two churches. Dryden's odes represent his final poetic period. They include *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, 1687, and *Alexander's Feast*. Today, they are widely anthologized, and they attest to Dryden's skill at incorporating musical composition into his poetry.

His first important literary effort, *Heroic Stanzas to the memory of Cromwell*, was published in 1659. This was followed the next year by verses on the return of Charles. In order to add to his slender income, he turned to the stage, and after two unsuccessful attempts he produced his first play, *The Wild Gallant*, in 1663. This comedy was not well received, and Dryden confesses that his forte was not comedy. The same year he produced *The Rival Ladies*, and married Lady Elizabeth Howard. *The Indian Queen* (1664), written in collaboration with Sir Robert Howard, his wife's brother, enjoyed considerable success. Dryden followed this with *The Indian Emperor* (1665). During the Plague Dryden lived with his father-in-law in Wiltshire, where he wrote his *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668). Howard's preface to his *Four New Playes* (1665) called forth a reply from Dryden: *A Defence of an Essay of Dramatique Poesie* (1668). From the re-opening of the theaters in 1666, to 1681, Dryden wrote little except his plays. The production of Buckingham's satirical play *The Rehearsal* in 1671, in which Dryden was the chief personage, called forth the preface *Of Heroic Plays and Defence of the Epilogue* (1672). *All for Love*, in all probability the poet's greatest play, was performed in 1678. He continued to produce plays to the end of his career. In 1681 he turned to satire and wrote *Absalom and Achitophel*, which achieved instant and widespread popularity. This was followed by other satires. In 1687, after his conversion to the Catholic Church, he wrote *The Hind and the Panther*, a plea for Catholicism. His Catholic leanings lost for him the laureateship and other offices when the Revolution came. During his last ten years he translated many of the Latin classics: Virgil, Ovid, Lucretius, Horace, Theocritus, and others, and modernized Chaucer. He died in 1700, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Dryden's contribution to English literature, besides his poems and plays, was the invention of a direct and simple style for literary criticism. He improved upon the prose of the Elizabethan writers in the matter of ridding English of its involved forms, even if through that process he lost some of its gorgeous ornament and rugged strength. Jonson's method in criticism was after all not much more than the note-book method of jotting down stray thoughts and opinions and reactions. Dryden elaborated his ideas, sought the weight of authority, argued both sides of the question, and adduced proofs. Dryden performed an inestimable service to his countrymen in applying true standards of criticism to the Elizabethans and in showing them a genuine and sympathetic if occasionally misguided love for Shakespeare. Dryden also enjoyed the advantage of being able to bring his knowledge of the drama of Spain and France to bear on his criticism of English dramatists.

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In 1667 Dryden had another remarkable hit with a tragicomedy, *Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen*, which appealed particularly to the king. The part of Florimel, a gay and witty maid of honour, was played to perfection by the king's latest mistress, Nell Gwynn. In Florimel's rattling exchanges with Celadon, the Restoration aptitude for witty repartee reached a new level of accomplishment. In 1667 Dryden also reworked for the stage Molière's comedy *L'Étourdi* (translated by William Cavendish, duke of Newcastle) under the title *Sir Martin Mar-all*.

In 1668 Dryden published *Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay*, a leisurely discussion between four contemporary writers of whom Dryden (as Neander) is one. This work is a defense of English drama against the champions of both ancient Classical drama and the Neoclassical French theatre; it is also an attempt to discover general principles of dramatic criticism. By deploying his disputants so as to break down the conventional oppositions of ancient and modern, French and English, Elizabethan and Restoration, Dryden deepens and complicates the discussion. This is the first substantial piece of modern dramatic criticism; it is sensible, judicious, and exploratory and combines general principles and analysis in a gracefully informal style. Dryden's approach in this and all his best criticism is characteristically speculative and shows the influence of detached scientific inquiry. The prefaces to his plays and translations over the next three decades were to constitute a substantial body of critical writing and reflection.

1.3.13 THOMAS GRAY

Thomas Gray began seriously writing poems in 1742, mainly after his close friend Richard West died. He moved to Cambridge and began a self-imposed programme of literary study, becoming one of the most learned men of his time, though he claimed to be lazy by inclination. He became a Fellow first of Peterhouse, and later of Pembroke College, Cambridge. It is said that the change of college was the result of a practical joke. Terrified of fire, he had installed a metal bar by his window on the top floor of the Burrough's building at Peterhouse, so that in the event of a fire he could tie his sheets to it and climb to safety. One night undergraduates decided to play a prank and shouted "fire". Gray climbed down from his window, landing in a barrel of water placed beneath.

Although he was one of the least productive poets (his collected works published during his lifetime amount to less than 1,000 lines), he is regarded as the predominant poetic figure of the mid-18th century. In 1757, he was offered the post of Poet Laureate, which he refused. In 1768, he succeeded Lawrence Brouckett as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, a sinecure.

Gray was so self critical and fearful of failure that he only published 13 poems during his lifetime, and once wrote that he feared his collected works would be "mistaken for the works of a flea." Walpole said that "He never wrote anything easily but things of Humour."

It is believed that Gray wrote his masterpiece, the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, in the graveyard of the church in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire in 1750. The poem was a literary sensation when published by Robert Dodsley in February 1751 and has made a lasting contribution to English literature. Its reflective, calm and stoic tone was greatly admired, and it was pirated, imitated,

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quoted and translated into Latin and Greek. It is still one of the most popular and most frequently quoted poems in the English language. Before the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, British General James Wolfe is said to have recited it to his officers, adding: "Gentlemen, I would rather have written that poem than take Quebec tomorrow". The poem's famous depiction of an "ivy-mantled tow'r" could be a reference to the early-mediaeval St. Laurence's Church in Upton, Slough.

The Elegy was recognised immediately for its beauty and skill, and the Churchyard Poets are so named because they wrote in the shadow of Gray's great poem. It contains many outstanding phrases which have entered the common English lexicon, either on their own or as referenced in other works.

Gray also wrote light verse, such as Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes, a mock elegy concerning Horace Walpole's cat. After setting the scene with the couplet "What female heart can gold despise? What cat's averse to fish?", the poem moves to its multiple proverbial conclusion: "a fav'rite has no friend", "[k]now one false step is ne'er retrieved" and ""nor all that glisters, gold". (Walpole later displayed the fatal china vase on a pedestal at his house in Strawberry Hill.) Gray's surviving letters also show his sharp observation and playful sense of humour.

Gray himself considered his two Pindaric odes, The Progress of Poesy and The Bard, his best works. Pindaric odes are written with great fire and passion, unlike the calmer and more reflective Horatian odes such as Ode on a distant Prospect of Eton College. The Bard tells of a wild Welsh poet cursing Edward I after the conquest of Wales and prophesying in detail the downfall of the House of Plantagenet. It is very melodramatic, and ends with the bard hurling himself to his death from the top of a mountain.

Gray travelled widely throughout Britain to places like Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Scotland in search of picturesque scenery and ancient monuments. These things were not generally valued in the early eighteenth century, when the popular taste ran to classical styles in architecture and literature and people liked their scenery tame and well-tended. Some people have seen Gray's writings on this topic, and the Gothic details that appear in his Elegy and The Bard as the first foreshadowing of the Romantic movement that dominated the early nineteenth century, when William Wordsworth and the other Lake poets had taught people to value the picturesque, the sublime, and the Gothic. Gray combined traditional forms and poetic diction with new topics and modes of expression and may be considered as a classically focussed precursor of the romantic revival.

Interestingly, however, Gray's connection to the Romantic poets is vexed. In the prefaces to the 1800 and 1802 editions of Wordsworth's and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth singled out Gray's "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West" to exemplify what he found most objectionable in poetry, declaring it was "Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation between prose and metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

1.3.14 ALEXANDER POPE

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Alexander Pope (1688-1744), was the most famous English poet of his century. His own century dwelt most upon his merits; the 19th century is disposed rather to dwell upon his defects, both as a poet and as a man, with a persistency and minuteness that more than counterbalance any exaggeration in the estimate formed when it was the fashion to admire his verse and treat his moral obliquity as a foible.

The well-deserved success of *An Essay on Criticism* brought Pope a wider circle of friends, notably Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, who were then collaborating on *The Spectator*. To this journal Pope contributed the most original of his pastorals, "The Messiah" (1712), and perhaps other papers in prose. He was clearly influenced by *The Spectator's* policy of correcting public morals by witty admonishment, and in this vein he wrote the first version of his mock epic, *The Rape of the Lock* (two cantos, 1712; five cantos, 1714), to reconcile two Catholic families.

The Rape of the Lock in its first form appeared in 1712 in Linton's *Miscellany*; the "machinery" of sylphs and gnomes was an afterthought, and the poem was republished as we now have it early in 1714. This was his first poem written on an inspiration from real life, from nature and not from books. A gentleman had in a frolic surreptitiously cut off a lock of a young lady's hair, and the liberty had been resented; Pope heard the story from his friend Caryll, who suggested that it might be a subject for a mock-heroic poem like Boileau's *Lutrin*. Pope caught at the hint; the mock-heroic treatment of the pretty frivolities of fashionable life just suited his freakish sprightliness of wit, and his studies of the grand epic at the time put him in excellent vein. *The Rape of the Lock* is almost universally admitted to be his masterpiece. English critics from his own time to the present have competed in lauding its airiness, its ingenuity, its exquisite finish.

From 1715 to 1720, Pope worked on translating Homer's *Iliad*. With its success, along with William Broome and Elijah Fenton, Pope translated *Odyssey* between 1725 and 1726. With that, Pope became the first English poet to ever live off the sales of his works alone. "Indebted to no prince or peer alive" he stated.

During the same period, Pope brought out an edition of Shakespeare, which "regularised" his meter and verse in several places. This led Lewis Theobald and other scholars to attack Pope's edition encouraging him to write the satire *The Dunciad*, the first of his moral and satiric poems, in 1728. Pope's other major contributions were *Moral Essays* (1731-1735), *Imitations of Horace* (1733-1738), *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (1735) and *Essay on Man* (1734).

Written in 1727, *The Art of Sinking in Poetry* was one of Alexander Pope's contributions to the literary output of the legendary Scriblerus club – a circle of writers dedicated to mocking what they perceived as a culture of mediocrity and false learning prevalent in the arts and sciences of their day.

Taking the form of an ironic guide to writing bad verse, Pope's tongue-in-cheek essay is wickedly funny in its lampooning of various pompous poetasters, as well as being essential reading for any budding writer wishing to avoid sinking to the unintentionally ridiculous, and instead to reach for the sublime.

This attractive edition makes the audacity of Pope's critical wit and his mastery of poetic technique accessible to a modern audience... Those interested in poetic practice or pursuing Pope's career from *An Essay in Criticism* to *The Rape of the Lock* to *The Dunciad* will find it an essential companion.' *The Times Literary Supplement*

'As the sublime was becoming fashionable, Alexander Pope produced a brilliant guide to this tendency, his *Art of Sinking in Poetry*. It was a compendium of the failed sublimities of other poets, many of them contemporaries, and it introduced the word 'bathos' to the English language.' *The Guardian*

'Hilariously vicious... At a time when more is being published in the English language than ever before, the re-publication of this 18th century essay is timely.' *The Guardian*.

A comparable blend of seemingly incompatible responses—love and hate, bawdiness and decorum, admiration and ridicule—is to be found in all Pope's later satires. The poem is thick with witty allusions to classical verse and, notably, to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The art of allusion is an element of much of Pope's poetry.

In the interval between the first and the enlarged edition of the *Rape of the Lock*, Pope gave the finishing touches to his *Windsor Forest*, and published it in March 1713, with a flattering dedication to the secretary at war and an opportune allusion to the peace of Utrecht. This was a nearer approach to taking a political side than Pope had yet made. His principle had been to keep clear of politics, and not to attach himself to any of the sets into which literary men were divided by party. In another early poem, "Eloisa to Abelard," Pope borrowed the form of Ovid's "heroic epistle" (in which an abandoned lady addresses her lover) and showed imaginative skill in conveying the struggle between sexual passion and dedication to a life of celibacy.

1.3.15 WILLIAM COWPER

Reformers in poetry probably seldom work with a conscious aim, like social and political reformers. A poet writes in a certain manner because that is the only way in which he can write, or wishes to write, and without foreseeing or calculating the effect of his work. This is especially true of Cowper, who owed more, perhaps, than any English poet to what may be called accident, as distinguished from poetic purpose. He did not, like Milton or Tennyson, dedicate himself to poetry. He did not even write poetry primarily for the sake of writing poetry, but to ward off melancholy by keeping his mind occupied. He drew poetry back to the simple truths of ordinary human nature and the English countryside, because, in the limited outlook on the world which his life allowed him, these were the things that touched him and interested him. Being a man of fine taste, tender feelings and a plain sincerity, he opened the road of truth for the nobler poetic pageants that were to pass along it.

The collection entitled *Olney Hymns* was published in London in 1779. Cowper's contributions to the volume were initialled "C" and among them occur several hymns still in use, together with three or four which are among the best known of English hymns, to whatever extent people may differ as to their morality. Oh for a closer walk with God; There is a fountain filled with blood; Hark, my soul!

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it is the Lord; Jesus! where'er thy people meet; God moves in a mysterious way—these are among the hymns by Cowper in this collection. The salient quality of them all is their sincerity and directness. The poet's actual experiences in the spiritual life are expressed with the simplicity generally characteristic of his work. Their weakness is a lack of profundity, and the absence of that suggestion of the infinite and the awful, which, as in Crashaw or Newman, sometimes informs religious poetry less carefully dogmatic than Cowper's. His mind, indeed, was too precisely made up on matters of doctrine to be fruitful either of lofty religious passion or of religious mystery; and, instead of being great sacred poetry, his hymns are a stay and comfort to souls experiencing what might be called the practical difficulties of certain phases of spiritual life. Most of them are hopeful in tone; for, though the book was not published till 1779, the hymns were written by Cowper before 1773.

Later, lady Austen came into Cowper's life and suggesting to Cowper a subject for his pen, she gave him not a moral topic but a simple object—the sofa in his room. The idea was very likely thrown off without full prevision of its far-reaching effect; but, in encouraging Cowper to write about something that he knew, in checking, so far as might be, his tendency to moralise and to preach by fixing his attention on the simple facts of his daily life, she gave him an impulse which was what his own poetry, and English poetry at that moment, most needed. The result of her suggestion was *The Task*, a blank-verse poem in six books, of which *The Sofa* formed the first. Cowper starts playfully, with a touch of the gallantry that was always his. He shows his humour by dealing with the ordained subject in the style of Milton. Milton was his favourite poet; Johnson's life of Milton one of the writings he most disliked. Nevertheless, with his gentle gaiety, he begins his work with a parody of Milton.

Hitherto, there had been nothing in English poetry quite like the passage that begins with the lines here quoted. The nearest parallel is, probably, Collins's *Ode to Evening*, though that lovely poem wraps its subject in a glow of romance which is absent from Cowper's description. But, when Cowper wrote *The Sofa*, he had never even heard of Collins. He owed as little to Gray's *Elegy*, where the scene is far more "sentimentalised"; and nothing can deprive him of the title to originality. Here is a very commonplace English landscape, minutely described. The poet does nothing to lend it dignity or significance other than its own. But he has seen for himself its beauty, and its interest; little details, like the straightness of the furrow, the smallness of the distant ploughman, please him. And, because he has himself derived pleasure and consolation from the scene and its details, his poetry communicates that pleasure and that consolation. Familiar scenes, simple things prove, in his lines, their importance, their beauty and their healing influence on the soul of man. Nature need not any longer be "dressed up" to win a place in poetry. And, if *The Task* be the forerunner of Wordsworth, its manner of accepting facts as they are, and at their own value, contains, also, the germ of something very unlike Cowper, something that may be found in *The Woods of Westermain*.

The nature poetry in *The Task* is, doubtless, of a humbler order than that of *Tintern Abbey* or *The Excursion*, though, in many passages of simple description, the similarity between Wordsworth and Cowper is striking. Cowper would have been unable to compose the books of *The Prelude: On Imagination and Taste, how impaired and how restored*. He would even have thought them unchristian

and reprehensible. Where the great soul of Wordsworth broods over the world of sense, conscious of how it opens and affects the world of the spirit, Cowper hardly even asks how it is that these loved scenes console and enlarge the mind. He is not a philosopher, and he is not a mystic. For him, it is enough that the things he sees are beautiful and dear; he does not ask for anything more. But the nearness of his object, his familiarity with it and his fine taste in expression result in poetry which, if not, in itself, great, is wonderfully pure and sweet, and prepared the way for profounder work by others. While his simplicity and exactness in description mark him off from all preceding nature poets, even from Thomson, the spirit of his poetry differentiates him equally from Crabbe, who, though even more minute and faithful in detail, always regarded nature as a setting for the emotions of man. There are passages in *The Task* which sound a nobler music than that quoted above. One is the invocation to evening in *The Winter Evening*, beginning:

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Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!

The earlier part of this passage is very like Collins. The whole of it, in spite of certain characteristic words—"ostentatious," "modest"—is a little too fanciful and a little too elaborate to be entirely in Cowper's peculiar manner. He is most himself when he is most closely concerned with the scenes and people that, in his restricted life, he had come to know and love. The six books of *The Task* (entitled *The Sofa*, *The Timepiece*, *The Garden*, *The Winter Evening*, *The Winter Morning Walk* and *The Winter Walk at Noon*) contain many passages of sympathetic description that have become classical. Such are the lines on the "rural sounds" and those on hay-carting in *The Sofa*; the man cutting hay from the stack, the woodman and his dog in *The Winter Morning Walk*; the postman and the waggoner in *The Winter Evening*; the fall of snow, in the same book. Each is the product of the poet's own observation; each helped to prove, in an age which needed the lesson, that simplicity and truth have their place in poetry, and that commonplace things are fit subjects for the poet. Cowper's simplicity is not the simplicity of *Lyrical Ballads*, any more than it is the glittering artifice of Pope. He is Miltonic throughout; but he speaks with perfect sincerity, keeping "his eye on the object."

There are, no doubt, stretches of didactic verse in *The Task*. That was almost necessary to Cowper in a poem of this length. But it is more important to observe how, in this poem, one quality, that has endeared Cowper to thousands of readers and was by no means without its effect on public opinion, finds its chief expression in his works. After concluding *The Sofa* with the famous and beautiful passage beginning:

God made the country, and man made the town;

He opens *The Time-piece* with a cry for some refuge where the news of man's oppression, deceit and cruelty might never reach him. The love of man for man, the love of man for animals, for the meanest thing that lives—this is the principal moral message of *The Task*. Doubtless, this kind of "sentimentalism" was "in the air," at the time. It belonged, to some extent, to Cowper's section of the church; it was spread far and wide by Rousseau. Yet it was inborn in Cowper's tender, joyful nature—a nature that was playfully serene when free from its tyrant melancholy; and Cowper remains the chief exponent of it in English poetry.

1.3.16 WILLIAM COLLINS

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Collins published a relatively small amount of work during his lifetime. A few newly discovered pieces which are credited as early work by Collins have been published in Drafts and Fragments. His first published volume, *Persian Eclogues*, owed its popularity at the time to its exotic setting and descriptions. Collins later revised these poems, republishing them under the title *Oriental Eclogues* in 1757. The work for which he is best known, *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects*, contains two of his most famous poems, "Ode to Evening" and "Ode to Fear." These poems contain many of the elements which characterize his work: strong emotional descriptions, the newly worked ode form, and a personal relationship to the subject. Collins's last poem, "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland," although unfinished, is considered one of his greatest works, hinting at his literary potential. His approach to the natural world, his treatment of the artistic self, and his inventive language foreshadow the nineteenth-century introspective poetry which would follow him.

In 1734 it is supposed that the young poet published his first verses, on *The Royal Nuptials*, of which, however, no copy has come down to us; another poem, probably satiric, called *The Battle of the Schoolbooks*, was written about this time, and has also been lost. Fired by his poetic fellows to further feats in verse, Collins produced, in his seventeenth year, those *Persian Eclogues* which were the only writings of his that were valued by the world during his own lifetime. They were not printed for some years, and meanwhile Collins sent, in January and October 1739, some verses to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which attracted the notice and admiration of Johnson, then still young and uninfluential.

No English poet so great as Collins has left behind him so small a bulk of writings. Not more than 1500 lines of his have been handed down to us, but among these not one is slovenly, and few are poor. His odes are the most sculptural and faultless in the language. They lack fire, but in charm and precision of diction, exquisite propriety of form, and lofty poetic suggestion they stand unrivalled. That one named *The Passions* is the most popular; that *To Evening* is the greatest favourite with imaginative persons. In reading this, and the *Ode to Simplicity*, one seems to be handling an antique vase of matchless delicacy and elegance. Distinction may be said to be the crowning grace of the style of Collins; its leading peculiarity is the incessant impersonification of some quality of the character. In the *Ode on Popular Superstitions* he produced a still nobler work; this poem, the most considerable in size which has been preserved, contains passages which are beyond question unrivalled for rich melancholy fullness in our literature between Milton and Keats.

SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about English poetry and the different genres of poetry. You have also learnt about the different authors and how they have contributed in their own way to English poetry.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the salient features of 14th century poetry?
2. What are the salient features of poetry?
3. How has John Donne contributed to English poetry?
4. Compare the contribution of William Cowper and William Collins.
5. Do you think that Shakespeare contributed the maximum to English poetry?
6. How has Michael Drayton contributed to English poetry?
7. How did the Rape of the Lock help Alexander Pope to establish himself in the field of English poetry?
8. Do you think that the Fairy Queene was Spenser's best work? Give reasons for your answer.

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FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT - 2**SOME AUTHORS PART I****NOTES****STRUCTURE**

- 2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2 Geoffrey Chaucer: Prologue to the Canterbury Tales
- 2.3 Sir Thomas Wyatt: I Find No Peace
- 2.4 Spenser: The Faerie Queene Book I
- 2.5 Michael Drayton: Love's Farewell
- 2.6 Shakespeare: Multiple Poems
 - Summary
 - Review Questions
 - Further Readings

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to teach you about English poetry that was prevalent in the era which can be categorized by Chaucer at the start and Pope at the end. At the end of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- understand the context of the poems listed above
- examine the characters of the poem
- understand the background of the author
- understand the poem
- examine the literary devices used in the poem

2.2 GEOFFREY CHAUCER: PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

The Canterbury Tales, written by Geoffrey Chaucer, is a fictional account in a historical setting about pilgrims who tell stories on their way to a cathedral shrine. A tavern owner acts as their tour guide. The pilgrims' stories are in various genres, including chivalric romance, Arthurian romance, satire, beast fable, fabliau, and exemplum (an exhortation on morals and religion.)

The Canterbury Tales opens with a general prologue introducing the storytellers after they gather at an inn. It continues the next morning. The pilgrims tell their tales to pass the time while journeying to Canterbury, about fifty-six miles southeast of London, to visit the shrine of Thomas à Becket, a saint of the Roman Catholic Church. In prologues between the tales, the travelers comment on a tale just completed or introduce a story about to be told. Sometimes they also make general observations.

Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1342-1400) wrote *The Canterbury Tales* between 1387 and 1400, about half a century before Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press. The first copies of Chaucer's work were handwritten. William Caxton (1422-1491), the first printer in England, published two editions of *The Canterbury Tales*, one in the late 1470s and one in the early 1480s.

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2.2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

According to Chaucer's original plan, each pilgrim was to tell four tales, two on the way to Canterbury and two on the return trip, so that a total of one hundred and twenty-four tales (counting those of the canon's yeoman) are made. However, Chaucer died before he could begin the twenty-fifth tale. Of the twenty-four stories in *The Canterbury Tales*, twenty are complete, two ("The Cook's Tale" and "The Squire's Tale") are incomplete, and two ("The Monk's Tale" and "Sir Thopas's Tale") are intentionally cut short.

The Canterbury Tales begins in April of a year in the late 1300s at the Tabard Inn in the borough of Southwark, across the River Thames from central London. In Chaucer's time, a traveler passing through London reached Southwark by boat or by the only causeway spanning the Thames, London Bridge. The bridge led directly into a Southwark street that was the starting point of the road to Canterbury and other destinations in southeastern England, including ports on the Strait of Dover, between England and continental Europe. Inns that lined the street, including the Tabard, hosted many southbound travelers.

After Chaucer introduces the pilgrims gathered at the Tabard Inn, the story continues the next morning when they begin telling their tales as they ride on horseback on the road to Canterbury, nearly sixty miles to the southeast.

In Chaucer's day, a leisurely journey to Canterbury on horseback probably took three to five days, with stops at inns along the way. April rains probably made the dirt road connecting Southwark and Canterbury muddy in spots with water pooling in holes and ruts. Robbers were a constant danger on rural roads. However, armed pilgrims travelling in a large group, like those in *The Canterbury Tales*, probably were safe from marauders.

2.2.2 POEM OVERVIEW

The Canterbury Tales has one overall narrator, Chaucer himself in the persona of the first pilgrim, who presents his account in first-person point of view. In the general prologue, he establishes the time of the year, April, then begins telling the story about the pilgrimage to Canterbury. After describing the pilgrims gathering at their point of departure — the Tabard Inn, across the Thames River from central London — he reports a proposal by their host, the proprietor of the Tabard, that the pilgrims tell stories on their journey to pass the time. Upon their return, the pilgrim deemed the best storyteller would receive a meal paid for by his companions. The proprietor, Harry Bailly (spelled Bailey or Bailley in some editions of *The Canterbury Tales*), says he would accompany the pilgrims, acting as their tour guide. The pilgrims enthusiastically approve his proposal.

Chaucer then allows the pilgrims to narrate their tales. They tell them in third-person point of view. Between their stories, Chaucer resumes his narration, reporting the discourse of the pilgrims and the words of Harry Bailly when he introduces the next storyteller. Thus, *The Canterbury Tales* consists of stories within

a story. Bailly plays a crucial role in *The Canterbury Tales*. With his questions and comments, he stimulates conversation that helps to reveal the personalities and attitudes of the pilgrims.

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Scholars label as frame tales literary works that present a story (or stories) within another story. The inner story is like a painting on a canvas; the outer story is like the frame of the painting. In *The Canterbury Tales*, the inner stories told by the pilgrims form the images on the canvas; the outer story told by Chaucer forms the frame. The frame tale was not unique to Chaucer. Among other literary works with this format were *The Seven Sages*, a collection of tales (authors and dates of composition not established) originating in India that spread westward; *The Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of tales (authors and dates of composition not established) from India, Persia, Arabia, and Egypt, including the famous stories about Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sindbad the Sailor; Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902).

2.2.3 ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

The Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is one of the most important works of literature ever written. Chaucer gives us a wonderful slice of medieval society as we meet the colourful characters. Through the characters, the author also makes allusions to the controversial topics of the time.

The Canterbury Tales is a frame story, a story, or in this case, stories, within another story. In the Prologue, we learn the framework of the plot that weaves the individual tales together: A group of pilgrims meet at the Tabard Inn the night before their trek to the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral.

Travel during the period was slow and arduous, so the innkeeper, Harry Bailey, comes up with an idea for passing the hours. He proposes that each traveller tells a story on the way to the shrine and on the way back. He'll judge the contest, and the winner will be treated by the others to a feast at his inn. Everyone agrees, and the journey begins.

The invocation of spring with which the General Prologue begins is lengthy and formal compared to the language of the rest of the Prologue. The first lines situate the story in a particular time and place, but the speaker does this in cosmic and cyclical terms, celebrating the vitality and richness of spring. This approach gives the opening lines a dreamy, timeless, unfocused quality, and it is therefore surprising when the narrator reveals that he's going to describe a pilgrimage that he himself took rather than telling a love story. A pilgrimage is a religious journey undertaken for penance and grace. As pilgrimages went, Canterbury was not a very difficult destination for an English person to reach. It was, therefore, very popular in fourteenth-century England, as the narrator mentions. Pilgrims travelled to visit the remains of Saint Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered in 1170 by knights of King Henry II. Soon after his death, he became the most popular saint in England. The pilgrimage in *The Canterbury Tales* should not be thought of as an entirely solemn occasion, because it also offered the pilgrims an opportunity to abandon work and take a vacation.

In line 20, the narrator abandons his unfocused, all-knowing point of view, identifying himself as an actual person for the first time by inserting the first

person—"I"—as he relates how he met the group of pilgrims while staying at the Tabard Inn. He emphasizes that this group, which he encountered by accident, was itself formed quite by chance (25–26). He then shifts into the first-person plural, referring to the pilgrims as "we" beginning in line 29, asserting his status as a member of the group.

The narrator ends the introductory portion of his prologue by noting that he has "tyme and space" to tell his narrative. His comments underscore the fact that he is writing some time after the events of his story, and that he is describing the characters from memory. He has spoken and met with these people, but he has waited a certain length of time before sitting down and describing them. His intention to describe each pilgrim as he or she seemed to him is also important, for it emphasizes that his descriptions are not only subject to his memory but are also shaped by his individual perceptions and opinions regarding each of the characters. He positions himself as a mediator between two groups: the group of pilgrims, of which he was a member, and us, the audience, whom the narrator explicitly addresses as "you" in lines 34 and 38.

On the other hand, the narrator's declaration that he will tell us about the "condicioun," "degree," and "array" (dress) of each of the pilgrims suggests that his portraits will be based on objective facts as well as his own opinions. He spends considerable time characterizing the group members according to their social positions. The pilgrims represent a diverse cross section of fourteenth-century English society. Medieval social theory divided society into three broad classes, called "estates": the military, the clergy, and the laity. (The nobility, not represented in the General Prologue, traditionally derives its title and privileges from military duties and service, so it is considered a part of the military estate.) In the portraits that we will see in the rest of the General Prologue, the Knight and Squire represent the military estate. The clergy is represented by the Prioress (and her nun and three priests), the Monk, the Friar, and the Parson. The other characters, from the wealthy Franklin to the poor Plowman, are the members of the laity. These lay characters can be further subdivided into landowners (the Franklin), professionals (the Clerk, the Man of Law, the Guildsmen, the Physician, and the Shipman), labourers (the Cook and the Plowman), stewards (the Miller, the Manciple, and the Reeve), and church officers (the Summoner and the Pardoner). As we will see, Chaucer's descriptions of the various characters and their social roles reveal the influence of the medieval genre of estates satire.

The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales is a wonderful piece. It is interesting, witty, and filled with social commentary. It gives readers a real insight into the culture of the Middle Ages. Its themes of love, power, lust, greed, compassion, courage, and corruption are ageless. Meeting the pilgrims makes the reader realize that the heart and soul of mankind have not changed at all over the centuries.

2.2.4 CHARACTERIZATION

As the Canterbury Tales are a collection of 24 stories, we get to meet different characters in the story. These characters are quite interesting and fascinating. We meet dishonest businessmen like the merchant, the reeve, and the foul-mouthed miller. The merchant is on the verge of bankruptcy, and the reeve, who embezzles from his employer. The miller, who sells grain, cheats his customers by placing his

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thumb on the scales as the grain is weighed. Evidently, these were fairly common practices, and Chaucer is showing his disdain for cheating the poor.

We also meet unsavoury professionals like the greedy doctor, who has little compassion for his patients and little knowledge of healing, and the lawyer, a boring braggart who is often outsmarted by his illiterate maniple. This reveals much about the way Chaucer viewed such "professionals".

The worst characters we meet are actually associated with the Church. During medieval Europe, the Catholic Church was the most powerful entity on Earth. With power often comes corruption, and through powerful characterization, Chaucer reveals the vile practices of many Church officials. We meet a monk who is wealthy instead of poor, a friar who seduces young girls, a pardoner who sells pardons and keeps the money for himself, a summoner who is greedy and unscrupulous, and a nun who regularly breaks the Church's rules. It becomes obvious how Chaucer felt about the Catholic Church.

Not all the characters we meet are evil. The priest and his brother, the plowman, are both Godly men who are poor but virtuous. Both characters are deeply concerned with the well being of their fellow man. The Oxford Cleric, another good guy, is a poor student who loves to read and to help others with their studies: Gladly would he learn, and gladly teach. It is also obvious that the author has a deep respect for the aged knight, an honest warrior who places more value on his horse and his weapons than he does on his outward appearance.

The most real character is the Wife of Bath, a widow from the city of Bath who is neither all good nor all bad. She's been married five times and is probably on the trip to find husband number six. She's wealthy, funny, amorous, opinionated, and wise in the ways of love. Chaucer seems to have a healthy respect for women, in spite of the misogynistic era.

Chaucer also shows his sense of humour and perhaps comments on the lack of hygiene during the period with the characterization of the cook, Roger. Poor Roger has an ulcer on his knee that oozes a thick white fluid. Just after revealing this fact to readers, Chaucer mentions that this cook is famous for his blanchmange, a chicken dish made with a thick white sauce.

2.2.5 THEMES, MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS USED

Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. Given below is an account of the themes used in the Canterbury Tales.

The Pervasiveness of Courtly Love - The phrase "courtly love" refers to a set of ideas about love that was enormously influential on the literature and culture of the Middle Ages. Beginning with the Troubadour poets of southern France in the eleventh century, poets throughout Europe promoted the notions that true love only exists outside of marriage; that true love may be idealized and spiritual, and may exist without ever being physically consummated; and that a man becomes the servant of the lady he loves.

Courtly love themes and motifs first appear in The Canterbury Tales with the description of the Squire in the General Prologue. The Squire's role in society

is exactly that of his father the Knight, except for his lower status, but the Squire is very different from his father in that he incorporates the ideals of courtly love into his interpretation of his own role. Indeed, the Squire is practically a parody of the traditional courtly lover. The description of the Squire establishes a pattern that runs throughout the General Prologue, and *The Canterbury Tales*: characters whose roles are defined by their religious or economic functions integrate the cultural ideals of courtly love into their dress, their behaviour, and the tales they tell, in order to give a slightly different twist to their roles. Another such character is the Prioress, a nun who sports a "Love Conquers All" brooch.

The Importance of Company - Many of Chaucer's characters end their stories by wishing the rest of the "compaignye," or company, well. The Knight ends with

"God save al this faire compaignye" (3108)

and the Reeve with

"God, that sitteth heighe in magestee,

Save al this compaignye, grete and smale!" (4322-4323).

Company literally signifies the entire group of people, but Chaucer's deliberate choice of this word over other words for describing masses of people, like the Middle English words for party, mixture, or group, points us to another major theme that runs throughout *The Canterbury Tales*. Company derives from two Latin words, *com*, or "with," and *pane*, or "bread." Quite literally, a company is a group of people with whom one eats, or breaks bread. The word for good friend, or "companion," also comes from these words. But, in a more abstract sense, company had an economic connotation. It was the term designated to connote a group of people engaged in a particular business, as it is used today.

The functioning and well-being of medieval communities, not to mention their overall happiness, depended upon groups of socially bonded workers in towns and guilds, known informally as companies. If workers in a guild or on a feudal manor were not getting along well, they would not produce good work, and the economy would suffer. They would be unable to bargain, as a modern union does, for better working conditions and life benefits. Eating together was a way for guild members to cement friendships, creating a support structure for their working community. *Guilds had their own special dining halls, where social groups got together to bond, be merry, and form supportive alliances.* When the peasants revolted against their feudal lords in 1381, they were able to organize themselves well precisely because they had formed these strong social ties through their companies.

Company was a levelling concept—an idea created by the working classes that gave them more power and took away some of the nobility's power and tyranny. The company of pilgrims on the way to Canterbury is not a typical example of a tightly networked company, although the five Guildsmen do represent this kind of fraternal union. The pilgrims come from different parts of society—the court, the Church, villages, the feudal manor system. To prevent discord, the pilgrims create an informal company, united by their jobs as storytellers, and by the food and drink the host provides. As far as class distinctions are concerned, they do form a company in the sense that none of them belongs to the nobility, and most have working professions, whether that work be sewing and marriage (the Wife

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of Bath), entertaining visitors with gourmet food (the Franklin), or tilling the earth (the Plowman).

The Corruption of the Church - By the late fourteenth century, the Catholic Church, which governed England, Ireland, and the entire continent of Europe, had become extremely wealthy. The cathedrals that grew up around shrines to saints' relics were incredibly expensive to build, and the amount of gold that went into decorating them and equipping them with candlesticks and reliquaries (boxes to hold relics that were more jewel-encrusted than kings' crowns) surpassed the riches in the nobles' coffers. In a century of disease, plague, famine, and scarce labour, the sight of a church ornamented with unused gold seemed unfair to some people, and the Church's preaching against greed suddenly seemed hypocritical, considering its great displays of material wealth. Distaste for the excesses of the Church triggered stories and anecdotes about greedy, irreligious churchmen who accepted bribes, bribed others, and indulged themselves sensually and gastronomically, while ignoring the poor famished peasants begging at their doors.

The religious figures Chaucer represents in *The Canterbury Tales* all deviate in one way or another from what was traditionally expected of them. Generally, their conduct corresponds to common medieval stereotypes, but it is difficult to make any overall statement about Chaucer's position because his narrator is so clearly biased toward some characters — the Monk, for example — and so clearly biased against others, such as the Pardoner. Additionally, the characters are not simply satirical versions of their roles; they are individuals and cannot simply be taken as typical of their professions.

The Monk, Prioress, and Friar were all members of the clerical estate. The Monk and the Prioress live in a monastery and a convent, respectively. Both are characterized as figures who seem to prefer the aristocratic to the devotional life. The Prioress's bejewelled rosary seems more like a love token than something expressing her devotion to Christ, and her dainty mannerisms echo the advice given by Guillaume de Loris in the French romance *Roman de la Rose*, about how women could make themselves attractive to men. The Monk enjoys hunting, a pastime of the nobility, while he disdains study and confinement. The Friar was a member of an order of mendicants, who made their living by traveling around and begging, and accepting money to hear confession. Friars were often seen as threatening and had the reputation of being lecherous, as the Wife of Bath describes in the opening of her tale. The Summoner and the Friar are at each other's throats so frequently in *The Canterbury Tales* because they were in fierce competition in Chaucer's time — summoners, too, extorted money from people.

Overall, the narrator seems to harbour much more hostility for the ecclesiastical officials (the Summoner and the Pardoner) than he does for the clerics. For example, the Monk and the Pardoner possess several traits in common, but the narrator presents them in very different ways. The narrator remembers the shiny baldness of the Monk's head, which suggests that the Monk may have ridden without a hood, but the narrator uses the fact that the Pardoner rides without a hood as proof of his shallow character. The Monk and the Pardoner both give their own opinions of themselves to the narrator — the narrator affirms the Monk's words by repeating them, and his own response, but the narrator mocks the Pardoner for his opinion of himself.

Motifs

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

Courtly Love - Courtly love encompassed a number of minor motifs. One of these is the idea that love is a torment or a disease, and that when a man is in love he cannot sleep or eat, and therefore he undergoes physical changes, sometimes to the point of becoming unrecognizable. "The Knight's Tale" is an example of a chivalric romance, or a tale of courtly love. In such tales, the knights exhibit nobility, courage, and respect for their ladies fair, and the ladies exhibit elegance, modesty, and fidelity. Although knights and ladies may fall passionately in love, they eschew immoral behaviour. In conflicts between good and evil, justice prevails. Although very few people's lives resembled the courtly love ideal in any way, these themes and motifs were extremely popular and widespread in medieval and Renaissance literature and culture. They were particularly popular in the literature and culture that were part of royal and noble courts.

Romance - The romance, a tale about knights and ladies incorporating courtly love themes, was a popular literary genre in fourteenth-century literature. The genre included tales of knights rescuing maidens, embarking on quests, and forming bonds with other knights and rulers (kings and queens). In particular, the romances about King Arthur, his queen, Guinevere, and his society of "knights of the round table" were very popular in England. In *The Canterbury Tales*, the *Knight's Tale* incorporates romantic elements in an ancient classical setting, which is a somewhat unusual time and place to set a romance. The *Wife of Bath's Tale* is framed by Arthurian romance, with an unnamed knight of the round table as its unlikely hero, but the tale itself becomes a proto-feminist's moral instruction for domestic behaviour. The *Miller's Tale* ridicules the traditional elements of romance by transforming the love between a young wooer and a willing maiden into a boisterous and violent romp.

Fabliaux - Fabliaux were comical and often grotesque stories in which the characters most often succeed by means of their sharp wits. Five of the tales that the pilgrims tell are fabliaux. Such stories were popular in France and Italy in the fourteenth century. The fabliau uses satire and cynicism, along with vulgar comedy, to mock one or several of its characters. Not infrequently, the ridiculed character is a jealous husband, a wayward wife, a braggart, a lover, a proud or greedy tradesman, a doltish peasant, or a lustful or greedy clergyman. Plot development often depends on a prank, a pun, a mistaken identity, or an incident involving the characters in intrigue. Frequently, the plot turns or climaxes around the most grotesque feature in the story, usually a bodily noise or function. The *Miller's Tale* is a prime experiment with this motif: Nicholas cleverly tricks the carpenter into spending the night in his barn so that Nicholas can sleep with the carpenter's wife; the finale occurs when Nicholas farts in Absolon's face, only to be burned with a hot poker on his rear end. In the *Summoner's Tale*, a wealthy man bequeaths a corrupt friar an enormous fart, which the friar divides twelve ways among his brethren. This demonstrates another invention around this motif—that of wittily expanding a grotesque image in an unconventional way. In the case of the *Summoner's Tale*, the image is of flatulence, but the tale excels in discussing the division of the fart in a highly intellectual (and quite hilarious) manner. It is not

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entirely clear whether the fabliau was a pastime of the upper classes as a means to ridicule their social inferiors or of the middle and lower classes as a means to poke fun at themselves.

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Exemplum - "The Pardoner's Tale" is an example of an exemplum (plural, exempla), a short narrative in verse or prose that teaches a moral lesson or reinforces a doctrine or religious belief. Other tales can be regarded as exempla or contain elements of the exemplum in that they present examples of right or wrong living that teach moral precepts.

Arthurian Romance - "The Wife of Bath's Tale" is an example of an Arthurian romance, a type of work in which a knight in the age of the legendary King Arthur goes on a quest.

Beast Fable - "The Nun's Priest's Tale" is an example of a beast fable, a short story in verse or prose in which animals are the main characters. They exhibit human qualities, and their activities underscore a universal truth.

Satire - A satire is a literary work or technique that attacks or pokes fun at vices and imperfections. Many of the prologues and tales contain satire that ridicules people who exhibit hypocrisy, greed, false humility, stupidity, self-importance, and other flaws.

Burlesque - A burlesque is a literary work or technique that mocks a person, a place, a thing, or an idea by using wit, irony, hyperbole, sarcasm, and/or understatement. For example, a burlesque may turn a supposedly respected person—such as old John in "The Miller's Tale"—into a buffoon. A hallmark of burlesque is its thoroughgoing exaggeration, often to the point of the absurd.

Low Comedy - A type of comedy that is generally physical rather than verbal, relying on slapstick and horseplay as in "The Miller's Tale." Low comedy usually focuses on ordinary folk.

Breton Lay - "The Franklin's Tale" is an example of a Breton lay, a Fourteenth Century English narrative poem in rhyme about courtly love that contains elements of the supernatural. The English borrowed the Breton-lay format from the French. A lay is a medieval narrative poem originally intended to be sung. Breton is an adjective describing anyone or anything from Brittany, France.

Allegory - An allegory is a literary work or technique that ascribes secondary or symbolic meaning to characters, events, objects, and ideas, as in "The Nun's Priest's Tale". The pilgrims' journey to Canterbury may also be regarded as an allegory in that it can be viewed as a representation of the journey through life or the journey toward the ultimate destination, heaven.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colours used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

Springtime - The Canterbury Tales opens in April, at the height of spring. The birds are chirping, the flowers blossoming, and people long in their hearts to go on pilgrimages, which combine travel, vacation, and spiritual renewal. The springtime symbolizes rebirth and fresh beginnings, and is thus appropriate for the beginning of Chaucer's text. Springtime also evokes erotic love, as evidenced by the moment when Palamon first sees Emelye gathering fresh flowers to make

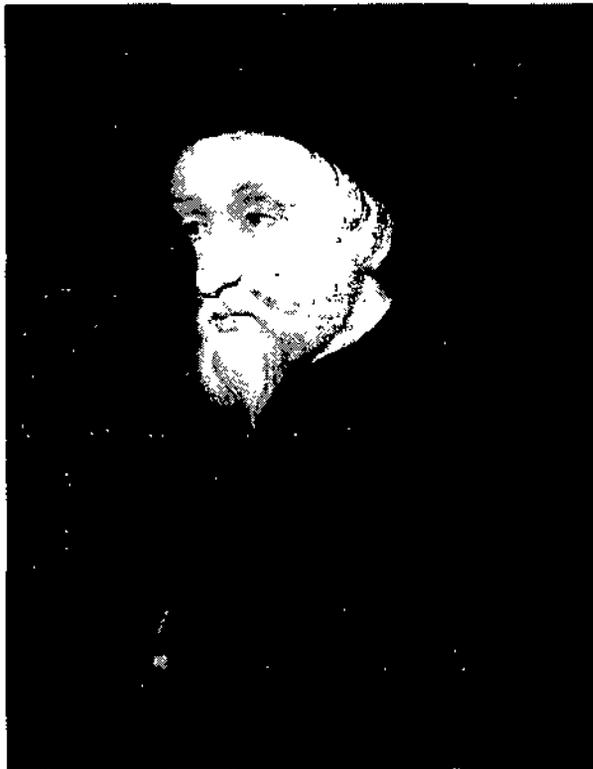
garlands in honour of May. The Squire, too, participates in this symbolism. His devotion to courtly love is compared to the freshness of the month of May.

Clothing - In the General Prologue, the description of garments, in addition to the narrator's own shaky recollections, helps to define each character. In a sense, the clothes symbolize what lies beneath the surface of each personality. The Physician's love of wealth reveals itself most clearly to us in the rich silk and fur of his gown. The Squire's youthful vanity is symbolized by the excessive floral brocade on his tunic. The Merchant's forked beard could symbolize his duplicity, at which Chaucer only hints.

Physiognomy - Physiognomy was a science that judged a person's temperament and character based on his or her anatomy. Physiognomy plays a significant role in Chaucer's descriptions of the pilgrims in the General Prologue. The most exaggerated facial features are those of the peasants. The Miller represents the stereotypical peasant physiognomy most clearly: round and ruddy, with a wart on his nose, the Miller appears rough and therefore suited to rough, simple work. The Pardoner's glaring eyes and limp hair illustrate his fraudulence.

2.2.6 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Geoffrey Chaucer was born between 1340 and 1344 at London to a prosperous wine merchant and deputy to the king's butler, and his wife Agnes. The exact date of his birth is not documented. He is mostly remembered for his frame tale, *The Canterbury Tales*, which ranks as one of the greatest epic works of world literature. Chaucer made a crucial contribution to English literature in using English at a time when much court poetry was still written in Anglo-Norman or Latin.



Geoffrey Chaucer

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Though, there is little information about his early education, it is known that he could speak and read French, Latin, English and Italian.

Chaucer joined Edward III's army and went to France for the Hundred Years' War during 1359. He was imprisoned in the Ardennes and was returned to England only in 1360 after the treaty of Brétigny was signed. There is no specific information about Chaucer's life between 1361 and 1366. It is assumed that during this period, he married Philippa Roet, the sister of John Gaunt's future wife. Though, Philippa died in 1387, Chaucer enjoyed the patronage of Gaunt throughout his life.

Between 1367 and 1378 Chaucer travelled a lot on account of diplomatic and commercial missions. In 1385, he moved to Kent after losing his employment. At Kent, he was appointed as justice of the peace. At Kent, he was also elected to the Parliament. The years spend at Kent proved to be his best as his literary best were produced during this period.

Though Chaucer was inspired by several other poets and authors, he maintained his individual style and technique. His first narrative poem titled, *The Book of the Duchess*, is believed to have been written soon after the death of Blanche, who was the Duchess of Lancaster and also the first wife of John Gaunt, in September 1369. His next important work, *The House of Fame*, was written between 1374 and 1385. Soon afterward Chaucer translated *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius, and wrote the poem *The Parliament of Birds*.

Chaucer started working on *The Canterbury Tales* when he was in his early 40s. He died on October 25, 1400 at London. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the part of the church, which afterwards came to be called Poet's Corner. A monument was erected to him in 1555.

Geoffrey Chaucer was among the first authors in Britain to write in the language of the masses, Middle English, rather than Latin or French, giving impetus to the development of English as a literary language. He was also among the first to write about ordinary folk in a contemporary setting rather than kings and queens or legendary heroes of the past. In doing so, he laid bare in fine detail both the psyche and the some of his characters, setting an example for later writers to follow in drawing realistic portraits. In addition, he was among the first to write in such verse forms as iambic pentameter and rhyme royal.

His innovations, along with the wit and insight he used to carry them out, earned him a place in the pantheon of England's greatest writers.

2.2.7 SUMMARY OF THE POEM

The narrator opens the General Prologue with a description of the return of spring. He describes the April rains, the burgeoning flowers and leaves, and the chirping birds. Around this time of year, the narrator says, people begin to feel the desire to go on a pilgrimage. Many devout English pilgrims set off to visit shrines in distant holy lands, but even more choose to travel to Canterbury to visit the relics of Saint Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, where they thank the martyr for having helped them when they were in need. The narrator tells us that as he prepared to go on such a pilgrimage, staying at a tavern in Southwark called the Tabard Inn, a great company of twenty-nine travellers entered. The travellers were a diverse group who, like the narrator, were on their way to Canterbury. They happily agreed to let him join them. That night, the group slept at the Tabard,

and woke up early the next morning to set off on their journey. Before continuing the tale, the narrator declares his intent to list and describe each of the members of the group.

The narrator begins his character portraits with the Knight. In the narrator's eyes, the Knight is the noblest of the pilgrims, embodying military prowess, loyalty, honour, generosity, and good manners. The Knight conducts himself in a polite and mild fashion, never saying an unkind word about anyone. The Knight's son, who is about twenty years old, acts as his father's squire, or apprentice. Though the Squire has fought in battles with great strength and agility, like his father, he is also devoted to love. A strong, beautiful, curly-haired young man dressed in clothes embroidered with dainty flowers, the Squire fights in the hope of winning favour with his "lady." His talents are those of the courtly lover—singing, playing the flute, drawing, writing, and riding—and he loves so passionately that he gets little sleep at night. He is a dutiful son, and fulfils his responsibilities toward his father, such as carving his meat. Accompanying the Knight and Squire is the Knight's Yeoman, or freeborn servant. The Yeoman wears green from head to toe and carries an enormous bow and beautifully feathered arrows, as well as a sword and small shield. His gear and attire suggest that he is a forester.

Next, the narrator describes the Prioress, named Madame Eglentyne. Although the Prioress is not part of the royal court, she does her best to imitate its manners. She takes great care to eat her food daintily, to reach for food on the table delicately, and to wipe her lip clean of grease before drinking from her cup. She speaks French, but with a provincial English accent. She is compassionate toward animals, weeping when she sees a mouse caught in a trap, and feeding her dogs roasted meat and milk. The narrator says that her features are pretty, even her enormous forehead. On her arm she wears a set of prayer beads, from which hangs a gold brooch that features the Latin words for "Love Conquers All." Another nun and three priests accompany her.

The Monk is the next pilgrim the narrator describes. Extremely handsome, he loves hunting and keeps many horses. He is an outrider at his monastery (he looks after the monastery's business with the external world), and his horse's bridle can be heard jingling in the wind as clear and loud as a church bell. The Monk is aware that the rule of his monastic order discourages monks from engaging in activities like hunting, but he dismisses such strictures as worthless. The narrator says that he agrees with the Monk: why should the Monk drive himself crazy with study or manual labour? The fat, bald, and well-dressed Monk resembles a prosperous lord.

The next member of the company is the Friar—a member of a religious order who lives entirely by begging. This friar is jovial, pleasure-loving, well-spoken, and socially agreeable. He hears confessions, and assigns very easy penance to people who donate money. For this reason, he is very popular with wealthy landowners throughout the country. He justifies his leniency by arguing that donating money to friars is a sign of true repentance, even if the penitent is incapable of shedding tears. He also makes himself popular with innkeepers and barmaids, who can give him food and drink. He pays no attention to beggars and lepers because they can't help him or his fraternal order. Despite his vow of poverty, the donations he extracts allow him to dress richly and live quite merrily.

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Tastefully attired in nice boots and an imported fur hat, the Merchant speaks constantly of his profits. The merchant is good at borrowing money, but clever enough to keep anyone from knowing that he is in debt. The narrator does not know his name.

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After the Merchant comes the Clerk, a thin and threadbare student of philosophy at Oxford, who devours books instead of food. The Man of Law, an influential lawyer, follows next. He is a wise character, capable of preparing flawless legal documents. The Man of Law is a very busy man, but he takes care to appear even busier than he actually is.

The white-bearded Franklin is a wealthy gentleman farmer, possessed of lands but not of noble birth. His chief attribute is his preoccupation with food, which is so plentiful in his house that his house seemed to snow meat and drink (344–345).

The narrator next describes the five Guildsmen, all artisans. They are dressed in the livery, or uniform, of their guild. The narrator compliments their shiny dress and mentions that each was fit to be a city official. With them is their skillful Cook, whom Chaucer would praise fully were it not for the ulcer on his shin.

The hardy Shipman wears a dagger on a cord around his neck. When he is on his ship, he steals wine from the merchant he is transporting while he sleeps.

The taffeta-clad Physician bases his practice of medicine and surgery on a thorough knowledge of astronomy and the four humours. He has a good setup with his apothecaries, because they make each other money. He is well acquainted with ancient and modern medical authorities, but reads little Scripture. He is somewhat frugal, and the narrator jokes that the doctor's favourite medicine is gold.

Next, the narrator describes the slightly deaf Wife of Bath. This keen seamstress is always first to the offering at Mass, and if someone goes ahead of her she gets upset. She wears head coverings to Mass that the narrator guesses must weigh ten pounds. She has had five husbands and has taken three pilgrimages to Jerusalem. She has also been to Rome, Cologne, and other exotic pilgrimage sites. Her teeth have gaps between them, and she sits comfortably astride her horse. The Wife is jolly and talkative, and she gives good love advice because she has had lots of experience.

A gentle and poor village Parson is described next. Pure of conscience and true to the teachings of Christ, the Parson enjoys preaching and instructing his parishioners, but he hates excommunicating those who cannot pay their tithes. He walks with his staff to visit all his parishioners, no matter how far away. He believes that a priest must be pure, because he serves as an example for his congregation, his flock. The Parson is dedicated to his parish and does not seek a better appointment. He is even kind to sinners, preferring to teach them by example rather than scorn. The parson is accompanied by his brother, a Plowman, who works hard, loves God and his neighbour, labours "for Christ's sake" (537), and pays his tithes on time.

The red-haired Miller loves crude, bawdy jokes and drinking. He is immensely stout and strong, able to lift doors off their hinges or knock them down by running at them with his head. He has a wart on his nose with bright red hairs sticking

out of it like bristles, black nostrils, and a mouth like a furnace. He wears a sword and buckler, and loves to joke around and tell dirty stories. He steals from his customers, and plays the bagpipes.

The Manciple stocks an Inn of Court (school of law) with provisions. Uneducated though he is, this manciple is smarter than most of the lawyers he serves. The spindly, angry Reeve has hair so short that he reminds the narrator of a priest. He manages his lord's estate so well that he is able to hoard his own money and property in a miserly fashion. The Reeve is also a good carpenter, and he always rides behind everybody else.

The Summoner arraigns those accused of violating Church law. When drunk, he ostentatiously spouts the few Latin phrases he knows. His face is bright red from an unspecified disease. He uses his power corruptly for his own gain. He is extremely lecherous, and uses his position to dominate the young women in his jurisdiction. In exchange for a quart of wine, he would let another man sleep with his girlfriend for a year and then pardon the man completely.

The Pardoner, who had just been in the court of Rome, rides with the Summoner. He sings with his companion, and has long, flowing, yellow hair. The narrator mentions that the Pardoner thinks he rides very fashionably, with nothing covering his head. He has brought back many souvenirs from his trip to Rome. The narrator compares the Pardoner's high voice to that of a goat, and mentions that he thinks the Pardoner might have been a homosexual. The narrator mocks the Pardoner for his disrespectful manipulation of the poor for his own material gain. In charge of selling papal indulgences, he is despised by the Church and most churchgoers for counterfeiting pardons and pocketing the money. The Pardoner is a good preacher, storyteller, and singer, the narrator admits, although he argues it is only because he cheats people of their money in that way.

After introducing all of the pilgrims, the narrator apologizes for any possible offense the reader may take from his tales, explaining that he feels that he must be faithful in reproducing the characters' words, even if they are rude or disgusting. He cites Christ and Plato as support for his argument that it is best to speak plainly and tell the truth rather than to lie. He then returns to his story of the first night he spent with the group of pilgrims.

After serving the pilgrims a banquet and settling the bill with them, the Host of the tavern speaks to the group. He welcomes and compliments the company, telling them they are the merriest group of pilgrims to pass through his inn all year. He adds that he would like to contribute to their happiness, free of charge. He says that he is sure they will be telling stories as they travel, since it would be boring to travel in silence. Therefore, he proposes to invent some entertainment for them if they will unanimously agree to do as he says. He orders the group to vote, and the narrator comments that the group didn't think it would be worthwhile to argue or deliberate over the Host's proposition and agreed immediately.

The Host congratulates the group on its good decision. He lays out his plan: each of the pilgrims will tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two more on the way back. Whomever the Host decides has told the most meaningful and comforting stories will receive a meal paid for by the rest of the pilgrims upon their return. The Host also declares that he will ride with the pilgrims and serve as

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their guide at his own cost. If anyone disputes his judgment, he says, that person must pay for the expenses of the pilgrimage.

The company agrees and makes the Host its governor, judge, and record keeper. They settle on a price for the supper prize and return to drinking wine. The next morning, the Host wakes everyone up and gathers the pilgrims together. After they have set off, he reminds the group of the agreement they made. He also reminds them that whoever disagrees with him must pay for everything spent along the way. He tells the group members to draw straws to decide who tells the first tale. The Knight wins and prepares to begin his tale.

2.2.8 EXAMINING THE POEM

Use of English

The language used in *The Canterbury Tales* is Middle English, spoken and written in Britain between 1100 and 1500. Middle English followed Old English (450 to 1100), the first period in the development of the English language, and preceded Modern English (1500 to the present).

Between 1100 and 1250, Middle English was the language of the middle and lower classes, French was the language of the upper classes, and French and Latin were the languages of literature. (William, Duke of Normandy, had brought French to England when he conquered the country in 1066 and acceded to the throne on Christmas day of that year.)

Between 1250 and 1300, the upper classes also began speaking Middle English because of the decline of French influence in England, but French and Latin remained the language of literature. When Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales* in Middle English between 1387 and 1400, he was among the first writers to tell stories in Middle English. Chaucer mainly used the East Midlands dialect of Middle English (spoken in London and nearby locales) in *The Canterbury Tales*.

During the Middle English period, rules of pronunciation and inflection were flexible, allowing the language to evolve. A notable characteristic of Middle English as used by Chaucer was the presence of a final -e in words that today are written without a final -e. Generally, the final -e of a word was pronounced if it preceded a word beginning with a vowel. Although midway through the Middle English period speakers were beginning to cease pronouncing the final -e before a vowel, Chaucer usually retained its pronunciation in *The Canterbury Tales*. It was pronounced like the a in *coma* and the second a in *papa*. (Note: A sounded e inside a word was generally pronounced like the modern long a. Thus, the first e in the word *swete*, the Middle English equivalent of *sweet*, was pronounced like the a in *mate*.)

Another characteristic of Middle English was the use of the letter y (pronounced as a long e) followed by a hyphen and a verb to indicate the past tense of that verb. Examples from *The Canterbury Tales* are y-draw (drawn), y-know (known), y-shave (shaven), y-beat (beaten), y-hold (held), y-do (done), y-take (took), y-go (gone), y-crow (crowed), y-fall (fallen), y-grave (engraved), and y-run (ran). Sometimes the y and hyphen preceded verbs already in the past tense in modern English, as in y-bought (bought), y-told (told), and y-nourished (nourished). The

use of *y*- before a verb continued until about 1600. On some occasions or in some editions of *The Canterbury Tales*, a *y* without a hyphen precedes a verb.

Rhymes and Verse

Except for two prose tales, Chaucer presents *The Canterbury Tales* in verse. The meter varies, although many lines are in iambic pentameter. However, metric classification depends often on whether the reader uses Middle English pronunciations. Even then, it may be difficult to determine whether Chaucer intended a syllable to be pronounced or skipped as silent. A further problem is that scribes copying his original manuscript may have deleted or inserted syllables.

Most of the prologues and the tales of the pilgrims consist of a series of rhyming couplets (units of two lines, each about the same length, with end rhyme). The opening lines of the work in the general prologue demonstrate the couplet pattern. The rhyming pairs of words in each couplet are presented below:

1. Whan that Aprille, with hise shoures **soote**,
2. The droghte of March hath perced to the **roote**
3. And bathed every veyne in swich **licour**,
4. Of which vertu engendred is the **fleur**;
5. Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
6. Inspired hath in every holt and **heeth**
7. The tendre croppes, and the yonge **sonne**
8. Hath in the Ram his halfe cours **yronne**,
9. And smale foweles maken **melodye**,
10. That slepen al the nyght with open **eye**-
11. So priketh hem Nature in hir **corages**-
12. Thanne longen folk to goon on **pilgrimages**
13. And palmeres for to seken **sstraunge strondes**
14. To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry **londes**;
15. And specially, from every shires **ende**
16. Of Engelond, to Caunturbury they **wende**,
17. The hooly blisful martir for the **seke**
18. That hem hath holpen, whan that they were **seeke**.

Some tales, however, use a different rhyme scheme. For example, "The Lawyer's Tale," "The Prioress's Tale" and "The Clerk's Tale" are in rhyme royal, in which stanzas of seven lines in iambic pentameter have a rhyme scheme of ababbcc. Look at the following stanza from "The Prioress's Tale" for a better understanding of the pattern followed:

- a.....Lady! thy bounty, thy **magnificence**,
b.....Thy virtue, and thy great **humility**,
a.....There may no tongue express in no **science**:
b.....For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to **thee**,
b.....Thou go'st before, of thy **benignity**,

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c.....And gettest us the light, through thy prayere,
c.....To guiden us unto thy son so dear.

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2.3 SIR THOMAS WYATT: I FIND NO PEACE

As a typical Renaissance man, Sir Thomas Wyatt took to writing poetry in order to restore gravity and cogency of utterance to English verse. This became crucial as pronunciation had altered and metrical patterns had gone to pieces after a period of linguistic transformation in the century following Chaucer. In the Italian sonnet he found a model which would help him achieve what he was seeking. The sonnet was a highly conventional form, a form that demanded discipline and craftsmanship from the poet's part, and challenged the poet to mould his thought with will and aptness to the precise shape of those fourteen balanced lines. In the English literary scene Wyatt along with other "courtly makers" emerged as craftsmen, experimenting with both the theme and the form in their attempts to hammer out a disciplined yet flexible poetic style.

2.3.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sir Thomas Wyatt

Thomas Wyatt was born to Henry and Anne Wyatt at Allington Castle, near Maidstone, Kent, in 1503. Little is known of his childhood education. His first court appearance was in 1516 as Sewer Extraordinary to Henry VIII. In 1516 he also entered St. John's College, University of Cambridge. Around 1520, when he was only seventeen years old, he married Lord Cobham's daughter Elizabeth Brooke. She bore him a son, Thomas Wyatt, the Younger, in 1521. He became popular at court, and carried out several foreign missions for King Henry VIII, and also served various offices at home.



Elizabeth Brooke



Thomas Wyatt, the Younger

Around 1525, Wyatt separated from his wife, charging her with adultery; it is also the year from which his interest in Anne Boleyn probably dates. He accompanied Sir Thomas Cheney on a diplomatic mission to France in 1526 and Sir John Russell to Venice and the papal court in Rome in 1527. On his return, he was captured by the imperial forces under the constable of Bourbon, but escaped. He was made High Marshal of Calais (1528-1530) and Commissioner of the Peace of Essex in 1532. Also in 1532, Wyatt accompanied King Henry and Anne Boleyn, who was by then the King's mistress, on their visit to Calais. Anne Boleyn married the King in January 1533, and Wyatt served in her coronation in June.

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Wyatt was knighted in 1535, but in 1536 he was imprisoned in the Tower for quarreling with the Duke of Suffolk, and possibly also because he was suspected of being one of Anne Boleyn's lovers. During this imprisonment Wyatt witnessed the execution of Anne Boleyn on May 19, 1536 from the Bell Tower, and wrote "V. Innocentia Veritas Viat Fides Circumdederunt me inimici mei". He was released later that year. Henry, Wyatt's father, died in November 1536. After this, he retired to his house at Allington, in Kent, and employed his leisure in writing his satires and his paraphrase of the penitential psalms.



Anne Boleyn

Wyatt was returned to favour and made ambassador to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in Spain. He returned to England in June 1539, and later that year was again ambassador to Charles until May 1540. Wyatt's praise of country life, and the cynical comments about foreign courts, in his verse epistle *Mine Own John Pains* derive from his own experience.

In 1541 Wyatt was charged with treason on a revival of charges originally levelled against him in 1538 by Edmund Bonner, now Bishop of London. Bonner claimed that while ambassador, Wyatt had been rude about the King's person, and had dealings with Cardinal Pole, a papal legate and Henry's kinsman, with whom Henry was much angered over Pole's siding with papal authority in the matter of Henry's divorce proceedings from Katharine of Aragón. Wyatt was again restricted to the Tower, where he wrote a passionate 'Defence'. He received a royal pardon, perhaps at the request of the then queen, Catharine Howard, and was fully restored to favour in 1542. Wyatt was given various royal offices after his pardon, but he became ill after welcoming Charles V's envoy at Falmouth and died at Sherborne on 11 October 1542.

None of Wyatt's poems had been published in his lifetime, with the exception of a few poems in a miscellany entitled *The Court of Venus*. His first published work was *Certain Psalms* (1549), metrical translations of the penitential psalms. It wasn't until 1557, 15 years after Wyatt's death, that a number of his poetry appeared alongside the poetry of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey in printer Richard Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets* written by the Right Honourable Lord Henry Howard late Earl of Surrey and other. Until modern times it was called simply *Songs and Sonnets*, but now it is generally known as *Tottel's Miscellany*. The rest of Wyatt's

poetry, lyrics, and satires remained in manuscript until the 19th and 20th centuries "rediscovered" them.

Wyatt, along with Surrey, was the first to introduce the sonnet into English, with its characteristic final rhyming couplet. He wrote extraordinarily accomplished imitations of Petrarch's sonnets, including 'I Find No Peace' ('Pace non trovo') and 'Whoso List to Hunt'—the latter, quite different in tone from Petrarch's 'Una candida cerva', has often been seen to refer to Anne Boleyn as the deer with a jewelled collar. Wyatt was also adept at other new forms in English, such as the terza rima and the roudau. Wyatt and Surrey often share the title of "Father of the English Sonnet".

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2.3.2 SUMMARY

I Find No Peace

I find no peace, and all my war is done;
I fear and hope. I burn and freeze like ice.
I fly above the wind, yet can I not arise;
And nought I have, and all the world I season.
That loseth nor locketh holdeth me in prison
And holdeth me not--yet can I 'scape no wise--
Nor letteth me live nor die at my device,
And yet of death it giveth me occasion.
Without eyen I see, and without tongue I plain.
I desire to perish, and yet I ask health.
I love another, and thus I hate myself.
I feed me in sorrow and laugh in all my pain;
Likewise displeaseth me both life and death,
And my delight is causer of this strife.

Wyatt's *I Find No Peace* is a sonnet set typically in the Petrarchan tradition. Wyatt's poem does not maintain the division and distribution of thought. The poet begins by enumerating the conflicting states of mind occasioned by the onset of love:

"I find no peace and all my war is done,
I fear and hope, I burn and freeze like ice..."

These carefully chosen monosyllabic words contain enough information so as to inform the readers what has gone before. His 'peace' of mind has been destroyed by the 'war' he has been waging against himself and his ladylove in order to win her love. It may be surmised here whether after finding his "war is done", that is, his game over, he resorts to writing this sonnet in an attempt to communicate to her the words of his desire; for, the rest of the lines in the poem are set almost as disguised appeals, as desperate cries to the mistress.

This is nowhere so prominent as in the second line, the poet speaks of experiencing contrary thoughts and emotions: he is afraid of his supposed

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rejection by her, and that is why gets frozen at this thought. But at the same time he is hopeful of the prospect of winning her favour, and this leads him to 'burn' in desire for her. It may be pointed out here that Wyatt's description of the impact of love, which has not been won, conforms to the onset of love generated by the first secretion of the hormones in the human body.

Quite consistent with this the poet finds himself daydreaming about an ideal situation: "I fly above the wind..."; but the next moment the reverie breaks down and he finds himself forlorn heavy with the thoughts of failure and fails to 'arise' out of the situation.

In the fourth line, "And nought I have, and all the world I season..." the poet has actually descended on the most dominant aspect of love in his confession, namely its possessive aspect. Love is a possessive instinct and it determines the passage of passion. When Wyatt thinks that he has not secured his beloved's love, he feels "naught I have", but the next moment when he hopes he might win her, it seems to him that "all the world I seize on". The point is that for him the physical possession of the beloved is the physical possession of the world, that is to say, it dictates the terms for his existence in time and space.

Conjoined with the above, however, another aspect of love also emerges in the next two lines. It was a prevalent thought during the Renaissance that the amorous gaze or glance of the beloved, like the one of a sorceress, might cast a spell, which may act as a trap for the helpless lover. The words—"yet can I 'scape nowise—betray this kind of sense.

The helplessness of the lover reaches its climax at the very middle, in the seventh line, "Nor letteth me live nor die at my device ..." when the poet speaks of death. It is psychologically plausible that a frustrated lover may think of death as the last way-out of the sufferings of love. For the Renaissance poets the word 'death', however, operated more on the rhetorical level as an extreme thought, as an extreme threat to convince the reader of the genuineness of his claim than on the plain of reality as an act. The effect of Saint John's "The Apocalypse" in the New Testament might have played a significant role in disseminating this idea.

The theme of death has been carried on to the sestet, and here it means putting an end to physical existence, which loses significance if he fails in securing the beloved's favour. But unlike the speaker of a Petrarchan sonnet the theme of the octave has not been discussed here in order to resolve the conflicts. Again, it is only in the twelfth line of the poem, "I feed me in sorrow and laugh in all my pain ..." that we are given the information regarding his mental agitation that the poet has fallen in love. But it is not, as he says, that he hates himself because he loves her. He may hate himself at the thought of being rejected for failing to become worthy of her. Again, he himself is indulging in self-pity and finds sustenance and substance for his thoughts in his sorrows. This leads him sometimes to cynicism and he laughs in his pain.

In the concluding couplet Wyatt tries to put an end to the contrary and antithetical thoughts and emotions by stating in a conceited fashion that he understands that his 'delight', that is, the object of his delight or ladylove is the cause of all these sufferings. It must be pointed out here that by providing a concluding couplet, like Shakespeare later on, Wyatt deviates from the Petrarchan

model. Again the poem is marked by the absence of Neo-Platonic concept of love, the hallmark of a Petrarchan sonnet, a concept in which a speaker like Petrarch would realise the supreme divine beauty through the idealisation and worship of the spiritual beauty of a beloved like Laura.

2.3.3 LITERARY DEVICES USED

'I Find no Peace' is an instance of the poetry of longing and of warring passions; in it Wyatt highlights the destructive force of love, a sentiment that forces him to live an inner conflict from which he can't escape, a view that bears echoes of Guido Cavalcanti's idea of love.

Wyatt's I Find No Peace is a sonnet set typically in the Petrarchan tradition; it has the same five rhymes—*abcde*, and can be divided in two parts—octave and sestet. But it should be pointed out here that Wyatt deviates from the Petrarchan model in a number of ways. He brought the Petrarchan sonnet in England, but transformed its division into stanzas and rhyme scheme. Petrarch's sonnet had an octave and a sestet—two quatrains and two tercets; Wyatt maintained the octave but introduced an interesting innovation that eventually led to the Elizabethan or Shakespearean sonnet. He created a third quatrain in place of the first four lines of the sestet, a transformation further emphasised by the full stop at the end of line 12, and ended the sonnet with a final rhyming couplet. The resulting rhyme scheme was *abba abba cddc ee*. While in the former the theme of the poem is introduced in the octave and developed in the sestet, Wyatt's poem does not maintain the division and distribution of thought.

'I find no Peace' is the first English version of the classical theme of love as a conflict of opposites: peace and war, love and hate, hot and cold, and so on. Actually a very long tradition of such paradoxical statements already existed in poetry, possibly starting with the Roman poet Catullus who, in 'Odi et Amo', writes: "I hate and love, nor can the reason tell: But that I love and hate I know too well".

The form of Wyatt's sonnet emphasises its theme by means of the sequence of contrasting images, turned into conceits, elaborate poetic images that add depth and variety to the poet's ideas, by means of fanciful far-fetched associations that achieve a double objective: they exemplify the paradoxical essence of love and startle the reader.

These recurrent opposites are the structural axis on which the poem is built, a sequence that mirrors the complex nature of the poet's emotional world. A long chain of oppositions crosses the whole sonnet, underlined by the frequent use of the polysyndeton; the antithesis is here functional to the manifestation of the poet's psychological distress and his oscillation between the contrasting feelings of hope and dejection. So form underlines the ambiguity of love and man's inability to understand its mysterious essence: the poet is in a state of disarray and cannot find peace because his woman's attitude allows neither hope nor lack of it.

In the first quatrain, the poet focuses on the contrasting emotions he associates with his feelings, which he introduces abruptly and with dramatic efficacy with a careful choice of monosyllabic words. Using a direct image, Wyatt gives greater emphasis to the impossibility of escaping from his love and the 'paralysis' of his

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mind. In the fourth line, he achieves the lowest point of his confession when he admits to having nothing; soon after, however, he yields to the need to possess typical of love and, hoping to conquer his beloved, he seizes "all the world". 'Woman' and 'world' are one and the same thing: love is a 'heterocosm' inside which the woman holds the time and space coordinates of the poet's existence.

In the second quatrain the use of the demonstrative pronoun "that" displays a negative connotation. By refusing to name the 'object' of their affection, Sir Wyatt wants to express contempt for their love and reduce the value of the figure of his beloved. The other lines are similar in meaning, but lines 5 and 6 are different in structure: in fact, in both cases there is an inversion in the presentation of the two contrasting conditions. An important difference is the expression "at my devise". This underlines the psychological weakness and vulnerability of the poet and his impossibility to react. The focus of this quatrain is the helplessness of love: here the lover appears to be prey to a sorceress-like woman, an 'enchantress' who casts a sort of spell on him depriving him of the power to "scape" from her, a trope typical of much love poetry. The climax of this condition of helplessness is achieved in line eight, when the idea of "death" is introduced, to be carried on also in the next stanza, in line ten. The poet's inability to act is further emphasized by the repeated use of negative forms in lines five, six, seven and eight.

In the third quatrain, we find two important elements. Both these are paradoxes: "Without eyes I see" and "laugh in all my pain". In both these cases, the contradictions underline the conflicting emotions of the poet and the extreme inner tension that he can feel. However, the most important difference of this stanza is in the line "I love another, and thus I hate myself". For Wyatt, to hate himself is a consequence of loving his woman, because his peace of mind has been destroyed by the hopeless "war" he has been waging both against himself and his beloved in order to win her; however, in his self-hate there could also be the awareness of being unworthy of his woman's love. Petrarch, the Italian poet, instead, attaches greater importance to the hate he feels for himself which is even stronger than his love for Laura. In this quatrain the poet's mental agitation reaches its climactic peak, particularly in line eleven.

The last lines are very important. Sir Wyatt deploys the conceit "my delight is causer of this strife". It is worth pointing out Wyatt's use of the word "delight", which is given particular prominence as the subject of this final line. It is the very word around which the whole emotional world of the poet gravitates: it enucleates the essence of the poet's feelings for his woman and somehow justifies the condition of (self-) imprisonment he is trapped in.

The other key word in this line is "strife" that, followed by the exclamation mark, closes the poem on a rising emotional curve that represents the logical and psychological connection with the initial image of "war". There is a sort of circularity to represent the poet's emotional world, a personal microcosm standing by itself, isolated from the everyday world which appears to be ignored by the speaking subject in his obsessive return to the object of his desire.

The tormented emotional condition of the lover in Wyatt's sonnet bears clear signs of the existential melancholic state debated by Freud in 'Mourning and

Melancholia' (1917). In this essay Freud maintains that melancholia is a frequent reaction to the loss of a loved object, who has not actually died but who "has been lost as an object of love". He also adds that, if the subject is unable to displace the libido onto a new object, there is an identification of the ego with the abandoned object, and the "object-loss [is] transformed into ego-loss", thus opening an "open wound" that signifies an irremediable lack.

So, in deliberately using contradictions as a rhetorical device to deal with the nature of love, Wyatt illustrates the often lamented paradoxical nature of this sentiment. The melancholic lover of the sonnet who wishes for death, shows the typical psychological symptoms described by Freud: "In melancholia [...] countless separate struggles are carried on over the object, in which hate and love contend with each other; the one seeks to detach the libido from the object, the other to maintain this position".

Sir Wyatt travelled abroad quite frequently. During these years of travel, he spent a period of some months in Italy. And it was from Italy that he drew the ideas and the form by means of which English poetry was rejuvenated. The changes which English versification passed through in the period between Chaucer and the Elizabethans are described elsewhere. Neither the principles of rhythm and accent, it would seem, not even the grammar of Chaucer were fully understood by his followers, Lydgate, Occleve and Hawes. In place of Chaucer's care in arranging the stress and pause of his line, Sir Thomas Wyatt followed a chaotic carelessness. His diction is now redundant, feeble and awkward. Meanwhile, the articulate final *-e*, of which Chaucer made cunning use, had been dropping out of common speech, and the accent on the final syllable of words derived from the French, such as *favour*, *virtue*, *travail*, had begun to move back to the first syllable, with the result of producing still further prosodical confusion and irregularity. It was the mission of Wyatt and his junior contemporary, Surrey, to substitute order for confusion, especially by means of the Italian influence which they brought to bear on English poetry, an influence afterwards united by Spenser (Gabriel Harvey assisting) with the classical influence.

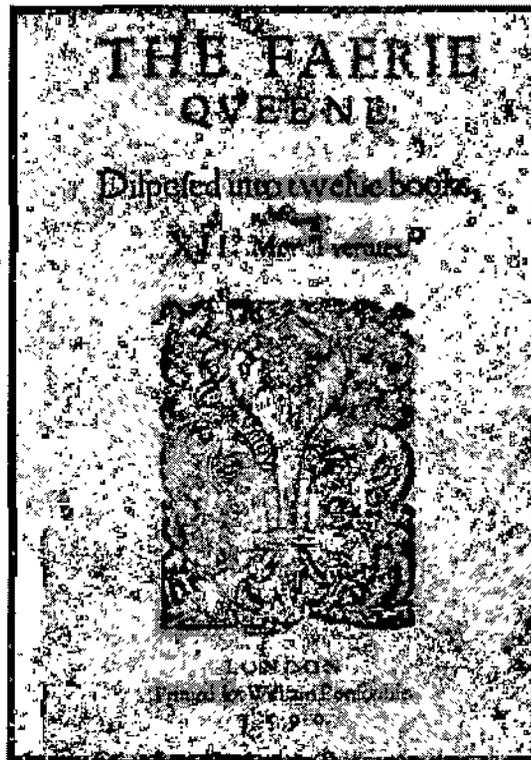
2.3.4 EXAMINING THE POEM

The poem, "I Find No Peace", is a love poem. It is a beautiful and effective example of the use of paradoxes in the poem. An astute reader can count fifteen separate paradoxes in the poem. Lines 5 and 6 provide just one paradox, but lines 9 and 12 each give us two. The total effect of the paradoxes is to stress the conflicting emotions elicited by love. The point is made about as strongly as it can be made, from the global paradoxes in lines 1-4 to the more political and personal ones in lines 5-8. The logic of turning the love of another to hate for oneself (line 11) is difficult to follow unless the line refers to the speaker's inability to express his love or to pursue it successfully. The assertion that the speaker's "delight" causes all the "strife" (line 14) is easier to follow. We may suppose that the speaker had established a regular way of life that has been upset by the changes required and anticipated by his having fallen in love.

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2.4 SPENSER: THE FAERIE QUEENE BOOK I

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The Original Cover of The Faerie Queene

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE FAERIE QUEENE BOOK I

The Faerie Queen, also referred to as The Faerie Queene, is an incomplete English epic poem by Edmund Spenser. The first half was published in 1590, and a second instalment was published in 1596. The Faerie Queene is notable for its form: it was the first work written in Spenserian stanza and is one of the longest poems in the English language.

The Faerie Queene is an allegorical work, written in praise of Queen Elizabeth I. Largely symbolic, the poem follows several knights in an examination of several virtues.

The Faerie Queene found political favour with Elizabeth I and was consequently a success, to the extent that it became Spenser's defining work. The poem found such favour with the monarch that Spenser was granted a pension for life amounting to 50 pounds a year.

2.4.2 POEM OVERVIEW

A letter written by Spenser to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1589 contains a preface for The Faerie Queene, in which Spenser describes the allegorical presentation of virtues through Arthurian knights in the mythical "Faerieland."

Presented as a preface to the epic in most published editions, this letter outlines plans for 24 books: 12 based each on a different knight who exemplified one of 12 "private virtues", and a possible 12 more centered on King Arthur displaying

twelve "public virtues". Spenser names Aristotle as his source for these virtues, although the influence of Thomas Aquinas can be observed as well. It is impossible to predict what the work would have looked like had Spenser lived to complete it, since the reliability of the predictions made in his letter to Raleigh is not absolute, as numerous divergences from that scheme emerged as early as 1590, in the first *Faerie Queene* publication.

As it was published in 1596, the epic presented the following virtues:

- Book I: Holiness
- Book II: Temperance
- Book III: Chastity
- Book IV: Friendship
- Book V: Justice
- Book VI: Courtesy

In addition to these six virtues, the Letter to Raleigh suggests that Arthur represents the virtue of Magnificence, which ("according to Aristotle and the rest") is "the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all"; and that the *Faerie Queene* herself represents Glory (hence her name, Gloriana). The unfinished seventh book (the Cantos of Mutability), appears to have represented the virtue of "constancy."

The First Book of the *Faerie Queene* contains the Legend of the Knight of Redcrosse or Holiness. The *Faerie Queene* was intended to have six books, but was never completed, but it continues to be one of the most beautiful and important works of literature ever written. Spenser wrote it as a paean to the Virgin Queen Elizabeth, and to the golden age which she had brought to England. Sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh and commended by the foremost literary minds of his day, Spenser's book remains one of the crowning poetic achievements of the Elizabethan period.

2.4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

Redcrosse is the hero of Book I, and in the beginning of Canto I, he is called the knight of Holiness. He will go through great trials and fight fierce monsters throughout the Book, and this in itself is entertaining, as a story of a heroic "knight errant." However, the more important purpose of the *Faerie Queene* is its allegory, the meaning behind its characters and events. The story's setting, a fanciful "faerie land," only emphasizes how its allegory is meant for a land very close to home: Spenser's England. The title character, the *Faerie Queene* herself, is meant to represent Queen Elizabeth. Redcrosse represents the individual Christian, on the search for Holiness, who is armed with faith in Christ, the shield with the bloody cross.

Redcrosse is travelling with Una, whose name means "truth." For a Christian to be holy, he must have true faith, and so the plot of Book I mostly concerns the attempts of evil-doers to separate Redcrosse from Una. Most of these villains are meant by Spenser to represent one thing in common: the Roman Catholic Church. The poet felt that, in the English Reformation, the people had defeated

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"false religion" (Catholicism) and embraced "true religion" (Protestantism/Anglicanism). Thus, Redcrosse must defeat villains who mimic the falsehood of the Roman Church.

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The first of these is Error. When Redcrosse chokes the beast, Spenser writes, "Her vomit full of bookes and papers was ..." These papers represent Roman Catholic propaganda that was put out in Spenser's time, against Queen Elizabeth and Anglicanism. The Christian (Redcrosse) may be able to defeat these obvious and disgusting errors, but before he is united to the truth he is still lost and can be easily deceived. This deceit is arranged by Archimago, whose name means "arch-image"--the Protestants accused the Catholics of idolatry because of their extensive use of images. The sorcerer is able, through deception and lust, to separate Redcrosse from Una--that is, to separate Holiness from Truth. Once separated, Holiness is susceptible to the opposite of truth, or falsehood. Redcrosse may be able to defeat the strength of Sansfoy (literally "without faith" or "faithlessness") through his own native virtue, but he falls prey to the wiles of Falsehood herself--Duessa. Duessa also represents the Roman Church, both because she is "false faith," and because of her rich, purple and gold clothing, which, for Spenser, displays the greedy wealth and arrogant pomp of Rome. Much of the poet's imagery comes from a passage in the Book of Revelation, which describes the "whore of Babylon"--many Protestant readers took this Biblical passage to indicate the Catholic Church.

The *Faerie Queene*, however, also has many sources outside of the Bible. Spenser considers himself an epic poet in the classical tradition and so he borrows heavily from the great epics of antiquity: Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. This is most evident at the opening of Book I, in which Spenser calls on one of the Muses to guide his poetry--Homer and Virgil established this form as the "proper" opening to an epic poem. The scene with the "human tree," in which a broken branch drips blood, likewise recalls a similar episode in the *Aeneid*. However, while these ancient poets mainly wrote to tell a story, we have already seen that Spenser has another purpose in mind. In the letter that introduces the *Faerie Queene*, he says that he followed Homer and Virgil and the Italian poets Ariosto and Tasso because they all have "ensampled a good governour and a vertuous man." Spenser intends to expand on this example by defining the characteristics of a good, virtuous, Christian man.

2.4.4 CHARACTERIZATION IN THE POEM

Arthur - The central hero of the poem, although he does not play the most significant role in its action. Arthur is in search of the Faerie Queene, whom he saw in a vision. He is madly in love with the Faerie Queene and spends his time in pursuit of her when not helping the other knights out of their sundry predicaments. Prince Arthur is the Knight of Magnificence, the perfection of all virtues. The "real" Arthur was a king of the Britons in the 5th or 6th century A.D., but the little historical information we have about him is overwhelmed by his legend.

Faerie Queene (also known as Gloriana) - Though she never appears in the poem, the Faerie Queene is the focus of the poem; her castle is the ultimate goal or destination of many of the poem's characters. She represents Queen Elizabeth, among others, as discussed in the Commentary.

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Redcrosse - The Redcrosse Knight is the hero of Book I. He stands for the virtues of Holiness. Introduced in the first canto of the poem, he bears the emblem of Saint George, patron saint of England; a red cross on a white background, which can still be seen in the flag of England. The Redcrosse Knight is declared to be the real Saint George in Canto X. He also learns that he is of English ancestry, having been stolen by a Fay and raised in Faerieland. In the climactic battle of Book I, Redcrosse slays the dragon that has laid waste to Eden. He marries Una at the end of Book I, but brief appearances in Books I and II show Redcrosse still questing through the world. His real name is discovered to be George. At another level, though, he is the individual Christian fighting against evil -- or the Protestant fighting the Catholic Church.

Una - Redcrosse's future wife and the other major protagonist in Book I. She is meek, humble, and beautiful, but strong when it is necessary. She represents truth, which Redcrosse must find in order to be a true Christian. She travels with the Redcrosse Knight (who represents England), whom she has recruited to save her parents' castle from a dragon. She also defeats Duessa, who represents the "false" (Catholic) church and the person of Mary, Queen of Scots, in a trial reminiscent of that which ended in Mary's beheading. Una is also representative of Truth.

Duessa - A lady who personifies Falsehood in Book One, is known to Redcrosse as "Fidessa". The opposite of Una, she represents falsehood and nearly succeeds in getting Redcrosse to leave Una for good. She appears beautiful, but it is only skin-deep. She is actually depicted as a witch, who can go to any lengths to serve her own purpose. She is also initially an assistant, or at least a servant, to Archimago.

Archimago - Next to Duessa, he is another of the major antagonist in Book I. Archimago is a sorcerer capable of changing his own appearance and even that of others. He has been sent to stop the knights in the service of the Faerie Queene. Of the knights, Archimago hates Redcross most of all, hence he is symbolically the nemesis of England. At the end of Book I, his magic is proven to be weak and ineffective.

Satyrane - Satyrane is the son of a human and a satyr (a half-human, half-goat creature). He is nature's knight, the epitome of natural human potential, the best a man can be through his own natural abilities without the enlightenment of Christianity and God's grace. He is significant in both Book I and Book III. His role is generally as an aide to the protagonists. Tamed by Una, he protects her, but ends up locked in a battle against the chaotic Sansloy, which remains unconcluded.

Sansfoy, Sansjoy and Sansloy (names from the old French meaning "Faithless", "Joyless" and "Lawless"), three Saracen knights who fight Redcrosse in Book One.

2.4.5 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edmund Spenser was born in London near the Tower in the year 1552. His parents were poor, though they were probably connected with the Lancashire branch of the old family of Le Despencers, "an house of ancient fame," from which the Northampton Spencers also descended. The poet's familiarity with the rural life and dialect of the north country supports the theory that as a boy, he spent some time in Lancashire. Beyond two or three facts, nothing is known with certainty of

his early years. He himself tells us that his mother's name was Elizabeth, and that London was his "most kindly nurse." His name is mentioned as one of six poor pupils of the Merchant Taylors' School, who received assistance from a generous country squire.

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Edmund Spenser

At the age of seventeen, Master Edmund became a student in Pembroke Hall, one of the colleges of the great University of Cambridge. His position was that of a sizar, or paid scholar, who was exempt from the payment of tuition fees and earned his way by serving in the dining hall or performing other menial duties. His poverty, however, did not prevent him from forming many helpful friendships with his fellow-students. Among his most valued friends he named Launcelot Andrews, afterward Bishop of Winchester, Edward Kirke, a young man of Spenser's own age, who soon after edited his friend's first important poem, the *Shepherds Calender*, with elaborate notes, and most important of all, the famous classical scholar, a fellow of Pembroke, Gabriel Harvey, who was a few years older than Spenser, and was later immortalized as the Hobbinoll of the *Faerie Queene*. It was by Harvey that the poet was introduced to Sir Philip Sidney, the most accomplished gentleman in England, and a favourite of Queen Elizabeth.

Spenser's residence in Cambridge extended over seven years, during which he received the usual degrees of bachelors and masters of arts. He became one of the most learned of English poets, and we may infer that while at this seat of learning he laid the foundations for his wide scholarship in the diligent study of the Greek and Latin classics, the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, the pastoral poetry of Theocritus and Vergil, and the great medieval epics of Italian literature. On account of some misunderstanding with the master and tutors of his college, Spenser failed to receive the appointment to a fellowship, and left the University in 1576, at the age of twenty-four. His failure to attain the highest scholastic recognition was due, it is supposed, to his being involved in some of the dangerous controversies which

were ripe in Cambridge at that time "with daily spawning of new opinions and heresies in divinity, in philosophy, in humanity, and in manners".

On leaving the university, Spenser resided for about a year with relatives in Lancashire, where he found employment. During this time, he had an unrequited love affair with an unknown beauty whom he celebrated in the *Shepherds Calender* under the name of Rosalind, "the widow's daughter of the glen". A rival, Menalchas, was more successful in finding favour with his fair neighbour. Although he had before this turned his attention to poetry by translating the sonnets of Petrarch and Du Bellay (published in 1569), it was while here in the North country that he first showed his high poetic gifts in original composition.

After a visit to Sir Philip Sidney at Penshurst, Spenser went down to London with his friend in 1578, and was presented to Sidney's great uncle, the Earl of Leicester. He thus at once had an opportunity for advancement through the influence of powerful patrons, a necessity with poor young authors in that age. An immediate result of his acquaintance with Sidney, with whom he was now on relations of intimate friendship, was an introduction into the best society of the metropolis. This period of association with many of the most distinguished and cultivated men in England, together with the succession of brilliant pageants, masks, and processions, which he witnessed at court and at Lord Leicester's mansion, must have done much to refine his tastes and broaden his outlook on the world.

In personal appearance, Spenser was a fine type of a sixteenth century gentleman. The grace and dignity of his bearing was enhanced by a face of tender and thoughtful expression in which warmth of feeling was subdued by the informing spirit of refinement, truthfulness, simplicity, and nobility. He possessed a fine dome-like forehead, curling hair, brown eyes, full sensuous lips, and a nose that was straight and strongly moulded. His long spare face was adorned with a full mustache and a closely cropped Van Dyke beard.

The *Shepherds Calender* was published in the winter of 1579 with a grateful and complimentary dedication to Sidney. It is an academic exercise consisting of a series of twelve pastoral poems in imitation of the eclogues of Vergil and Theocritus. The poem is cast in the form of dialogues between shepherds, who converse on such subjects as love, religion, and old age. In three eclogues the poet attacks with Puritan zeal the pomp and sloth of the worldly clergy, and one is devoted to the courtly praise of the queen. It was at once recognized as the most notable poem that had appeared since the death of Chaucer, and placed Spenser immediately at the head of living English poets.

In 1580 Spenser went over to Ireland as private secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, the Artegall of the Legend of Justice in the *Faerie Queene*. After the recall of his patron he remained in that turbulent island in various civil positions for the rest of his life, with the exception of two or three visits and a last sad flight to England. For seven years he was clerk of the Court of Chancery in Dublin, and then was appointed clerk to the Council of Munster. In 1586 he was granted the forfeited estate of the Earl of Desmond in Cork County, and two years later took up his residence in Kilcolman Castle, which was beautifully situated on a lake with a distant view of mountains. In the disturbed political condition of the country, life

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here seemed a sort of exile to the poet, but its very loneliness and danger gave the stimulus needed for the development of his peculiar genius.

"Here," says Mr. Stopford Brooke, "at the foot of the Galtees, and bordered to the north by the wild country, the scenery of which is frequently painted in the *Faerie Queene* and in whose woods and savage places such adventures constantly took place in the service of Elizabeth as are recorded in the *Faerie Queene*, the first three books of that great poem were finished." Spenser had spent the first three years of his residence at Kilcolman at work on this masterpiece, which had been begun in England, under the encouragement of Sidney, probably before 1580. The knightly Sidney died heroically at the battle of Zutphen, in 1586, and Spenser voiced the lament of all England in the beautiful pastoral elegy *Astrophel* which he composed in memory of "the most noble and valorous knight".

Soon after coming to Ireland, Spenser made the acquaintance of Sir Walter Raleigh, which ripened into intimate friendship. A memorable visit from Raleigh, who was now a neighbour of the poet's, having also received a part of the forfeited Desmond estate, led to the publication of the *Faerie Queene*. Sitting under the shade "of the green alders of the Mulla's shore," Spenser read to his guest the first books of his poem. So pleased was Raleigh that he persuaded the poet to accompany him to London, and there lay his poem at the feet of the great queen, whose praises he had so gloriously sung. The trip was made, Spenser was presented to Elizabeth, and read to her Majesty the three Legends of Holiness, Temperance, and Chastity. She was delighted with the fragmentary epic in which she heard herself delicately complimented in turn as Gloriana, Belpheobe, and Britomart, conferred upon the poet a pension of £50 yearly, and permitted the *Faerie Queene* to be published with a dedication to herself. Launched under such auspices, it is no wonder that the poem was received by the court and all England with unprecedented applause.

The next year while still in London, Spenser collected his early poems and issued them under the title of *Complaints*. In this volume were the *Ruins of Time* and the *Tears of the Muses*, two poems on the indifference shown to literature before 1580, and the remarkable *Mother Hubberds Tale*, a bitter satire on the army, the court, the church, and politics. His *Daphnida* was also published about the same time. On his return to Ireland he gave a charming picture of life at Kilcolman Castle, with an account of his visit to the court, in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*. The story of the long and desperate courtship of his second love, Elizabeth, whom he wedded in 1594, is told in the *Amoretti*, a sonnet sequence full of passion and tenderness. His rapturous wedding ode, the *Epithalamion*, which is, by general consent, the most glorious bridal song in our language, and the most perfect of all his poems in its freshness, purity, and passion, was also published in 1595. The next year Spenser was back in London and published the *Prothalamion*, a lovely ode on the marriage of Lord Worcester's daughters, and his four *Hymns* on Love and Beauty, Heavenly Love, and Heavenly Beauty. The first two *Hymns* are early poems, and the two latter maturer work embodying Petrarch's philosophy, which teaches that earthly love is a ladder that leads men to the love of God. In this year, 1596, also appeared the last three books of the *Faerie Queene*, containing the Legends of Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy.



Elizabeth Spencer

At the height of his fame, happiness, and prosperity, Spenser returned for the last time to Ireland in 1597, and was recommended by the queen for the office of Sheriff of Cork. Surrounded by his beloved wife and children, his domestic life was serene and happy, but in gloomy contrast his public life was stormy and full of anxiety and danger. He was the acknowledged prince of living poets, and was planning the completion of his mighty epic of the private virtues in twelve books, to be followed by twelve more on the civic virtues. The native Irish had steadily withstood his claim to the estate, and continually harassed him with lawsuits. They detested their foreign oppressors and awaited a favourable opportunity to rise. Discord and riot increased on all sides. The ever growing murmurs of discontent gave place to cries for vengeance and unrepressed acts of hostility. Finally, in the fall of 1598, there occurred a fearful uprising known as Tyrone's Rebellion, in which the outraged peasants fiercely attacked the castle, plundering and burning. Spenser and his family barely escaped with their lives. According to one old tradition, an infant child was left behind in the hurried flight and perished in the flames; but this has been shown to be but one of the wild rumours repeated to exaggerate the horror of the uprising. Long after Spenser's death, it was also rumoured that the last six books of the *Faerie Queene* had been lost in the flight; but the story is now utterly discredited.

Spenser once more arrived in London, but he was now in dire distress and prostrated by the hardships which he had suffered. There on January 16, 1599, at a tavern in King Street, Westminster, the great poet died broken-hearted and in poverty. Drummond of Hawthornden states that Ben Jonson told him that Spenser died for lack of bread in King Street, and refused 20 pieces sent to him by my Lord of Essex, and said that he was sorry as he had no time to spend them. The story is probably a bit of exaggerated gossip. He was buried close to the tomb of Chaucer in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, his fellow-poets bearing the pall, and

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the Earl of Essex defraying the expenses of the funeral. Referring to the death of Spenser's great contemporary, Basse wrote:—

Renowned Spenser, lie a thought more nigh
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont, lie
A little nearer Spenser, to make room
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold tomb.

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Thus, says Mr. Stopford Brooke, appropriately, London, 'his most kindly nurse,' takes care also of his dust, and England keeps him in her love.

Spenser's influence on English poetry can hardly be overestimated. Keats called him the poets' poet, a title which has been universally approved. He is the poet of all others, says Mr. Saintsbury, for those who seek in poetry only poetical qualities. His work has appealed most strongly to those who have been poets themselves, for with him the poetical attraction is supreme. Many of the greatest poets have delighted to call him master, and have shown him the same loving reverence which he gave to Chaucer. Minor poets like Sidney, Drayton, and Daniel paid tribute to his inspiration; Milton was deeply indebted to him, especially in *Lycidas*; and many of the pensive poets of the seventeenth century show traces of his influence. "Spenser delighted Shakespeare," says Mr. Church; "he was the poetical master of Cowley, and then of Milton, and in a sense of Dryden, and even Pope." Giles and Phineas Fletcher, William Browne, Sir William Alexander, Shenstone, Collins, Cowley, Gray, and James Thomson were all direct followers of Spenser. His influence upon the poets of the romantic revival of the nineteenth century is even more marked. "Spenser begot Keats," says Mr. Saintsbury, "and Keats begot Tennyson, and Tennyson begot all the rest." Among this notable company of disciples should be mentioned especially Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne. If we include within the sphere of Spenser's influence also those who have made use of the stanza which he invented, we must add the names of Burns, Shelley, Byron, Beattie, Campbell, Scott, and Wordsworth. When we consider the large number of poets in whom Spenser awakened the poetic gift, or those to whose powers he gave direction, we may safely pronounce him the most seminal poet in the language.

2.4.6 SUMMARY

Book I tells the story of the knight of Holiness, the Redcrosse Knight. This hero gets his name from the blood-Redcrosse emblazoned on his shield. He has been given a task by Gloriana, "that greatest Glorious Queen of Faerie land," to fight a terrible dragon that is ravaging the land. He is travelling with a beautiful, innocent young lady, Una, and a dwarf as servant. Just as we join the three travellers, a storm breaks upon them and they rush to find cover in a nearby forest. When the skies clear, they find that they are lost, and they end up near a cave, which the lady recognizes as the den of Error. Ignoring her warnings, Redcrosse enters and is attacked by the terrible beast, Error, and her young. She wraps him up in her tail, but he eventually manages to strangle her and chops off her head. Error's young then drinks her blood until they burst and die. Victorious, the knight and his companions set out again, looking for the right path. As night falls, they meet an old hermit who offers them lodging in his inn. As the travellers sleep, the hermit

assumes his real identity—he is Archimago, the black sorcerer, and he conjures up two spirits to trouble Redcrosse.

One of the spirits obtains a false dream from Morpheus, the god of sleep; the other takes the shape of Una, the lady accompanying Redcrosse. These sprites go to the knight; one gives him the dream of love and lust. When Redcrosse wakes up in a passion, the other sprite (appearing to be Una) is lying beside him, offering a kiss. The knight, however, resists her temptations and returns to sleep. Archimago then tries a new deception; he puts the sprite disguised as Una in a bed and turns the other sprite into a young man, who lies with the false Una. Archimago then wakes Redcrosse and shows him the two lovers in bed. Redcrosse is furious that “Una” would spoil her virtue with another man, and so in the morning he leaves without her. When the real Una wakes, she sees her knight is gone, and in sorrow rides off to look for him. Archimago, enjoying the fruits of his scheme, now disguises himself as Redcrosse and follows after Una.

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“Una and the Lion” by Briton Rivière (1840-1920)

When Redcrosse leaves alone the next morning and soon meets the old witch Duessa, disguised as Fidessa, a young and beautiful maiden. Duessa is accompanied by Sansfoy, whom Redcrosse kills in a fierce fight. Duessa and Redcrosse then rest under a pair of trees. To Redcrosse’s surprise, one of the trees begins to speak, describing how it was once a young knight named Fradubio who was traveling with his fair Fraelissa. Fradubio explains how he met a beautiful maiden, was enamored of her, and fought for her hand. The beautiful maiden then turned Fraelissa into a tree to end Fradubio’s love for Fraelissa, and later, after Fradubio saw his new love bathing and realized that she was actually an old and loathsome witch (Duessa), Fradubio himself is turned into a tree by the witch. Redcrosse fails to understand the warning, and he and Duessa soon continue their journey.

In the meantime, Una, left behind by Redcrosse, wanders in a forest, searching for her knight. She there meets a lion, who decides to protect the maiden. As night falls, Una and the lion seek shelter in the home of Abessa (who is dumb) and Corceca (who is blind); though they resist, the lion forces his way into their house. Later that night, Kirkrapine, a church robber and Abessa’s lover, enters the house, where he is killed by the lion. Una and the lion depart the next morning, only to be approached by Archimago, disguised as Redcrosse. Una is fooled until the pair is stopped by Sansloy, who, seeing the Redcrosse on Archimago’s chest, mistakenly

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takes him for Redcrosse and challenges him to a duel to avenge the death of his brother, Sansloy, earlier killed by the real Redcrosse. Sansloy injures Archimago and then removes Archimago's helmet, and both Sansloy and Una find that he is not Redcrosse after all. The lion attacks Sansloy when Sansloy attempts to sexually assault Una, but Sansloy kills the lion and then forces Una onto his horse, and the two ride off into the forest.

The scene then shifts to Redcrosse as he is led by Duessa into the House of Pride. Redcrosse is impressed at first by the lush palace and soon witnesses a formal procession of the Seven Deadly Sins, with Queen Lucifera the focus of the procession. The entertainment is interrupted, though, by the arrival of Sansjoy, who, after seeing his dead brother's (Sansfoy's) shield in Redcrosse's possession, challenges the knight to a duel. Lucifera arranges a duel between the two men for the next day. The fight is treacherous, and both men suffer great injuries. Just as Redcrosse is about to kill Sansjoy, a dark cloud covers and protects Sansjoy. Redcrosse is carried back to the House of Pride, where he is treated for his wounds. In the meantime, Duessa takes Sansjoy down to Hades (Avernus), where he is treated by the Greek physician Aesculapius. As Redcrosse's wounds are treated, the Dwarf warns him that he has seen the dungeon of the palace, and it is filled with victims of Pride and the other Deadly Sins. Thus warned, Redcrosse, though weakened from his wounds, makes his escape from the House. Duessa, returning from Hades, discovers that Redcrosse has departed.

Meanwhile, Sansloy attempts to seduce and to rape Una in the woods, but he is scared off by a group of fauns and satyrs. These creatures recognize Una's beauty and take her to their leader, Sylvanus, to be worshipped as a goddess. Satyrane, a knight who is the son of a satyr father and a human mother, is visiting the woods when he meets Una, whom he helps to escape. On their way out of the woods, the pair meets a pilgrim who tells them that he witnessed the death of Redcrosse at the hands of another knight, and the pilgrim informs the pair where this knight can be found. Satyrane discovers Sansloy and challenges him, while Una, recognizing Sansloy as her adversary, escapes from the scene, followed by the pilgrim, who is actually Archimago in another of his many disguises.

As Una makes her escape, Duessa begins searching for Redcrosse and discovers him next to a magic fountain whose waters, once drunk, causes a loss of strength. Duessa and Redcrosse are reconciled, and, after drinking from the magic fountain and losing his powers, Redcrosse "dallies" with Duessa on the grass until he hears the approach of Orgoglio, a hideous giant. Orgoglio quickly overcomes the weakened Redcrosse, but Duessa asks that his life be spared, and, in return, she agrees to become the mistress of the giant. Redcrosse survives but is thrown into Orgoglio's dungeon. The Dwarf, after witnessing Redcrosse's defeat, sets out to find help and discovers Una, who is still fleeing from Sansloy. The Dwarf relates all of Redcrosse's adventures to Una, and the two then head toward Orgoglio's castle. On their way, they meet a brilliantly arrayed knight, whose armour includes a magic diamond shield with such great powers that it can turn men to stone and overthrow monsters; the shield is so powerful, in fact, that it must remain covered with cloth. Una explains her situation to the knight, who comforts her and agrees to help. The knight, though unnamed, is the great Prince Arthur.

Arthur, accompanied by his Squire, Una, and the Dwarf, approaches the castle, and the Squire blows a horn whose blast bursts open the castle doors. Orgoglio comes running out, along with Duessa riding a seven-headed beast, a gift from Orgoglio. Arthur and his Squire engage in a great battle with Orgoglio and the beast and, in the midst of the fight, the cloth drops from Arthur's magic shield, exposing its brilliant surface. Orgoglio and the beast are stunned by the light from the shield, thus allowing Arthur to kill both monsters. Duessa attempts to escape but is restrained by the Squire. After the battle, Arthur enters the castle in search of Redcrosse, but he finds only an old servant named Ignaro who walks with his head facing backwards and who cannot answer any of Arthur's questions. Arthur takes Ignaro's keys and begins exploring the different rooms of the castle, finding one room richly decorated but containing an altar stained with the blood of martyrs. He opens another door and falls into a deep dungeon holding Redcrosse, famished and distraught after months of imprisonment. After struggling out of the dungeon, Arthur returns Redcrosse to Una, and the two reunite after their long absence. Duessa is allowed to live, but not until she is stripped of all her clothes, revealing her as a loathsome and foul hag.

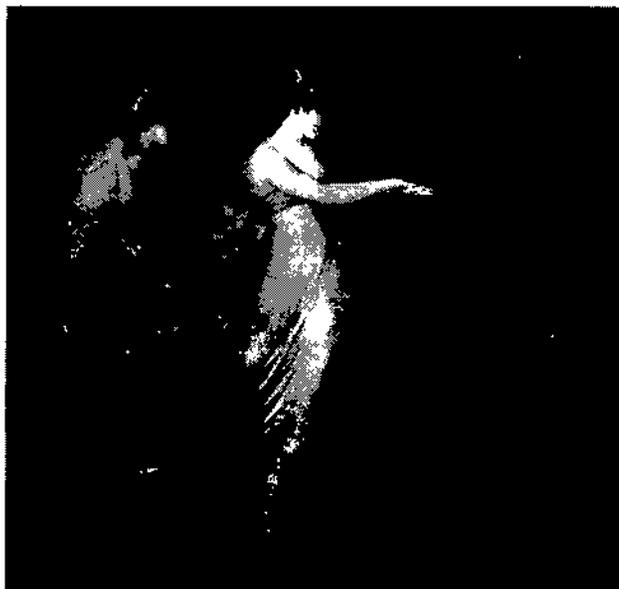
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Still unaware of the brave knight's identity, Una and Redcrosse question Arthur. Arthur explains that he does not know who his parents are: he was raised by Timon, an old knight, and educated by the magician Merlin, who would only tell him that Arthur's father was a king and that Arthur would gain knowledge of his identity some time in the future. Arthur then describes how he was visited by the Faerie Queene in a dream, and, captivated by her beauty, he has been searching in vain for her in Faerie Land for the last nine months. He then leaves Una and Redcrosse to resume his search. Una and Redcrosse, likewise, resume their long-delayed journey but are soon interrupted by Sir Trevisan, a knight running along the roadside with a rope around his neck. Trevisan describes how the villain Despair attempted to persuade Trevisan and his companion, Sir Terwin, that their desperate lives should be ended by suicide. Terwin had stabbed himself, but Trevisan escaped just as he was about to hang himself. Redcrosse vows to destroy Despair and, led by Trevisan, he enters the villain's dark cave and confronts Despair, denouncing his persuasions. Despair, however, argues that his work should be praised, since he has helped so many people escape from the miseries of human existence, and he reminds Redcrosse that even Redcrosse himself has suffered his share of miseries and embarrassments. Despair is so convincing that Redcrosse raises his dagger to end his own life, but Una intercedes, preventing the knight from taking his life, lecturing him on his foolishness, and reminding Redcrosse of heavenly mercy. Convinced by Una, Redcrosse escapes from the cave of Despair.

Seeing that the weakened Redcrosse is in need of recuperation, Una leads him to the House of Holiness, where Redcrosse is attended to and revitalized by a variety of characters, including Fidelia, Speranza, Patience, Penance, Remorse, and Repentance. Charity, another character residing in the House of Holiness, educates Redcrosse on practising love instead of hate, while Mercy instructs the knight on forms of charity. Contemplation leads the knight to the top of a high mountain and informs Redcrosse that he will one day enter the New Jerusalem as St. George, the patron saint of England. Refreshed and restored, Redcrosse once again rejoins Una on their journey to her native land.

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Upon entering Una's country, the pair sees a huge dragon and a high tower that holds Una's parents captive. Redcrosse and the dragon immediately begin their fight, which lasts an entire day. Finally, Redcrosse is able to injure the dragon, but, in return, the dragon breathes fire on Redcrosse, burning him in his armour and causing him to fall into a spring. Believing he is victorious, the dragon rests as night falls. Una prays all night for the recovery of Redcrosse, and, in the morning, Redcrosse rises from the spring with his strength restored. Another day of fierce fighting follows, which again causes injury to both the dragon and to Redcrosse. As the day ends, the wounded Redcrosse falls at the foot of a blessed tree, whose stream of balm restores the knight for yet another day of fighting. On the third day, the dragon approaches Redcrosse with open jaws, intending to eat the knight and to end the battle. Redcrosse, though, pierces the throat of the dragon, finally killing the beast. Una steps forward to thank God and the brave knight for a great victory.



"Prince Arthur and the Faerie Queen" by Johann Heinrich Füssli

With the dragon killed, the land is freed from its captivity and, rejoicing, the inhabitants honour Redcrosse as their hero. Ceremonies for the betrothal of Redcrosse and Una are celebrated, until a messenger arrives with a letter stating that Redcrosse is already pledged to Fidessa. Redcrosse, supported by Una, denies the words of the messenger, and Una soon recognizes that the messenger is in reality Archimago in yet another disguise. Archimago is captured and thrown into a dungeon, and the betrothal of the knight and his lady is concluded. Redcrosse, however, cannot remain with Una but must instead continue to fulfil his pledge of six years of service to Gloriana, the Queen of Faerie Land.

2.4.7 THEMES, MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

The concept of the Faerie Queene was to teach people about different virtues and other properties desirable of a person, in both public as well as private life. Apart from these, the poem also followed certain other themes and was written in accordance with them. In this section, we will learn about the different themes the poem illustrates.

Performance of One's Duty

Throughout *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser emphasizes the importance of performing one's duty and accepting responsibility to complete the quest. Several heroic figures emerge during the course of the poem and each is given a question to undertake, a monster or demon to extinguish. Each time, the hero must overcome disadvantage and hurdles to succeed, but the importance of the quest is always the overriding concern. Although the Red Cross Knight must fight several demons and overcome despair, he always continues on the quest to rescue the King and Queen of the West. Similarly, Artegall must be rescued himself by Britomart and although he really wants to continue with her, he must complete the quest of freeing Irena.

Instruction in Virtue

Spenser intended *The Faerie Queene* to be read primarily by young men desiring to learn better what virtues to cultivate in their lives. As such, the epic makes clear who the heroes and villains are, whom they represent, and what good behaviour looks like. The most basic reading of *The Faerie Queene* is an education in proper living for 16th Century England.

Interdependence of the Virtues

The Faerie Queene makes it clear that no single virtue is greater than the rest. While some are superior to others, they require one another to strengthen the integrity of the whole person. For example, Redcrosse's Holiness requires rescuing by Britomart's Chastity, while Britomart's Chastity seeks Justice to complete it in the social realm.

Chivalric Society and Social Classes

Spenser chose to set his epic in a romanticized medieval fantasy world full of knights, monsters, and damsels in distress. He uses this environment to give power to his allegorical statements, but at the same time, he includes an undercurrent of criticism for feudal Britain (and the class system his own age had inherited from it). Along with virtuous knights, Spenser includes noble savages (the Savage Man), honourable squires (Tristram), and even battle-hardened women (Britomart and Radigund). The knights, who are supposed to be the ideal of virtue, are often the most wrong-headed characters in the epic.

Christian Humanism

While ostensibly constructing an epic devoted to theological virtues of the Christian faith, Spenser cannot resist including his beloved classical mythology and legends in the work. Alongside the Redcrosse knight stands the half-satyr Satyrane; Calidone, the knight of Courtésy, spends time with rustic shepherds and a magical storyteller; and the virtuous Queen of England herself is depicted as Gloriana, Queen of the Faerie. To Spenser, there was no contradiction between classical aesthetic values and Protestant Christianity.

Protestantism versus Catholicism

Although *The Faerie Queene* can be read as a simple allegory of virtue, there are too many overt criticisms of the Catholic Church to keep the work theologically neutral. The monster Error vomits Catholic tracts upon Redcrosse in Book 1, and Grantorto stands in for Catholicism as a whole in Book 6. Throughout the epic, Godliness is equated with Protestant theology, while falsehood and the destruction of lives are attributed to Catholic sources.

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Chastity**NOTES**

Spenser makes much of female Chastity in *The Faerie Queene*, and not just in the book devoted to that virtue (Book 3). Britomart is the ideal of chastity, yet she does not seek to remain a maiden; her quest is to find the man she has fallen in love with and marry him. Belphoebe, the virgin huntress, eventually develops a relationship with Arthur's squire Timias. Arthur himself looks forward to the day when he will woo and win the Faerie Queene herself. Each of these strong female figures points to the real-life Queen Elizabeth, whose continued celibacy caused great concern among many of her subjects (who feared she would leave no heir to continue her glorious reign). In some ways, the entire epic is not just dedicated to Queen Elizabeth I, but it also aims to change her mind and push her into accepting a suitor.

The Pervasive Effects of Slander

Through the Blatant Beast in Books 5 and 6, Spenser expounds the effects slander can have upon its victims. The Blatant Beast bites its prey, leaving them poisoned and dying. Only self-control, good living, and forthrightness of speech can cure them of their ills. Spenser uses the poisoning of Serena to show how a woman's virtue can suffer even when she has done no wrong; he uses the poisoning of Timias following Belphoebe's misperception of his intentions toward Amoretta to show a similar evil worked upon an upright man. Spenser had real-world counterparts in mind for these episodes: well-known political figures had been the victims of slander and could not escape its detrimental effects even after the allegations were disproved. The Blatant Beast is the one creature left alive by the questing knight: apparently, Slander is subject to repression (the Beast's jaws can be bound for a while) but not complete elimination (the Beast still lives).

2.4.8 EXAMINING THE POEM

Spenser's language in *The Faerie Queene*, as in *The Shepheardes Calender*, is deliberately archaic, though the extent of this has been exaggerated by critics who follow Ben Jonson's dictum, that "in affecting the ancients Spenser writ no language." Allowing that Jonson's remark may only apply to the Calendar, Bruce Robert McElderry, Jr., states, after a detailed investigation of the FQ's diction, that Jonson's statement "is a skillful epigram; but it seriously misrepresents the truth if taken at anything like its face value."

The number of archaisms used in the poem are not overwhelming—one source reports thirty-four in Canto One of Book One, that is, thirty-four words out of a total 4,200 words, less than one percent. According to McElderry, language does not account for the poem's archaic tone: "The subject-matter of *The Faerie Queene* is itself the most powerful factor in creating the impression of archaism."

Examples of medieval archaisms (in morphology and diction) include:

- Infinitive in -en: "Vewen," 1. 201, 'to view.'
- Prefix y- retained in participle: "Yclad," 1. 58, 254, 'clad,' 'clothed.'
- Adjective: "Combrous," 1. 203, 'harassing,' 'troublesome.'
- Verb: "Keepe," 1. 360, 'heed,' 'give attention to.'

Samuel Johnson also commented critically on Spenser's diction, with which he became intimately acquainted during his work on *A Dictionary of the English Language*, and "found it a useful source for obsolete and archaic words"; Johnson, however, mainly considered Spenser's (early) pastoral poems, a genre of which he was not particularly fond.

The diction and atmosphere of *The Faerie Queene* relied on much more than just Middle English; for instance, classical allusions and classical proper names abound—especially in the later books—and he coined some names based on Greek, such as "Poris" and "Phao lilly white."

The *Faerie Queene* is the most perfect type which we have in English of the purely romantic poem. Four elements enter into its composition: "it is pastoral by association, chivalrous by temper, ethical by tendency, and allegorical by treatment". Its subject was taken from the old cycle of Arthurian legends, which were brightened with the terrorless magic of Ariosto and Tasso. The scene of the adventures is laid in the enchanted forests and castles of the far away and unreal fairyland of mediaeval chivalry, and the incidents themselves are either highly improbable or frankly impossible. The language is frequently archaic and designedly unfamiliar. Much of the machinery and properties used in carrying on the story, such as speaking myrtles, magic mirrors, swords, rings, impenetrable armour, and healing fountains, is supernatural. All the characters—the knights, ladies, dwarfs, magicians, dragons, nymphs, satyrs, and giants—are the conventional figures of pastoral romance.

Like Milton, Gray, and other English poets, Spenser was a scholar familiar with the best in ancient and modern literature. As to Spenser's specific indebtedness, though he owed much in incident and diction to Chaucer's version of the *Romance of the Rose* and to Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, the great epic poets, Tasso and Ariosto, should be given the first place. The resemblance of passages in the *Faerie Queene* to others in the *Orlando Furioso* and the *Jerusalem Delivered*, is so striking that some have accused the English poet of paraphrasing and slavishly borrowing from the two Italians. Many of these parallels are pointed out in the notes. To this criticism, Mr. Saintsbury remarks: "Not, perhaps, till the *Orlando*, has been carefully read, and read in the original, is Spenser's real greatness understood. He has often, and evidently of purpose, challenged comparison; but in every instance it will be found that his beauties are emphatically his own. He has followed Ariosto only as Vergil has followed Homer, and much less slavishly."

The influence of the New Learning is clearly evident in Spenser's use of classical mythology. Greek myths are placed side by side with Christian imagery and legends. Like Dante, the poet did not consider the Hellenic doctrine of sensuous beauty to be antagonistic to the truths of religion. There is sometimes an incongruous confusion of classicism and medievalism, as when a magician is seen in the house of Morpheus, and a sorcerer goes to the realm of Pluto. Spenser was guided by a higher and truer sense of beauty than the classical purists know.

A very attractive element of his classicism is his worship of beauty. The Greek conception of beauty included two forms - the sensuous and the spiritual. So richly coloured and voluptuous are his descriptions that he has been called the painters' poet, "the Rubens," and "the Raphael of the poets". As with Plato, Spenser's idea

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of the spiritually beautiful includes the true and the good. Sensuous beauty is seen in the forms of external nature, like the morning mist and sunshine, the rose gardens, the green elders, and the quiet streams. His ideal of perfect sensuous and spiritual beauty combined is found in womanhood. Such a one is Una, the dream of the poet's young manhood, and we recognize in her one whose soul is as fair as her face-an idealized type of a woman in real life who calls forth all our love and reverence.

The Faerie Queene is written in the Spenserian Stanza, a form which the poet himself invented as a suitable vehicle for a long narrative poem. Suggestions for its construction were taken from three Italian metres - the Ottava Rima, the Terza Rima, the Sonnet - and the Ballade stanza.

There are eight lines in the iambic pentameter measure (five accents); e.g. v -/ - j v -/ -1 v -/ -1 v -/ -1 v -/ - a gen | tie knight | was prick | ing on | the plaine followed by one iambic hexameter, or Alexandrine (six accents); e.g.--

v J-1 v J-1 v -/ -1 v J-1 v J-1 v -/ - as one | for knight | ly giusts | and fierce |
encount | ers fitt

The rhymes are arranged in the following order:

_ ab ab be bcc _

It will be observed that the two quatrains are bound together by the first two b rhymes, and the Alexandrine, which rhymes with the eighth line, draws out the harmony with a peculiar lingering effect. In scanning and reading it is necessary to observe the laws of accentuation and pronunciation prevailing in Spenser's day; e.g. in *Jearned* (I, i); *undeserved* (I, ii), and *woundes* (V, xvii) the final syllable is sounded, *patience* (X, xxix) is trisyllabic, *devotion* (X, xl) is four syllables, and *entertainment* (X, xxxvii) is accented on the second and fourth syllables. Frequently there is in the line a cesural pause, which may occur anywhere; e.g.--

"And quite dismembred hath; | the thirsty land Dronke up his life; | his corse left on the strand." (III, xx.)

The rhythm of the meter is also varied by the alternating of end-stopped and run-on lines, as in the last quotation. An end-stopped line has a pause at the end, usually indicated by some mark of punctuation. A run-on line should be read closely with the following line with only a slight pause to indicate the line-unit. Monotony is prevented by the occasional use of a light or feminine ending-a syllable on which the voice does not or cannot rest; e.g.-

"Then choosing out few words most horrible." (I, xxxvii.) "That for his love refused deity." (III, xxi.) "His ship far come from watrie wilderness." (III, xxxii.)

The use of alliteration, i.e. having several words in a line beginning with the same letter, is another device frequently employed by Spenser for musical effect; e.g.--

"In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare." (I, xxxvi.) "Sweet slornbring deaw, the which to sleep them biddes." (I, xxxvi.)

In the handling of his stanza, Spenser revealed a harmony, sweetness, and colour never before dreamed of in the English. Its compass, which admitted of an almost endless variety of cadence, harmonized well with the necessity for

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continuous narration. It appeals to the eye as well as to the ear, with its now languid, now vigorous, but always graceful turn of phrase. Its movement has been compared to the smooth, steady, irresistible sweep of water in a mighty river. Like Lyly, Marlowe, and Shakespeare, Spenser felt the new delight in the pictorial and musical qualities of words, and invented new melodies and word pictures. He aimed rather at finish, exactness, and fastidious neatness than at ease, freedom, and irregularity; and if his versification has any fault, it is that of monotony. The atmosphere is always perfectly adapted to the theme.

The peculiar diction of the *Faerie Queene* should receive the careful attention of the student. As a romantic poet, Spenser often preferred archaic and semi-obsolete language to more modern forms. He uses four classes of words that were recognized as the proper and conventional language of pastoral and romantic poetry; viz.

- (a) archaisms
- (b) dialect
- (c) classicisms and
- (d) Gallicisms

He did not hesitate to adopt from Chaucer many obsolete words and grammatical forms. Examples are: the double negative with *_ne_*; *_eyen_*, *_Jenger_*, *_doen_*, *_ycladd_*, *_harrowd_*, *_purchas_*, *_raught_*, *_seely_*, *_stowre_*, *_swinge_*, *_owch_*, and *_withouten_*. He also employs many old words from Layamon, Wiclif, and Langland, like *_swelt_*, *_younglings_*, *_noye_*, *_kest_*, *_hurtle_*, and *_Joft_*. His dialectic forms are taken from the vernacular of the North Lancashire folk with which he was familiar. Some are still a part of the spoken language of that region, such as, *_brent_*, *_cruddled_*, *_forswat_*, *_fearen_*, *_forray_*, *_pight_*, *_sithen_*, *_carie_*, and *_carke_*.

Examples of his use of classical constructions are: the ablative absolute, as, *_which doen_* (IV, xliii); the relative construction with *_when_*, as, *_which when_* (I, xvii), *_that when_* (VII, xi); the comparative of the adjective in the sense of "too," as, *_weaker_* (I, xlv), *_harder_* (II, xxxvi); the participial construction after *_ti_* 11, as, *_till further tryall made_* (I, xii); the superlative of location, as, *_middest_* (IV, xv); and the old gerundive, as, *_wandering wood_* (I, xiii). Most of the gallicisms found are anglicized loan words from the French *_romans d'aventure_*, such as, *_disseized_*, *_cheare_*, *_chappell_*, *_assoiled_*, *_guerdon_*, *_palfrey_*, *_recreaunt_*, *_trenchand_*, *_syre_*, and *_trusse_*. Notwithstanding Spenser's use of foreign words and constructions, his language is as thoroughly English in its idiom as that of any of our great poets.

"I think that if he had not been a great poet," says Leigh Hunt, "he would have been a great painter,"

"After reading," says Pope, "a canto of Spenser two or three days ago to an old lady, between seventy and eighty years of age, she said that I had been showing her a gallery of pictures. I do not know how it is, but she said very right. There is something in Spenser that pleases one as strongly in old age as it did in youth. I read the *Faerie Queene* when I was about twelve, with infinite delight; and I think it gave me as much, when I read it over about a year or two ago."

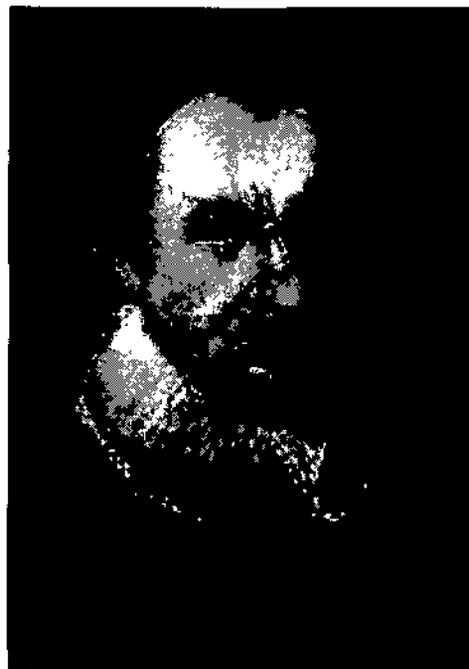
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The imperishable charm of the poem lies in its appeal to the pure sense of beauty. "A beautiful pagan dream," says Taine, "carries on a beautiful dream of chivalry." The reader hears in its lines a stately and undulating rhythm that intoxicates the ear and carries him on with an irresistible fascination, he sees the unsubstantial forms of fairyland go sweeping by in a gorgeous and dreamlike pageantry, and he feels pulsing in its luxuriant and enchanted atmosphere the warm and beauty-loving temper of the Italian Renaissance. "Spenser is superior to his subject," says Taine, "comprehends it fully, frames it with a view to the end, in order to impress upon it the proper mark of his soul and his genius. Each story is modified with respect to another, and all with respect to a certain effect which is being worked out. Thus a beauty issues from this harmony,—the beauty in the poet's heart,—which his whole work strives to express; a noble and yet a laughing beauty, made up of moral elevation and sensuous seductions, English in sentiment, Italian in externals, chivalric in subject, modern in its perfection, representing a unique and admirable epoch, the appearance of paganism in a Christian race, and the worship of form by an imagination of the North."

2.5 MICHAEL DRAYTON: LOVE'S FAREWELL

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Michael Drayton's sonnet "Love's Farewell," deals with the theme of reconciliation between two lovers who are at the brink of breaking up and parting forever, but at the last moment they decided to make up and continue as lovers. The experience in the sonnet is that of quarreling and parting in anger, as if saying, "I don't want to see my beloved again". The speaker bids a bitter farewell to his beloved promising to forget her forever.



Michael Drayton

2.5.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Like his contemporary William Shakespeare, Michael Drayton was the son of a prosperous Warwickshire tradesman. Born at Hartshill in Warwickshire in 1563, he received education as a page in the house of Sir Henry Goodere, but there is no record of his ever having studied at a university. Whatever education he has received can be credited to Sir Henry Goodere. Little else is known of Drayton's early years, though it has been suggested that he may have served in the army, before settling down in London in 1590.

Drayton's career as a poet was long: from his first published work in 1591 to his last in 1630. Drayton constantly revised his works, rewriting and reissuing them, sometimes under different titles. Drayton's first publication, *The Harmony of the Church*, a somewhat clumsy paraphrase of the Bible, appeared in 1591, when he was 28. Succeeding publications exemplify a wide variety of genres. *Idea*, the *Shepherd's Garland* (1593) is a collection of nine pastoral poems, celebrating ideal beauty, in imitation of Edmund Spenser. *Idea's Mirror* (1594), a sonnet sequence, also portrays the poet's beloved (probably Anne Goodere, the daughter of his patron, Henry Goodere), under the Platonic name of "Idea." Goodere also introduced Drayton to the 'patroness of poets', Lucy, Countess of Bedford, to whom Drayton's *Mortimeriados* is dedicated.

By 1593, Drayton had also written his first historical romance in verse, *Piers Gaveston*. Two heroic poems followed, drawing on incidents in English history: *Robert, Duke of Normandy* and *Mortimeriados*, both published in 1596. The latter, which portrays the evils of civil strife, was considerably revised and republished as *The Baron's Wars* (1603). The most popular of Drayton's early works, *England's Heroical Epistles*, was published in 1597. This work was a collection of verse letters by lovers, earned Drayton the title of 'our English Ovid'. Written in imitation of Ovid's *Heroides*, it consists of a series of verse letters between lovers famous in English history.

Drayton's only extant play, *The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle* (1600), played on the popularity of Falstaff from Shakespeare's plays. It may have been a collaboration, like the now lost plays of which only records survive.

Drayton turned to the fashionable genre of satirical verse in two rather obscure works, *The Owl* (1604) and *The Man in the Moon* (1606). Some of his most famous shorter works were published in *Poems Lyric and Pastoral* (1606), including the patriotic "Battle of Agincourt" and the "Ode to the Virginian Voyage," which celebrates English discoveries in America. Drayton's ambitious *Polyolbion* (1612-1622), a long topographical poem, describes region by region the beauties and traditions of England and attempts to provide a legendary basis for the Stuart claim to the English throne. The most important of the poems of Drayton's later years, his *Nymphidia* (1627), is a delicate mock-heroic tale of the fairy kingdom, peopled with characters like those that appear in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Although Drayton often lacks dramatic power and intellectual depth, he has been rightly praised for his versatility, narrative skill, and insight into character. He died in London in 1631 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

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2.5.3 SUMMARY OF LOVE'S FAREWELL

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Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part;
 Nay, I have done, you get no more of me,
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
 Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,
 And when we meet at any time again,
 Be it not seen in either of our brows
 That we one jot of former love retain.
 Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
 When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
 When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
 And Innocence is closing up his eyes,
 Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
 From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

Michael Drayton's poem "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part", written during the Elizabethan Era, is considered by some to be one of the best sonnets of all time, and undoubtedly Drayton's best. The poem touches on the deaths of Love, Passion, Faith and Innocence, drawing out the feelings that one goes through during the ending of a relationship.

From reading the first two quatrains of the poem, the reader is certain that the speaker, a man who has found himself nearing the end of a relationship, is confident that he is ready for his relationship to be over. From the first line (also the title of the poem) "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part" (1, 2), the poet has doomed the relationship. Also lines like, "And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart" (3) and "Be it not seen in either of our brows/ That we one jot of former love retain" (7, 8) show that the speaker has little or no doubt that he is prepared for the break up, and that he is happy. In these, first eight lines, the speaker uses first person, and sets up the problem that will be discussed and mulled over in the rest of the poem: whether or not the speaker is truly ready for the end of his relationship.

In the third quatrain, the speaker begins to use third person, and talks about Love as something that is dying. He personifies Love as a man who is lying on his death bed and taking his "last gasp" (9), using imagery like "his pulse failing" (10) and "closing up his eyes" (12). This change in tone shows the speakers' reflection on his relationship and what it is like to have Love fade away, or 'die'.

Three aspects of love are also personified: Passion, Faith and Innocence. These three concepts are looked at as friends of Love, companions who are witnessing, and giving up on, Love. Although Passion, Faith and Innocence are often seen as important aspects of a relationship, during the third quatrain, they are seen as being "speechless" (10), weak, and lost. The Passion, lying "speechless" (10) next to Love, is no longer abundant and exciting, as Passion is usually thought of in

relationships. Faith, “kneeling by his bed of death” (11), is seen as weak through the image of kneeling, rather than powerful, as Faith usually is. And Innocence, as often seen through the eyes of young lovers, has been lost, and closes “up his eyes” (12), dying along with Love.

The strong imagery and personification in the third quatrain leaves the reader with an almost hopeless attitude toward the relationship. Although there seems to be a small possibility that Love will not die, and that Passion, Faith and Innocence will not give up on him, it seems unlikely. But upon reading the couplet, in true Elizabethan style, Drayton surprises the reader with a new idea. The couplet, written in second person, changes the roles of the speaker and the reader. The reader becomes the woman, Love becomes the man, and the speaker is merely the narrator. The speaker, directing his words towards the woman (the reader), is saying, “Wait! Don’t give up on him. There is still a chance. Yes, Passion, Faith and Innocence have all given up on him (Love), but there’s still you! ‘If thou wouldst’ (13), Love can be saved.”

This poem draws a thin line between love and hate, and shows the reader the confusion and uncertainty that comes with the ending of a relationship. Although at the beginning of the poem, the speaker seems as though he is in control of his feelings and the status of his relationship, towards the end of the poem it becomes apparent that is not true. It turns out that it is only the woman who can save him and their relationship, and it will take him getting over his pride in order for that to happen. Despite the fact that it seems difficult for the man to yield some of his ‘power’ and tell the woman how he truly feels, it is necessary, so he allows the woman to help at the end of the poem. It becomes evident, that even when it seems like there is no solution, that there is some way in which Love can be restored back to life. One can rebuild the Passion, find a new Faith, and return to the childlike Innocence of newly born lovers.

2.5.4 EXAMINING THE POEM

Drayton creates a beautiful balance between simplicity and eloquence by combining both elementary words and complicated composition. The Elizabethan sonnet is written in form a b a b, c d c d, e f e f, g g. Because of the rhyme scheme, there tends to be three places during the poem where the poet’s thoughts are expected to change, and turn in another direction. Sometimes the poet may even end the poem with a surprising twist in lines g g, as evident in Drayton’s poem.

2.6 SHAKESPEARE: MULTIPLE POEMS

2.6.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

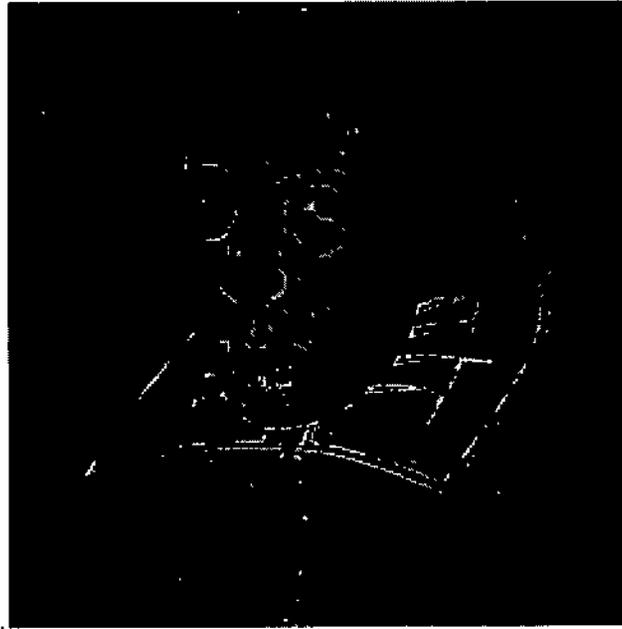
For all his fame and celebration, William Shakespeare remains a mysterious figure with regards to personal history. There are just two primary sources for information on the Bard: his works, and various legal and church documents that have survived from Elizabethan times. Naturally, there are many gaps in this body of information, which tells us little about Shakespeare the man.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, allegedly on April 23, 1564. Church records from Holy Trinity Church indicate that he was baptized

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there on April 26, 1564. Young William was born of John Shakespeare, a glover and leather merchant, and Mary Arden, a landed heiress. William, according to the church register, was the third of eight children the Shakespeare household—three of whom died in childhood. John Shakespeare had a remarkable run of success as a merchant, and later as an alderman and high bailiff of Stratford, during William's early childhood. His fortunes declined, however, in the 1570s.



William Shakespeare

There is great conjecture about Shakespeare's childhood years, especially regarding his education. It is surmised by scholars that Shakespeare attended the free grammar school in Stratford, which at the time had a reputation to rival Eton. While there are no records extant to prove this claim, Shakespeare's knowledge of Latin and Classical Greek would tend to support this theory. In addition, Shakespeare's first biographer, Nicholas Rowe, wrote that John Shakespeare had placed William "for some time in a free school." John Shakespeare, as a Stratford official, would have been granted a waiver of tuition for his son. It is assumed and widely believed that William attended school from the age of 7 to 14. As the records do not exist, we do not know how long William actually attended school, but certainly the literary quality of his works suggests a solid education. This is attributed to the fact that the schools held classes in Latin and concentrated on grammar and the ancient classics of Greece and Rome. What is certain is that William Shakespeare never proceeded to university schooling, which has stirred some of the debate concerning the authorship of his works.

The next documented event in Shakespeare's life is his marriage to Anne Hathaway on November 28, 1582. William was 18 at the time, and Anne was 26 and pregnant with their first child. Their first daughter, Susanna, was born on May 26, 1583. The couple later had twins, Hamnet and Judith, born on February 2, 1585 and christened at Holy Trinity. Hamnet died in childhood at the age of 11, on August 11, 1596.

For seven years, William Shakespeare effectively disappears from all records, turning up in London circa 1592. This has sparked as much controversy about Shakespeare's life as any period. Rowe notes that young Shakespeare was quite fond of poaching, and may have had to flee Stratford after an incident with Sir Thomas Lucy, whose lands he allegedly hunted. There is also rumour of Shakespeare working as an assistant schoolmaster in Lancashire for a time, though this is circumstantial at best.

It is estimated that Shakespeare arrived in London around 1588 and began to establish himself as an actor and playwright. Evidently, Shakespeare garnered envy early on for his talent, as related by the critical attack of Robert Greene, a London playwright, in 1592: "...an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes fac totum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country."

London's theatres were closed in January 1593 due to an outbreak of the plague, and many players left the capital to tour the provinces. Shakespeare preferred to stay in London, and it was during this time of plague that he began to gain recognition as a writer, notably of long poems, such as *Venus and Adonius*, and *Rape of Lucrece*.

By 1594, he was not only acting and writing for the Lord Chamberlain's Men (called the King's Men after the ascension of James I in 1603), but was a managing partner in the operation as well. With Will Kempe, a master comedian, and Richard Burbage, a leading tragic actor of the day, the Lord Chamberlain's Men became a favourite London troupe, patronized by royalty and made popular by the theatre-going public. When the plague forced theatre closings in the mid-1590s, Shakespeare and his company made plans for the Globe Theatre in the Bankside district, which was across the river from London proper.

He was fortunate to find a patron, Henry Wriothsley, Earl of Southampton, to support him in his writing. *Venus and Adonius* was wildly successful, and it was this work that first brought the young writer widespread recognition. Apart from his longer poetry, Shakespeare also began writing his sonnets during this period, perhaps at the behest of Southampton's mother, who hoped to induce her son to marry.

Shakespeare became an investor in the company, perhaps with money granted him by his patron, Southampton. It was this financial stake in his theatre company that made Shakespeare's fortune. For the next 17 years he produced an average of 2 plays a year for The King's Men.

The early plays were held at **The Theatre**, to the north of the city. In 1597 the company's lease on **The Theatre** expired, and negotiations with the landlord proved fruitless. Taking advantage of a clause in the lease that allowed them to dismantle the building, the company took apart the place board by board and transported the material across the Thames to Bankside.

There they constructed a new circular theatre, the grandest yet seen, called **The Globe**. The Globe remained London's premier theatre until it burned down in 1613 during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*.

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Shakespeare held a share in the profits from the Globe, which netted him a princely yearly income of £200-£250. His financial success enabled Shakespeare to purchase New Place, the second largest house in Stratford. It was here that he retired around 1611.

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Shakespeare's success is apparent when studied against other playwrights of this age. His company was the most successful in London in his day. He had plays published and sold in octavo editions, or "penny-copies" to the more literate of his audiences. It is noted that never before had a playwright enjoyed sufficient acclaim to see his works published and sold as popular literature in the midst of his career. While Shakespeare could not be accounted wealthy, by London standards, his success allowed him to purchase New House and retire in comfort to Stratford in 1611.

William Shakespeare wrote his will in 1611, bequeathing his properties to his daughter Susanna (married in 1607 to Dr. John Hall). To his surviving daughter Judith, he left £300, and to his wife Anne left "my second best bed." William Shakespeare allegedly died on his birthday, April 23, 1616. This is probably more of a romantic myth than reality, but Shakespeare was interred at Holy Trinity in Stratford on April 25.

In 1623, two working companions of Shakespeare from the Lord Chamberlain's Men, John Heminges and Henry Condell, printed the First Folio edition of the Collected Works, of which half the plays contained therein were previously unpublished. The First Folio also contained Shakespeare's sonnets.

William Shakespeare's legacy is a body of work that will never again be equaled in Western civilization. His words have endured for 400 years, and still reach across the centuries as powerfully as ever. Even in death, he leaves a final piece of verse as his epitaph.

Given below is a list of all Shakespeare's works:

Comedies

- All's Well That Ends Well
- As You Like It
- The Comedy of Errors
- Love's Labour's Lost
- Measure for Measure
- The Merchant of Venice
- The Merry Wives of Windsor
- A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Much Ado About Nothing
- The Taming of the Shrew
- The Tempest
- Twelfth Night
- The Two Gentlemen of Verona
- The Two Noble Kinsmen
- The Winter's Tale

Histories

- King John
- Richard II
- Henry IV, Part 1
- Henry IV, Part 2
- Henry V
- Henry VI, Part 1
- Henry VI, Part 2
- Henry VI, Part 3
- Richard III

Tragedies

- Romeo and Juliet
- Coriolanus
- Julius Caesar
- Macbeth
- Hamlet
- Troilus and Cressida
- King Lear
- Othello
- Antony and Cleopatra
- Cymbeline

Poems

- Shakespeare's sonnets
- Venus and Adonis
- The Rape of Lucrece
- The Passionate Pilgrim
- The Phoenix and the Turtle
- A Lover's Complaint

Let us now look at the poems associated with your course.

2.6.2 A MADRIGAL

What's a Madrigal

A madrigal is a type of secular vocal music composition, written during the Renaissance and early Baroque eras. Throughout most of its history it was polyphonic and unaccompanied by instruments, with the number of voices varying from two to eight, but most frequently three to six. The earliest examples of the genre date from Italy in the 1520s, and while the center of madrigal production remained in Italy, madrigals were also written in England and Germany, especially late in the 16th and early in the 17th centuries. Unlike many other strophic forms of the time, most madrigals are through-composed, with music being written to

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best express the sentiment of each line of a poetic text. The madrigal originated in part from the frottola, in part from the resurgence in interest in vernacular Italian poetry, and also from the influence of the French chanson and polyphonic style of the motet as written by the Franco-Flemish composers who had naturalized in Italy during the period. The madrigal is related mostly by name alone to the Italian trecento madrigal of the late 13th and 14th centuries. The madrigal was the most important secular form of music of its time. It reached its fullest development in the second half of the 16th century, losing its importance in the early 17th century, when forms such as the solo song became more popular. After the 1630s it merged with the cantata and the dialogue, and the solo madrigal was replaced by the aria due to the rise of opera as an important genre.

A Madrigal by Shakespeare

Crabbed Age and Youth

Cannot live together:

Youth is full of pleasance,

Age is full of care;

Youth like summer morn,

Age like winter weather;

Youth like summer brave,

Age like winter bare:

Youth is full of sports,

Age's breath is short,

Youth is nimble, Age is lame:

Youth is hot and bold,

Age is weak and cold,

Youth is wild, and Age is tame:-

Age, I do abhor thee;

Youth, I do adore thee;

O! my Love, my Love is young!

Age, I do defy thee-

O sweet shepherd, hie thee,

For methinks thou stay'st too long..

Summary

In the above madrigal, William Shakespeare is talking about the differences between old age and youth.

Ageing is indeed the way of life. God has awarded His creations with age for them to learn how to build a wall between age and youth. Yet, in the poem Crabbed Age and Youth Cannot live together, the persona is in conflict with his age, as he desires youth more than the other stage of life.

"Age" is compared to "winter weather" as it restricts one's movements. Indeed, before one ages, their movements were probably "full of sport" and "breath" is not "short". Thus, it creates a parallel to one's capabilities and strength, making age not the perfect time to persevere to gain something that is needed, as it is like "winter bare".

Humans often regard death to be something they would be looking forward to. Thus, "O! Sweet Shepherd, hie thee," indicates the reluctance of the persona in facing the end of his life. The shepherd is described to be a spirit which guides humans to the afterlife. The persona is frustrated as the shepherded "stay" st too long".

Examining the Poem

The poem is full of personifications (crabbed age :: old people), and also uses an apostrophe (talking to an imaginary person) in a bucolic setting (the poem pretends it is talking to a shepherd).

2.6.3 TO ME, FAIR FRIEND, YOU NEVER CAN BE OLD

What is a Sonnet

Shakespeare wrote a lot of sonnets in his lifetime. "To me a fair friend ... " is his sonnet number 104. A Sonnet is a fourteen-line poem. These can exist in every line length, with every rhyme scheme imaginable, or with no rhyme scheme at all. *The more or less standard sonnets, however, fall into two types: Italian and Shakespearean.*

Of these, let's work with the more popular, more elaborate, and at least formally more difficult form. The Italian sonnet was popularized by the Italian poet Petrarch in the fourteenth century, when he wrote a whole bunch of them about his hopeless love for Laura (she seems to have been married). Hopeless lovers have imitated him ever since.

Italian, or Petrarchan, sonnets are usually written with a long line of five beats (da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM). They break down into one eight-line stanza, that tells an experience or expresses a thought or feeling, and a six-line stanza, that contrasts with, resolves, or comments on the first part.

The eight-line stanza, called an octave, uses two rhyme words. The first line rhymes with the fourth, fifth, and eighth lines; the second with the third, sixth, and seventh. For example, study the sonnet given below by Edna St. Vincent Millay:

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,
 I have forgotten, and what arms have lain
 Under my head till morning; but the rain
 Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh
 Upon the glass and listen for reply,
 And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain
 For unremembered lads that not again
 Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

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So now she has expressed her feeling (Loneliness? Regret?) In the six-line finale (the sestet), she is going to make the feeling more vivid still by resorting to a comparison of her situation with that of a tree in winter which, cold and abandoned, seems to have only a faint, nonspecific sense of loss:

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Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,
I only know that summer sang in me
A little while, that in me sings no more.

Note the rhyming here is "tree" (line 1) rhyming with "me" (line 5); "one" (line 2) rhyming (imperfectly) with "gone" (line 4); and "before" (line 3) rhyming with "more" (line 6). We could represent that using the scheme abcbac. Actually, that's trickier than most sestets. The usual is either abcabc, ababab or, if the poet wants a summarizing last two lines, ababcc.

On the other hand, a Shakespearean sonnet (also called the English sonnet) has three four-line stanzas (quatrains) and a two-line unit called a couplet. A couplet is always indented; both lines rhyme at the end. The meter of Shakespeare's sonnets is iambic pentameter. The rhyming lines in each stanza are the first and third and the second and fourth. In the couplet ending the poem, both lines rhyme. All of Shakespeare's sonnets follow the same rhyming pattern.

Shakespeare wrote his sonnets (and many of the lines in his plays) in iambic pentameter, a technical term for a poetry pattern in which each line has 10 syllables, beginning with an unstressed syllable and a stressed syllable, followed by another pair of unstressed and stressed syllables, and so on—until there are five pairs of syllables (or ten syllables in all).

Shakespeare's Sonnets

William Shakespeare wrote a total of one hundred and fifty-four sonnets. A sonnet or a lyric poetry presents the deep feelings and emotions of the poet as opposed to poetry that tells a story or presents a witty observation. The topic of most sonnets written in Shakespeare's time is love or a theme related to love.

Shakespeare wrote his sonnets in London in the 1590's during an outbreak of plague that closed theatres and prevented playwrights from staging their dramas.

Usually, a sonnet is written as a part of a series, with each sonnet being a sequel to the previous one, although many sonnets could stand alone as separate poems. Sonnets afforded their author an opportunity to show off his ability to write memorable lines.

Shakespeare addresses Sonnets 1 through 126 to an unidentified young man with outstanding physical and intellectual attributes. The first seventeen of these urge the young man to marry so that he can pass on his superior qualities to a child, thereby allowing future generations to enjoy and appreciate these qualities when the child becomes a man. In Sonnet 18, Shakespeare alters his viewpoint, saying his own poetry may be all that is necessary to immortalize the young man and his qualities.

In Sonnets 127 through 154, Shakespeare devotes most of his attention to addressing a mysterious "dark lady"—a sensuous, irresistible woman of questionable morals who captivates the poet. References to the dark lady also appear in previous sonnets (35, 40, 41, 42), in which Shakespeare reproaches the young man for an apparent liaison with the dark lady. The first two lines of Sonnet 41 chide the young man for "those petty wrongs that liberty commits / when I am sometime absent from thy heart," a reference to the young man's wrongful wooing of the dark lady. The last two lines, the rhyming couplet, further impugn the young man for using his good looks to attract the dark lady. In Sonnet 42, the poet charges, "thou dost love her, because thou knowst I love her."

Generally, Shakespeare's sonnets receive high praise for their exquisite wording and imagery and for their refusal to stoop to sentimentality. Readers of his sonnets in his time got a taste of the greatness that Shakespeare exhibited later in such plays as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*. Sonnets 138 and 144 were published in 1599 in a poetry collection entitled *The Passionate Pilgrime* [Pilgrim]. The other sonnets were published in 1609 in *Shakespeare* [Shakespeare's] *Sonnets*. It is possible that the 1609 sequence of sonnets is out of its original order.

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To me, fair friend, you never can be old

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
 For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
 Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
 Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
 Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd
 In process of the seasons have I seen,
 Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
 Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
 Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
 Steal from his figure and no pace perceived;
 So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
 Hath motion and mine eye may be deceived:
 For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred;
 Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

Summary

In my eyes, you can never be old, for you look the same now as you did when I first saw you. You still retain your beauty. Since that time, three cold winters have shaken the leaves of three summers off the trees, and three beautiful springs have turned into the yellow colour of autumn. During those three years, the fresh fragrance of three Aprils burned away in the hot sun of three Junes. Yet still you are young, unchanged. The hand of the clock may be stealing your beauty, but hand must be moving very slowly because I perceive no change in you. Your sweet complexion still looks the same, even though it is aging, but I realize time may be deceiving my eye. In fear that I am being deceived, I urge you who have yet to

be born, all of you of future generations, to pay attention to this observation: You cannot grow up to be truly beautiful, because beauty--which has been fully and supremely realized in the young man I am writing about--will die when he dies. In him, beauty has used itself up.

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From the explanation given above, it is clear that Shakespeare is writing about an unidentified man with outstanding physical and intellectual attributes. In the first quatrain of the sonnet, Shakespeare addresses his poem to his "fair friend," and tells him that he can never be old.

Shakespeare says that though he saw his friend three years ago, his beauty has not decreased. Even after "three winters cold" which changed the "forests" that shone with "summer's pride, the "friend" is fresh with the beauty of his youth.

In the second quatrain, Shakespeare then emphasizes again that he eyed the friend three years ago: three springs have turned into "yellow autumn," and the fragrance of "three April[s]" has been incinerated by "three hot Junes." But unlike the seasons that are swallowed up by other seasons, the freshness and "green" of the "friend" remains and he glows with youth and vitality.

In the third quatrain, Shakespeare hedges somewhat in speculating that his "eye may be deceived" by beauty alone, because beauty, being in the eye of the beholder, may behave "like a dial-hand," and "steal from his figure." The poet cannot predict how the beauty might change down through the centuries. His "figures" that is so beautiful, might become worn out or change meaning over time.

In the last couplet Shakespeare considers himself tainted with this "fear," he redounds with a strong assertion that despite such mutability, before his "friend" there existed no height of beauty. Even if he exaggerates the power of his "friend" to exude beauty, he is sure that beauty will die once his friend dies.

2.6.4 SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY

Introduction

The poet's only answer to such profound joy and beauty is to ensure that his friend be forever in human memory, saved from the oblivion that accompanies death. He achieves this through his verse, believing that, as history writes itself, his friend will become one with time. The final couplet reaffirms the poet's hope that as long as there is breath in mankind, his poetry too will live on, and ensure the immortality of his muse.

This sonnet is certainly the most famous in the sequence of Shakespeare's sonnets; it may be the most famous lyric poem in English. Among Shakespeare's works, only lines such as "To be or not to be" and "Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" are better-known. This is not to say that it is at all the best or most interesting or most beautiful of the sonnets; but the simplicity and loveliness of its praise of the beloved has guaranteed its place.

Sonnet 18 is the first poem in the sonnets not to explicitly encourage the young man to have children. The "procreation" sequence of the first 17 sonnets ended with the speaker's realization that the young man might not need children to preserve his beauty; he could also live, the speaker writes at the end of Sonnet 17, "in my rhyme".

Sonnet 18, then, is the first "rhyme"—the speaker's first attempt to preserve the young man's beauty for all time. An important theme of the sonnet (as it is an important theme throughout much of the sequence) is the power of the speaker's poem to defy time and last forever, carrying the beauty of the beloved down to future generations. The beloved's "eternal summer" shall not fade precisely because it is embodied in the sonnet: "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see," the speaker writes in the couplet, "So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day is sonnet number 18 of Shakespeare. The text of this sonnet is as follows:

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 oft' is his gold complexion dimm'd;
 And every fair from 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 wanderest in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Summary

Shakespeare opens the sonnet with a question addressed to the beloved: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The next eleven lines are devoted to such a comparison.

On the surface, the poem is simply a statement of praise about the beauty of the beloved; summer tends to unpleasant extremes of windiness and heat, but the beloved is always mild and temperate. Summer is incidentally personified as the "eye of heaven" with its "gold complexion"; the imagery throughout is simple and unaffected, with the "darling buds of May" giving way to the "eternal summer", which the speaker promises the beloved. The language, too, is comparatively unadorned for the sonnets; it is not heavy with alliteration or assonance, and nearly every line is its own self-contained clause—almost every line ends with some punctuation, which effects a pause.

In line 2, Shakespeare stipulates what mainly differentiates the young man from the summer's day: he is "more lovely and more temperate." Summer's days tend toward extremes: they are shaken by "rough winds"; in them, the sun ("the eye of heaven") often shines "too hot," or too dim. And summer is fleeting: its date is too short, and it leads to the withering of autumn, as "every fair from fair sometime declines." The final quatrain of the sonnet tells how the beloved differs

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from the summer in that respect: his beauty will last forever ("Thy eternal summer shall not fade...") and never die. In the couplet, the speaker explains how the beloved's beauty will accomplish this feat, and not perish because it is preserved in the poem, which will last forever; it will live "as long as men can breathe or eyes can see."

Let us look at the explanation of these lines in details:

In the first two lines, Shakespeare starts the sonnet by asking or wondering out loud whether he ought to compare whomever he's speaking to with a summer's day. Instead of musing on that further, he jumps right in, and gives us a thesis of sorts. The object of his description is more "lovely" and more "temperate" than a summer's day. "Lovely" is easy enough, but how about that "temperate"? The meaning that comes to mind first is just "even-keeled" or "restrained," but "temperate" also introduces, by way of a double meaning, the theme of internal and external "weather." "Temperate," as you might have heard on the Weather Channel, refers to an area with mild temperatures, but also, in Shakespeare's time, would have referred to a balance of the "humours."

In lines 3 and 4, Shakespeare begins to personify nature. He says that the strong summer winds threaten those new flower buds that popped up in May, and summer just doesn't last very long. Summer is fated to end.

In lines 5 and 6, Shakespeare says that sometimes the sun is too hot, and other times you can't even see it at all (hidden, we assume, by clouds). Comparing it, he calls the sun the "eye of heaven," refers to it using the word "his," and gives it a "complexion," which generally means refers to the skin of the face.

"Complexion," brings back the whole "humours" theme we saw in "temperate." "Complexion" used to be used to describe someone's health, specifically with regard to their balance of humours. Thus, we see here again that the speaker is combining descriptions of external weather phenomena with internal balance.

In lines 7 and 8, Shakespeare gets even broader in his philosophy, declaring that everything beautiful must eventually fade away and lose its charm, either by chance or by the natural flow of time. He also tells us that "fair" or beautiful things eventually lose their trimmings, or their decorations, and thus fade from beauty.

On the other hand, "untrimmed" is also a term from sailing, as you "trim," or adjust, the sails to take advantage of the wind. This gives "untrimmed" a completely opposite meaning; instead of "made ugly and plain by natural changes," it means "unchanged in the face of nature's natural changes."

In lines 9 and 10, the tone and direction of the poem changes dramatically. Moving on from bashing summer and the limitations inherent in nature, the speaker pronounces that the beloved he's speaking to isn't subject to all of these rules he's laid out.

Shakespeare argues that, unlike the real summer, his beloved's summer (by which he means beautiful, happy years) will never go away, nor will the beloved lose his/her beauty. In line 4, the summer in real life actually is an "eternal summer," since it comes back every year for all eternity. Just like we saw with all of the personifications of nature in the previous lines, we begin to notice here that "thee" and the "summer's day" are really quite similar. Both can fade away or,

depending on how you look at it, be eternal, and both can be personified. That's why here, at line 9, the poet switches direction – both the beloved and nature are threatened mainly by time, and it is only through this third force (poetry), that they can live on.

In lines 11 and 12, we see another personification. Here death is personified. Death, the speaker claims, won't get a chance to claim the beloved in the valley of the shadow of death, since he is immortal. The general meaning of line 12 (you're eternal) is actually easier to see if you read the line as a metaphor. As a metaphor, "lines to time" definitely refers to a poem, since they are lines set to a meter, or time.

Here, then, the poet is making two bold claims: first, that his poem is "eternal," and second, that it nourishes and develops "thee," as it is where he is able to "grow."

The last lines are really just a fuller admission of what the speaker points toward in line 12. Shakespeare believes that his poem will continue to be read, and the beloved will continue to be analysed and reanalysed for all time. In other words, by allowing us to try to give life to "thee" (figuring out who he was), Shakespeare and the poem itself give "thee" life. As long as men live and can read, this poem will continue to live, and so keep "thee" alive.

2.6.5 WHEN IN DISGRACE WITH FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES

Introduction

"When in disgrace..." is Sonnet no. 29 of Shakespeare. In this sonnet, the general feeling is of despair. In this sonnet, Shakespeare first describes how he feels and then goes on to say that even at his lowest times, if he remembers, the unidentified man, his spirit soars and he is filled with such happiness that is not even there at the disposal of kings.

The text of the sonnet is as follows:

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
 I all alone be weep my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least;
 Yet in these thoughts my self almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
 For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

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Summary

The speaker in this sonnet takes the shape of an anonymous narrator. The dramatic situation of this poem is divided into three parts. The first four lines show that the narrator is in a condition of severe melancholy due to his bad luck and his relationships with other men. Although he "troubles deaf heaven" with cries, or prayers, they are not answered. The narrator cannot solve his angst so he is left to "look upon himself and curse his fate."

Lines five through eight showcase the narrator's desire to be in the proverbial "shoes" of anyone but himself. He would like to be a man that can deal with anguish because he is "rich in hope." He wishes to be "featured" like a man with many friends; this type of man would probably not be in the state the narrator is in. The narrator wants to have a desirable "art," or skill, and "scope," or range of mental or physical attributes. Furthermore, he does not want to experience anything he enjoys at that moment; the narrator wants to be as far from his unhappiness as possible.

In the final six lines that follow, lines nine through fourteen, the narrator has an epiphany. While he pities and despises himself, the narrator thinks about the woman he loves and happiness overcomes him. He realizes that the "wealth" that is brought to him in remembrance of this love is what he truly wants. At this moment, he "scorns to change his state with kings," meaning he does not want to live any other life if it involves giving up his true love.

Examining the Poem

The first four lines of William Shakespeare's Sonnet 29 contain visual, auditory and kinesthetic (human or animal movement) images. "Men's eyes" in line 1 is an example of visual imagery with negative connotation. The phrase is meant to evoke our sense of sight as we imagine countless pairs of eyes looking on us disgracefully. The word "beweep" is used in line 2 as a kinesthetic image to help us picture a grown man relentlessly wailing. Line three's "deaf heaven" visual image is interesting in the fact that Shakespeare used a normally positive image to convey a feeling of bleakness. "Bootless," in line three, is a visual image of someone without boots in the rain, slush or some other form of precipitate. This suggests that the narrator's cries are also hopeless. A few auditory images are scattered throughout the four lines such as "cries," "beweep" and "curse." All of these images have a negative connotation and work together to give the reader a feeling of wretchedness.

Lines five through eight include only one visual image. Line seven speaks about "art" as something that the narrator desires. This is a visual image of something that people during Shakespeare's time might consider jealousy-provoking, although "art" is actually used as a symbol for attractive skills within the sonnet. Thus, this image has positive connotation. Using the word "art" affects the overall statement of the poem by showing the narrator's longing to be someone else.

The final six lines contain visual, auditory and kinesthetic images. The first visual image comes with line 11 which says: "(Like to the lark at break of day

arising)." The narrator compares the lark to his state of mind when he thinks of his love. This gives the reader the impression that he suddenly perks up like a bird when the sun begins to show itself. The line is also meant to refer to the next line: "From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate." "Sullen earth" is written in reference to the narrator's gloomy condition and has a negative connotation. Yet, when he sees his love he is suddenly content with himself. This satisfaction is represented by the lark and the phrase "sings hymns." This is both an auditory and kinesthetic image. The act of singing is often looked upon as a sign of happiness and the sound that comes from "singing hymns" is joyous and jubilant. Heaven is again mentioned, this time in a more positive light. It is used in this case to give the reader a visual image of their interpretation of heaven, which is considered a blissful place. Most of these images have positive connotations and are meant to show the narrator's change in mood. They also build towards the ending line in which the narrator actually admits that he would hate to alter any aspects of his life; the woman is enough for him.

William Shakespeare used visual, auditory and kinesthetic imagery to convey his emotions in Sonnet 29. "When in Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes" is a perfect example of a poem that can induce feelings from the reader just by careful word selection and placement. In this specific sonnet, Shakespeare makes you sympathize with the down-and-out narrator before lifting your spirits when he finally comprehends what is most important in his life.

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SUMMARY

In this unit, you have studied about some of the most famous poems of the English poets. You have learned about the characters of the poems, analysed them, studied what others think about them and drawn your own conclusions. You have also worked towards understanding the background of the poets and what was their state of mind, while writing these poems. You have also learned about the different literary devices that the poets used to write the poems.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you think was the purpose of writing the Prologue of the Canterbury Tales?
2. What are the themes used in the Prologue of the Canterbury Tales?
3. What are the literary devices used by Sir Thomas Wyatt in "I Find No Peace"?
4. What is the context of the Fairy Queen?
5. Discuss the protagonists of Fairy Queen with reference to the virtues that they represent.
6. How important do you think was Edmund Spenser to English poetry?
7. What were the themes used in the Fairy Queen?
8. What is the context of Love's Farewell?
9. Outline a brief sketch of the life history of Shakespeare.

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10. What is a madrigal and a sonnet? Are they similar or not? Give reasons for your answer.
11. Of the given sonnets, discuss any one that you liked the most. Also state the reasons for which you liked the sonnets.

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UNIT - 3

Some Authors Part II

SOME AUTHORS PART II

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STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 John Donne: Multiple Poems
- 3.3 Henry Vaughan: The Retreat
- 3.4 Andrew Marvell: Thoughts in a Garden
- 3.5 John Milton: Paradise Lost Book I
- 3.6 Thomas Carew: The True Beauty
- 3.7 Robert Herrick's "To the Virgins to Make Much of Time"
- 3.8 Abraham Cowley: A Supplication
 - Summary
 - Review Questions
 - Further Readings

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to teach you about English poetry of some legendary poets like John Donne, Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvell, John Milton, Thomas Carew, Robert Herrick and Abraham Cowley. At the end of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- understand the poems
- understand the purpose or motive behind the poetry
- analyse the critical appreciation of the poem
- recognize the literary devices used in the poem

3.2 JOHN DONNE: MULTIPLE POEMS

3.2.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Donne (1572-1631) was the most outstanding of the English Metaphysical Poets and a churchman famous for his spellbinding sermons.

Donne was born in London to a prominent Roman Catholic family but converted to Anglicanism during the 1590s. At the age of 11 he entered the University of Oxford, where he studied for three years. According to some accounts, he spent the next three years at the University of Cambridge but took no degree at either university. He began the study of law at Lincoln's Inn, London, in 1592, and he seemed destined for a legal or diplomatic career. Donne was appointed private secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Keeper of the Great Seal, in 1598. His secret

marriage in 1601 to Egerton's niece, Anne More, resulted in his dismissal from this position and in a brief imprisonment. During the next few years Donne made a meager living as a lawyer.

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Donne's principal literary accomplishments during this period were *Divine Poems* (1607) and the prose work *Biathanatos* (c. 1608, posthumously published 1644), a half-serious extenuation of suicides, in which he argued that suicide is not intrinsically sinful. Donne became a priest of the Anglican Church in 1615 and was appointed royal chaplain later that year. In 1621 he was named dean of St. Paul's Cathedral. He attained eminence as a preacher, delivering sermons that are regarded as the most brilliant and eloquent of his time.



John Donne

Donne's poetry embraces a wide range of secular and religious subjects. He wrote cynical verse about inconstancy, poems about true love, Neoplatonic lyrics on the mystical union of lovers' souls and bodies and brilliant satires and hymns depicting his own spiritual struggles. The two "Anniversaries" - "An Anatomy of the World" (1611) and "Of the Progress of the Soul" (1612)--are elegies for 15-year-old Elizabeth Drury.

Whatever the subject, Donne's poems reveal the same characteristics that typified the work of the metaphysical poets: dazzling wordplay, often explicitly sexual; paradox; subtle argumentation; surprising contrasts; intricate psychological analysis; and striking imagery selected from nontraditional areas such as law, physiology, scholastic philosophy, and mathematics.

Donne's prose, almost equally metaphysical, ranks at least as high as his poetry. The Sermons, some 160 in all, are especially memorable for their imaginative explications of biblical passages and for their intense explorations of the themes of divine love and of the decay and resurrection of the body. *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624) is a powerful series of meditations, expostulations,

and prayers in which Donne's serious sickness at the time becomes a microcosm wherein can be observed the stages of the world's spiritual disease. Obsessed with the idea of death, Donne preached what was called his own funeral sermon, "Death's Duel" just a few weeks before he died in London on March 31, 1631.

3.2.2 THE GOOD MORROW

Introduction to the Poem

The poem "The Good Morrow" by John Donne speaks of the pleasures of love *when one has found the perfect person. It also speaks of the naïvety and dissipation youth before coming into the complex knowledge of the love that life can bring.* The poet uses a variety of literary devices to decorate the poem, creating several images through the use of extended metaphors and descriptions. The mood of the poem is also created through this language, and he expresses the complexity of the transition from youth to adulthood through such stylistic efforts. The poet also uses allusions, apostrophe, symbolism, foreshadowing and several other literary forms that serve to infuse his poem with meanings and sentiments. The speaker *enriches the love he describes through the multiplicity of devices contained within the few lines, and in so doing enriches his readers through granting them a wide scope of the lovers' experiences.*

The poem opens dramatically and rather explosively with a series of short exclamatory questions, the first containing an oath, which the lover addresses to the woman beside him. The broken lines, Hunt suggests, contain the "rhythms of impassioned speech." The first four lines convey the speaker's amazed surprise at his new discovery of love and his scorn for his former, unbelievably naive ignorance. To achieve sincerity of feeling, then, Donne abandons the conventional complimentary love-song opening and startles us, rather, with energetic, colloquial, and realistic language. True, he uses hyperbole to contrast their states before and after their discovery of love, but the exaggeration is earthy and entirely outside the usual courtly love vocabulary, having here something even of a comic effect, as Hunt notes.

In his poem, 'The Good Morrow,' Donne fully employs the numerous devices of poetry to relay his speaker's endearing message to his lover. He uses elements of structure, figurative language, point-of-view, and tone to creatively support his speaker in the endeavour. However, not all aspects of the poem are clear due to the astute allusions and references by the learned Donne. Examples of these unclear elements are found in the first stanza's 'seven sleepers den' phrase, the second stanza's exploration imagery, and the final stanza's hemispherical imagery. On the surface, these references may seem to be carelessly included and non-supportive of the central theme. But we will come to see that these references do much to further support the speaker's message. We will come to discover that Donne's 'The Good Morrow' is poem that efficiently uses devices to maximize the poetic potential of the verse, and contains erudite allusions and references that further support the speaker's message to his beloved.

The terms wean'd, suck'd, countrey pleasures, and childishly all suggest that in this new love they have suddenly come to maturity in their knowledge and experience. Line four, "Or snorted we in the seven sleepers den?", alludes to the legend of the seven Christian youths of Ephesus who hid in a cave during the persecutions of Decius and slept there for more than two hundred years, awaking,

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amazed, in the fifth century to find Christianity triumphant. Snorted, in Donne's time meant, for one thing, "to sleep heavily or sluggishly," or it could mean "to convert (oneself) into something [else] by idleness." Both meanings are perhaps relevant here. The lovers, their souls just awakened, realise that all of life until this time has been as a drugged sleep, their world a den, shut from all reality.

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Poem and it's Summary

I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I
Did, till we loved? Were we not weaned till then?
But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.
And now good-morrow to our waking souls,
Which watch not one another out of fear;
For love, all love of other sights controls,
And makes one little room an everywhere.
Let sea-discoveres to new worlds have shown,
Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.
My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
Where can we find two better hemispheres,
Without sharp north, without declining west?
Whatever dies was not mixed equally,
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike that none do slacken, none can die.

Good morrow suggests a happy beginning. The title hints at the transportation of the physical union to spiritual fusion of sensibility. The content of the poem reflects the significance of the title.

In the first one, the lover rejects the life he led until he experienced his present love. He describes the past as childish ("were we not weaned," "childishly"). And then he was unconscious of what love is ("Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den"?). His past loves must not be considered as serious, since he was not aware of himself at the time. This is a statement.

But this, all pleasures fancies be;
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, twas but a dream of thee.

The second stanza in contrast, is a celebration of the present. Each soul has "awakened" to the other, and has discovered a whole world in it. The union is self-sufficient. It is "one little room". The second stanza in contrast, is a celebration of the present. Each soul has "awakened" to the other, and has discovered a whole world

in it. The union is self-sufficient. It is "one little room" Just as the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water were supposed to combine to form new substances, so two souls mix to form a new unity. The strength and durability of this new unit is dependent upon how well the elements of the two souls are balanced, as we see from these lines from *The Good-Morrow*:

What ever dyes, was not mix equally;
It our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.

A good example of this state, where two lovers' souls cannot be separated, even when they are physically far apart, is seen in *A Valediction: forbidding mourning*:

If they be two, they are two so
As stiffe twin encompasses are two,
Thy soule the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th'other doe.

The idea of two coming together to form one is very important in Donne's view of love. When a couple find perfect love together they become all-sufficient to one another, forming a world of their own, which has no need of the outside world. This idea is expressed in the lines from *The Good-Morrow*; For love, all love of other sights controls, And makes one little room, an everywhere.

The third stanza shows the unification of sensibility. The discovery is a strange island that ever remains unvisited by sharp north or declining best. Their mutual bond of love can never fade (*What ever dyes was not mixed equally*).

Critical Analysis of the Poem

In creating poetry that seems to demonstrate intimate relationships between men and women, seventeenth century poet, John Donne has often been criticized for being crude. His use of detailed descriptions of women's bodies has caused him to pick up much negative criticism. As critic Andrew Hadfield explains, because of its content, Donne's work was not always readily accepted. In taking his inspiration from the Roman poet, Ovid he at times wrote with what Hadfield refers to as a "frantic lust" that kept his work from being published and distributed. However, as his uncensored work has since been made available to readers, Donne's Ovidian style has been the source of much criticism, some of which I will address in this paper. Major critics include Ilona Bell, Anthony Low and Achsah Guibbory.

In conjunction with the work of Guibbory and Low, my essay will argue that Donne's poetry does not demean women but in fact acknowledges and appreciates all of their capabilities. He accomplishes this by describing not just the physical aspects of lovemaking but the spiritual and intellectual sides of intimacy. In my readings of Donne's poetry, I will be mainly looking to the critical work of Guibbory and Low. I take into great consideration Low's claim that Donne had a hand in reinventing love during Renaissance England by writing in a way that revisits Ovidian lyric. In doing so, he "invented a new kind of private love" that discredits older ways of loving that highlighted desire and "terrible longing for the absent and unobtainable" lovers of the poets. I also heavily look to Guibbory's readings and criticism of Donne's work as she urges not to dismiss its misogyny as a mere need to shock readers but instead to look at it as a tool in creating a new space for mutual love in amorous lyric poetry.

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During a time in which women were not seen as inferior to men, Donne's speaker takes on the voice of a man torn between feelings for a woman and his position in society as a superior male. At times he seems to be a blatant sexist and at others his affection for his muse. By adding a level of complexity to the portrayed relationships in his poetry, Donne's speaker abandons a Petrarchan position of flattery. As Guibbory explains it, the Petrarchan position promotes "idealized women and spiritualized desire".

Donne's speaker loves his muse but he also loves his masculine power and by showing her faults, he can also highlight his own strengths. In poems in which he addresses his male peers his tone is confident and at times belittling of women but in poems addressing the woman directly, the voice either becomes playful, inviting the woman into a back and forth of game of wit, or softens and becomes sensitive and serious. Donne does this by rejecting a Petrarchan position on love and instead uses one that reflects the poetics of the Ovid. In this way he can express both his concern about the woman's power as well as a fondness for the subject of the poem.

Anthony Low, in the second chapter of his book *The Reinvention of Love* further describes the Petrarch influenced lover as one who endlessly courts a woman he watches from afar but will never have for his own. It resembles the work of the Italian poet, Petrarch who "was probably the most influential poet in the Renaissance Europe" and a "significant model for English poets to imitate". This poet is smitten with and remains dedicated to a woman he barely knows and writes his poetry to reflect a relationship that expresses more of an obsession with the woman than a well-rounded love.

Petrarch had an influence on Renaissance England that created a wave of poetry that portrays the speaker as a "submissive, yearning, endlessly devoted, and frustrated lover" who idealized an unattainable and chaste woman. He had a huge presence in Elizabethan poetry that influenced the Petrarchan subject position, an element of poetry that expresses a particular, uneven relationship between the speaker and his beloved. By rejecting this Petrarchan subject position and instead using Ovid's influence, Donne used intimate details about women's bodies to portray an intimacy that is both physical and spiritual. The Petrarchan subject position causes the poet to bypass getting to know his beloved and instead prematurely fall in love with her based on her physical beauty. She is unobtainable to him, but still he is obsessed with her beauty, making it an act of love without conclusion.

While other writers of Renaissance Europe adapted their work to match Petrarch, opting for a yearning love to longingly write "elaborate poems about remote ladies who had enormous power over their lives", Donne, quite revolutionarily, rejected the common poem and wrote in such a way that represented "women at times as equals, at others as despicable creatures" rather than "perfect and distant beauties who can ennoble their men".

In the poems of Donne's Petrarch influenced peers, woman is placed upon a pedestal on which she is adored for her soft bosom or her fair head. But how can a lover become acquainted with a woman who sits so far out of his reach? By rejecting the Petrarchan subject position, Donne shows us. His work reflects the beliefs of a man who believes this type of empty adoration should be abandoned and replaced with intimacy. What makes Donne so innovative is the way his poems describe an intimacy between the speaker and the muse. He does this through

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his detailed descriptions of women's bodies (as in "The Comparison") as well as in poems in which he focuses on their spiritual connection (which I will further discuss in chapter 3). By instead comparing women to "animals, fields and land" and highlighting that "their bodies are imperfect and open, unlike the perfect, classical, closed bodies of statues", Donne's break from the popular trends at the time led to controversy.

Ilona Bell has credited Donne's Ovidian influence as the reason for his negative reputation as "a misogynist who loathed women's bodies and scorned their minds; a metaphysician less interested in emotions than intellection; an egoist and careerist who used women for his own advantage; a wit willing to say anything for the sake of the poem". These varying titles portray the varying attitudes held about his poetry. His elegies have a "persistent misogyny, indeed a revulsion at the female body" but as Guibbory notes, that hatred for woman has been identified by some as "an example of Donne's desire to shock or his outrageous wit" rather than a representation of his own personal feelings. It is present, but not in every poem. Different audiences and situations affect the portrayed points of view and because they change so rapidly it is difficult to place Donne's opinion of women. Bell writes, however, that much of the emotion about women portrayed in Donne's poetry is influenced by "the beliefs of early modern English society... about women and gender".

The poem is divided into three septets, which employ an alternate rhyme scheme for the first four lines (quatrain) and then a parallel rhyme scheme for the final triplet. The lines are written in iambic pentameter and though the poem is not written strictly in sonnet form, the style is reminiscent of the sonnet as each stanza represents exactly half the number of lines that would be found in a sonnet. The rhyme scheme itself is a mixture of both Shakespearian and Petrarchan schemes.

Donne's lover speaks from a time in which women were not at all socially or politically equal to men. Though Elizabeth was the monarch at the time, her position in power was unusual in his patriarchal culture that viewed women as subordinates. Not only did tensions rise surrounding the idea of the male population submitting to a female ruler but her ability to rule was also questioned. In defending her abilities Elizabeth famously drew on the doctrine of the kings' two bodies to validate herself. In a speech to her troops at Tilbury in 1588 she claimed, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king"

Themes/Motives/Examining the Poem

The Good Morrow' celebrates the rapture of mutual love. The man and the woman are equal partners in an exchange of love. It is a poem about "We" and "us" rather than about "I" and "she". The discovery of love makes all previous modes of pleasure trivial and unimportant. They became mere fantasies. The lovers are 'awake' now to feel the rhythm of the universe in their love making. They greet each other and bid good-morrow. The lovers are clasped in each other's arms and close enough for the face of each to be reflected in the eye of the other. Each sees a hemisphere or half-world in the other's eyes for only half a world is visible to sight. Their hemispheres are far different from the hemispheres of the natural world. All compounded things are liable to corruption and decay but their love being uncompounded cannot bring decay.

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We are going to examine in the first place those figures of speech that contribute to enhance musicality, not sense; those that could be appreciated on hearing the poem even by a person with no knowledge of English. Of course, the main of these are the metrical scheme and the rhyme, but these are taken almost for granted in a poem of the seventeenth century, and deserve a separate section.

In his poem, "The Good Morrow", John Donne utilizes the literary devices of structure, style, and symbolism, strengthened by many rhetorical devices such as diction, repetition, and personification, in order to express his opinion on the theme of love and how it encompasses modern society.

(I) Structure; One of the most obvious things about "The Good Morrow" at first glance is the organized structure of the work, which he creatively uses to further emphasize the theme of love.

(A) The rhyme scheme follows an ABABCCC pattern, one that is mirrored only with different ending sounds, save for the last three lines of the poem in which the rhyme scheme goes back to that in the beginning of 'A'.

(a) Shows the loop of the process of falling in love (by returning back to the beginning)

(b) Highly organized structure suggests that those in love follow this process inevitably when they fall in love

(B) Each stanza is 7 lines

(a) Biblical reference; "7" is the perfect number in the Bible and suggests the idea that love is perfect as well, and that without love one's life cannot be perfect

(C) Progression throughout the poem is shown with each of the 3 stanzas

(a) First → noting "immaturity," that people supposedly have before finding love. Questioning

(b) Second → "waking up" from "dream" (The Good Morrow ; The Good Morning) and yearning for this girl because he finally found "the one." Notion of "our world is one"

(c) Third → more hyperboles to stress how much he loves this girl and how perfect she is and how good their life is together, but in the middle begins to question again. The ending 3 lines suggest that love can only stay alive if everything is equal.

(II) Style; Donne utilizes diction and repetition to create a style that flows and creates a tone for the reader as well as emphasize certain aspects of the speaker and his audience.

(A) Troth → a solemn vow, especially said at weddings (bride and groom). When you want to marry someone, that is when you think you are the most in love with them.

(B) "but suck'd on country pleasures, childishly ?" (line 3) → diction of the word "suck'd" created the image of a child sucking happily on a lollipop. Ignorance because so engulfed in the sense of satisfaction of the lollipop (or country pleasures)

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(C) World is repeated in the second stanza 4 times in 3 lines. Emphasis of looking all over the world for "the one," because used in reference to searching (lines 12-13)

(III) Symbolism; Symbolism is also used throughout the poem to help the reader relate and therefore connect with the poem.

(A) Seven Sleepers' den → sleeping, the notion of dreaming and not living until finding love. Reference to a story where 7 men are sealed in a cave and many years later wake up thinking only one night had passed.

(B) World, the world of the two lovers, they are just in their own little world.

(C) Hemispheres, goes with the previous example of the world. The two hemispheres represent the couple. Hemispheres are perfect halves that make a perfect sphere, which, in this case, means true love.

- Alliteration is a device frequently used by Donne. There are several instances in our poem:

Line 2: "... Were we not wean'd till then?"

Line 4: "Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?"

Here alliteration has an onomatopoeic character; alliteration in - s appears in two words related to sleep, "snorted" and "sleepers", helping thus to underline the sense.

3.2.3 AT THE ROUND EARTH'S IMAGINED CORNERS

Introduction to the Poem

John Donne's Holy Sonnet 7 is a gutsy performance. The speaker calls for the *Christian Judgment Day* to take place, and then realizes that he's still a sinner, and changes his mind. By the end of the poem, he's ready to stick the proverbial bun back in the oven for a few more years, or maybe a few thousand, until he has cleansed his soul.

Donne's "Holy Sonnets" are famous both for their perfection of the sonnet form and for the way they mix heartfelt religious feelings with mischievous wit. Donne was an Englishman who lived in the first part of the 17th century, around the same time as poets like George Herbert and Andrew Marvell. These guys are frequently identified the "Metaphysical Poets," that is, the poets who wrote about big topics like God, creation, and the afterlife. Of course, they didn't get this name until many decades after they had all died, so they never knew how they were viewed by posterity. Donne's Holy Sonnet 7 is a classic metaphysical poem. The speaker addresses himself to angels and to God.

The "Holy Sonnets" were published in 1633, two years after Donne's death, but they were probably written at least a decade before that. Donne and his metaphysical friends have always been a big deal in English poetry, but they got a big boost from the 20th-century poet T.S. Eliot. Eliot thought the "Holy Sonnets" were the bee's knees.

Poem and its Summary

At the round earth's imagin'd corners, blow
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise

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From death, you numberless infinities
 Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go;
 All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
 All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
 Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you whose eyes
 Shall behold God and never taste death's woe.
 But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space,
 For if above all these my sins abound,
 Tis late to ask abundance of thy grace
 When we are there; here on this lowly ground
 Teach me how to repent; for that's as good
 As if thou'hadst seal'd my pardon with thy blood.

John Donne wrote a total of nineteen sonnets he titled "The Holy Sonnets." When it came to their form, Donne very loosely followed the Petrarchan style for all nineteen. In the first eight lines--the octet--he presents readers with a problem, idea, or situation. And the following six lines--the sestet--he presents an answer to the problem or comments on the idea or situation. He often broke the strict rules of sonnet writing in order to convey a situation that was important or emotionally intense to him. In Holy Sonnet VII, Donne expresses his reverence for God. It was obvious that he exalted God, and had great respect for him, both out of awe and fear. In the octet of this poem, Donne states the issue of sin and evil, and in the sestet, he argues for repent as a way of cleansing our sinned souls. Countless references of biblical events, mainly ones forecasted in The Revelations of Jesus Christ, are made throughout the octet to express Donne's reverence for God and to emphasize a great sense of sinfulness. Through the use of caesurae, alliteration, assonance, substitution, and a loosely followed rhyme scheme, Donne adds emotional intensity to his argument, making it stronger.

With a little knowledge of the Bible's book of Revelations, a reader could quickly pick up on John Donne's reverence, awe, fear of God. Throughout this whole poem, Donne alludes to events predicted in Revelations. The first two lines of the poem, "At the round earth's imagined corners blow/Your trumpets angels", are reference to a part of Revelations that says "I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth" (Revelations 7:1). In the first four lines, it's made apparent that Donne believes in the prophesized coming, and he expresses a respectful but reluctant welcome by calling out to the angels and sinful souls--"blow/Your trumpets, angels" and "numberless infinities/Of souls, to your scattered bodies go." Line 5, "All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow", alludes both to the great flood of Noah and the destructive fire prophesied in Revelations. "All whom war, dea[r]th, age, agues, tyrannies,/Despair, law, chance hath slain" (lines 6-7) are all allusions from Revelations. These lines list, according to Revelations, all the heavenly signs that the world has come to some sort of crisis. Donne's reverence for God shows when he speaks of His prophesized events in a matter-of-fact way that makes it obvious he believes they are to happen. His awe and fear of God are revealed in lines 9-14. In line 9, Donne practically begs God to let the sinful but unfortunate souls rest--"But let them sleep, Lord." And he pleads in prayer for God to teach him to repent while he's on Earth because it's too late to ask for forgiveness when in heaven. (Lines 11-13, "'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace/When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,/Teach me how to repent."

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Holy Sonnet VII has a "rough" and emotionally powerful reading rhythm to it. There are a plethora of caesurae within these lines, for example, in lines 6-7, "war, dea[r]th, age, agues, tyrannies,/Despair, law, chance." Listing these events in a long line and running the list on to a second line intensifies the sinful nature of all these negatively connotated words. Then, from lines 6-14, there are pauses at the line of every line except line 13. That's because most of Donne's sentences go on for at least four lines. He uses prepositional phrases and lots of compound sentences. For example, "if above all these my sins abound", in line 10, "and, you whose eyes", in lines 7, and "for that's as good as if Thou hadst seal'd my pardon with Thy blood" in lines 13-14. The use of such long sentences, with many pauses, made the poem somewhat sermon-like and earnest.

John Donne, though generally rough in his writing because of tendency to break or stretch the rules of sonnet writing, used lots of alliteration and assonance throughout Holy Sonnet VII. Illustrating his stretch of the rules was his stretch in the use of alliteration. His repetition of consonant sounds were not always the initial consonant sounds, yet it was easy for readers to pick up on the intended string of repeating sounds. Such as the letter r in the first two lines--"At the round earth's imagined corners blow/Your trumpets angels, and arise, arise." Also, in line 5, one picks up on the repetition of the letter f--"the flood did, and fire shall." Furthermore, Donne threads together lines 11-13 by repeating the letter g in the last word of each of these lines. Donne effectively used loads of assonance in his poem as well. In fact, I think that it's what gives this poem most of its fluidity. As in line 2, "and arise, arise", the neighboring words in a line of assonance flow better because of the similar vowel sounds. "Teach me to repent" in line 13 also illustrates this flow.

Repeatedly, the irregular style of John Donne is demonstrated in Holy Sonnet VII. This time, it's through substitutions. Though a majority of the lines are iambic pentameter, more of the individual feet are substitutions and trochaic, rather than iambic. Especially in the middle part of the poem, like line 6--"All whom war, dea[r]th, age, agues, tyrannies"--there's nothing but substitutions and trochees. By doing this, Donne places emphasis on these differentiated parts of the poem, which happen to be the forecasted events of Revelations, thus stressing their sinful nature and the need to repent.

Finally, even the Petrarchan rhyme scheme of abbaabba cdecde/cdcdcd wasn't strictly followed by John Donne. In Holy Sonnet VII, he tweaked it a little and went with abcaacba dedeff. The switching of the bc to cb rhyme in the two halves of the octet (arise, infinities; tyrannies, eyes) shakes up the poem and demonstrates Donne's irregularity and tendency to break the rules.

A master of poetry John Donne really was. He was so original in his style of poetry. Instead of sticking to the traditional strict rules of sonneteers, he bent and molded himself and his poems around the rules. He successfully used elements of prosody to convey his emotionally intense feelings through his poems. In Holy Sonnet VII, Donne used lots of caesurae, alliteration, assonance, substitutions, and rhyme to demonstrate his reverence for God, and to make his plea to learn how to repent stronger. This prosody assignment introduced me to the man considered the greatest metaphysical poet ever. Through scansion of its prosodic elements, I've really come to appreciate and like this poem a lot. The intensity behind it, illustrated through the allusions of forecasted events in The Revelations of Jesus Christ, and through Donne's somewhat obsession with God, death and repentance, is explicit.

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Analysis of the Poem

John Donne's "Divine Sonnet VII", which begins "At the round earth's imagined corners", describes the end of the world, and the Last Judgment, but does so largely in terms of the poet's own feelings and fears. Whether this makes it a moving and personal piece of poetry, or a monstrous piece of egotism, is up to reader – it's a familiar quandary for readers of John Donne.

The Round Earth's Imagined Corners

The image contained in the very first line is an unusual one – though it isn't strictly speaking an image, as most readers will find it difficult to imagine the round earth, then add corners, but add them in a way which makes clear that they are imaginary, even though the whole business is taking place in the reader's imagination. The line's effectiveness comes from the tension between the two shapes. Of course they're not simply geometrical abstractions, but represent two ways of viewing the world. Donne, as a seventeenth century intellectual, knew that the world was round, but mapped on to that world view was the old medieval and Biblical vision in which the world had corners. Donne is consciously drawing here on the Book of Revelation, 7:1, "I saw four angels standing at the corners of the earth". The tension between the two visions shows Donne pulled in two directions, as the poem goes on to elaborate.

Time and Tense

Donne's use of tense is extraordinary in "Divine Sonnet VII", and perhaps more extraordinary is that the reader understands him instinctively, and doesn't trip over the shifts in tense. The first commands "blow/ Your trumpets" and "arise" are in the present tense, though since this is a poem about the Last Judgment, it isn't immediately clear whether Donne's present tense is the same as ours, or whether he is imagining himself far into the future. His exhortations to "All whom the fire did, and flood shall overthrow" telescopes human time with its shift in tense, as Donne calls on souls to rise from death who haven't died yet. This underlines the difference between the human, temporal vision and the divine eternal one – Milton uses a similar technique when describing the fallen angels in the opening sections of *Paradise Lost*. After the volta, Donne moves back to the immediate present, "But let them sleep, Lord", asking to be allowed to prepare himself in human time for the shift into divine time.

The Volta and Uncertainty

The shift in tone and meaning which occurs at the ninth line, beginning "But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space", is a volta, or turning point. The volta is an established part of the Italian sonnet, and separates the first eight lines, or "octave", from the last six, or "sextet", which traditionally approaches the subject from a different angle, or gives a new turn to the argument. In this case both the tone and argument shift, from the grand exhortations of the octave, which instruct the Last Judgement to begin, to a humble fear that the poet is not worthy, and needs God to provide time to expiate his sins, and teach him "how to repent" whilst he is still on this "lowly ground". In the hands of a poet like Donne, the volta becomes more than an expected technical device; it provides a shift of attitude which feels natural and even inevitable.

Themes/Motives/Examining the Poem

The author focuses on four aspects or themes – religion, justice and judgment, mortality and humility.

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The "Holy Sonnets" are an example of what is called "devotional poetry," through which the poet tries to demonstrate his or her religious faith. Although the speaker asks to learn how to repent, the poem itself is an act of repentance. "At the round earth's imagined corners" could be compared to a mini-drama, in which the hero falls and begins the path to salvation. Donne draws on his deep knowledge of the Bible to integrate passages from the Book of Revelation and make reference to the Book of Genesis.

"At the round earth's imagined corners" is a fantasy of the Last Judgment. In Christian theology, the world as we know it has a definite end point: the Apocalypse. All the people who have died throughout time must wait until the Apocalypse to receive their final judgment. It is at this point when the good are separated from the bad. Christianity teaches that a person can always ask God for forgiveness, but once the Last Judgment comes, the opportunity is lost. The speaker calls off his fantasy when he begins to worry that maybe he hasn't repented enough.

Donne's religious poetry frequently turns into a one-on-one grudge match versus death. In Holy Sonnet 10, he declares, "Death, thou shalt die." Well, in this poem, death dies. Everyone who has ever lived is brought back to life, but not before Donne reminds us of death's power by listing all the different ways a person can die.

Humility? More like arrogance. Who does this speaker think he is, ordering the angels to blow their mighty trumpets, rearranging dead people, and even asking God to be his personal tutor? We still think that the speaker is aiming for humility, but a kind of humility that is different from the modern stereotype of religious humility as passive and guilt-ridden. Although his requests to God and the angels seem presumptuous, throughout the sonnet the speaker demonstrates his knowledge and adherence to scripture. Does Donne show that you can be humble without renouncing your pride in your own intelligence?

"At the round earth's imagined corners" has a typical rhyme scheme for a Petrarchan sonnet: ABBA ABBA CDCD EE. Then again, not all the rhymes are perfect, a case in point being "arise" and "infinities" in lines 2 and 3. But you try to make a rhyme out of "infinities"!

The poem's meter is iambic pentameter: an unstressed beat followed by a stressed beat. "'Tis late to ask a-bun-dance of thy grace." But, the poem has exceptions. One of the most obvious can be found at the beginning: "At the round earth's [...]." The poem has two unstressed beats followed by two stressed beats. The complicated rhythm makes this poem fun to listen to and read aloud.

3.2.4 A CANONIZATION

Introduction to the Poem

The Canonization is a poem written by metaphysical poet John Donne. First published in 1633 (see 1633 in poetry), the poem exemplifies Donne's wit and irony[1]. It is addressed to one friend from another, but concerns itself with the complexities of romantic love: the speaker presents love as so all-consuming that lovers forgo other pursuits in order to spend time together. In this sense, love is asceticism, a major conceit in the poem. The poem's title serves a dual purpose: while the speaker argues that his love will canonize him into a kind of sainthood, the poem itself functions as a canonization of the pair of lovers.

New Critic Cleanth Brooks used the poem, along with Pope's "An Essay on Man" and Wordsworth's "Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802," to illustrate his argument for paradox as central to poetry.

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The forty-five lines of John Donne's "The Canonization" are divided into five nine-line stanzas, a form that suggests a five-act play. The title reflects the speaker's conviction that in opposing the claims of the world (business, courtly ambitions), he and his beloved have become love's martyrs, and therefore saints.

The first-person speaker appears to be addressing an outsider who is unsympathetic to his romantic involvement and who has said as much prior to the first line.

Poem and its Summary

FOR God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love ;
Or chide my palsy, or my gout ;
My five gray hairs, or ruin'd fortune flout ;
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve ;
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his Honour, or his Grace ;
Or the king's real, or his stamp'd face
Contemplate ; what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.
Alas ! alas ! who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drown'd?
Who says my tears have overflow'd his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
Though she and I do love.
Call's what you will, we are made such by love ;
Call her one, me another fly,
We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find th' eagle and the dove. .
The phoenix riddle hath more wit
By us ; we two being one, are it ;
So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
We die and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.
We can die by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tomb or hearse
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse ;

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And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
 We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms ;
 As well a well-wrought urn becomes
 The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
 And by these hymns, all shall approve
 Us canonized for love ;
 And thus invoke us, "You, whom reverend love
 Made one another's hermitage ;
 You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage ;
 Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
 Into the glasses of your eyes ;
 So made such mirrors, and such spies,
 That they did all to you epitomize—
 Countries, towns, courts beg from above
 A pattern of your love."

In the first stanza, beginning memorably "For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love", Donne distances that love from worldly affairs and earthly power. He dismisses whomever the exclamation is directed to, instructing them to concentrate on criticising his physical flaws, or to go and make a career by cultivating a nobleman or Bishop, visiting the King's court, or making money.

The speaker asks his addressee to be quiet, and let him love. If the addressee cannot hold his tongue, the speaker tells him to criticize him for other shortcomings (other than his tendency to love): his palsy, his gout, his "five grey hairs," or his ruined fortune. He admonishes the addressee to look to his own mind and his own wealth and to think of his position and copy the other nobles ("Observe his Honour, or his Grace, / Or the King's real, or his stamped face / Contemplate.") The speaker does not care what the addressee says or does, as long as he lets him love.

The speaker asks rhetorically, "Who's injured by my love?" He says that his sighs have not drowned ships, his tears have not flooded land, his colds have not chilled spring, and the heat of his veins has not added to the list of those killed by the plague. Soldiers still find wars and lawyers still find litigious men, regardless of the emotions of the speaker and his lover.

The speaker tells his addressee to "Call us what you will," for it is love that makes them so. He says that the addressee can "Call her one, me another fly," and that they are also like candles ("tapers"), which burn by feeding upon their own selves ("and at our own cost die"). In each other, the lovers find the eagle and the dove, and together ("we two being one") they illuminate the riddle of the phoenix, for they "die and rise the same," just as the phoenix does—though unlike the phoenix, it is love that slays and resurrects them.

He says that they can die by love if they are not able to live by it, and if their legend is not fit "for tombs and hearse," it will be fit for poetry, and "We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms." A well-wrought urn does as much justice to a dead man's ashes as does a gigantic tomb; and by the same token, the poems about the speaker and his lover will cause them to be "canonized," admitted to the sainthood of love.

All those who hear their story will invoke the lovers, saying that countries, towns, and courts "beg from above / A pattern of your love!"

Analysis of the Poem

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This poetry analysis reviews the main themes of the poem "The Canonisation" by John Donne. Firstly, a poetry essay needs to take a free and clear look at the title to see how it reflects the poet's interests and background. In this case, the religious theme of the title refers to catholicism and reminds the reader of Donne's struggle to reconcile the beliefs of his youth with his latter leaning towards the Church of England. The term "Canonisation" refers to the catholic practice of sanctifying worthy individuals by preferring sainthood upon them.

In this poem then, John Donne bitterly requests that if his love be not worthy or possible on earth, then at least let his partnership exist in heaven even if only as a saintly legend and as an example to others. The speaker appears to address another, whose attitude to Donne's relationship must have been dismissive in the past. When speaking to this person, Donne even invokes the help of his God, as in a prayer, asking his critic to keep quiet for "God's sake," if not for his own.

Donne challenges his critic in the opening stanza, presuming him to have worldly concerns that would not easily sit with the sort of love he himself enjoys with his beloved. He demeans the world the critics belongs to, talking of its pomp, ceremony, status and rank. He hopes he himself has moved above such earthly trivialities with his new love.

In the second stanza, John Donne continues to deride his critic's values and also pours scorn upon the old-time poets with their talk of tears and sighing. His own love, he asserts, will not affect anyone else detrimentally, or cause ships to sink under waves of tears.

Unity, always a popular theme with Donne is talked of next. This is an important theme both in Donne's ideas of love where two can become one, but also in the catholic sacrament of marriage and in the Trinity. He uses many metaphors to illustrate the sheer dimensions and quality of his love, such as a moth and a candle. The candle is apt as it shows how the couple will live and die from their own resources.

"The Canonization" figures prominently in critic Cleanth Brooks's arguments for paradox as integral to poetry, a central tenet of New Criticism. In his collection of critical essays, *The Well Wrought Urn*, Brooks writes that a poet "must work by contradiction and qualification," and that paradox "is an extension of the normal language of poetry, not a perversion of it". Brooks analyzes several poems to illustrate his argument, but cites Donne's "The Canonization" as his main evidence. According to Brooks, there are superficially many ways to read "The Canonization," but the most likely interpretation is that, despite his witty tone and extravagant metaphors, Donne's speaker takes both love and religion seriously. He neither intends to mock religion by exalting love beside it, nor aims to poke fun at love by comparing it to sainthood. Instead, Brooks argues, the apparent contradiction in taking both seriously translates into a truer account of both love and spirituality. Paradox is Donne's "inevitable instrument," allowing him with "dignity" and "precision" to express the idea that love may be all that is necessary in life. Without it, "the matter of Donne's poem unravels into 'facts'."

More direct methods may be tempting, but all of them enfeeble and distort what is to be said. ... Indeed, almost any insight important enough to warrant a great poem apparently has to be stated in such terms.

John Donne concludes by stating that after their deaths, the sweethearts will be prayed to like canonized saints, as people will look to them for a shining example of how to conduct the perfect relationship that eluded them on earth.

Themes/Motives/Examining the Poem

The five stanzas of "The Canonization" are metered in iambic lines ranging from trimeter to pentameter; in each of the nine-line stanzas, the first, third, fourth, and seventh lines are in pentameter, the second, fifth, sixth, and eighth in tetrameter, and the ninth in trimeter. (The stress pattern in each stanza is 545544543.) The rhyme scheme in each stanza is ABBACCCDD. This could be described as an alternative Quatrain followed by a tercet and a rhyming couplet, thereby highlighting the epigrammatic origins of Metaphysical poetry, however none of these sections are separated by volta's to make this analysis explicit. This strict format can be understood as showing social constraints within which the persona must operate, and to whom the persona's love is held accountable. The metre of the lines varies within individual stanzas, alternating between iambic Pentameter, tetrameter, and trimeter, often changing Foot as well. These various meters are, however, to some extent consistent between stanzas. This is a reflection of the Metaphysical attempts at a more conversational Rhythm, so as to be more accessible in meaning. This strict structure also allows for distinct stages in the development in the persona's argument, however jumbled these stages may be in comparison to convention. The first Stanza describes the viewpoint of society (however briefly) and passes judgment on that viewpoint. The second stanza presents the case of the persona's argument. A decision is therefore already made before the reader has heard all cases, forcing them to accept the message of the text, and allowing the following stanzas to operate on that assumption of agreement. The structure has thereby played a major role in the persuasion of readers, and manipulation of their reader position.

In a classic piece of Donne's egotism and flair, he then turns around the concept of an image itself. Though images such as the tapers or the eagle and the dove are usually used to lend weight to the description of an individual couple, Donne suggests that applying them to his love bolsters the image, not the relationship: "The Phoenix riddle hath more wit/ By us."

3.2.5 A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDEN MOURNING

Introduction to the Poem

"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" shows many features associated with seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry in general, and with Donne's work in particular. Donne's contemporary, the English writer Izaak Walton, tells us the poem dates from 1611, when Donne, about to travel to France and Germany, wrote for his wife this valediction, or farewell speech. Like most poetry of Donne's time, it did not appear in print during the poet's lifetime. The poem was first published in 1633, two years after Donne's death, in a collection of his poems called *Songs and Sonnets*. Even during his life, however, Donne's poetry became well known because it circulated privately in manuscript and handwritten copies among literate Londoners.

The poem tenderly comforts the speaker's lover at their temporary parting, asking that they separate calmly and quietly, without tears or protests. The speaker justifies the desirability of such calmness by developing the ways in which the

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two share a holy love, both sexual and spiritual in nature. Donne's celebration of earthly love in this way has often been referred to as the "religion of love," a key feature of many other famous Donne poems, such as "The Canonization" and "The Ecstasy." Donne treats their love as sacred, elevated above that of ordinary earthly lovers. He argues that because of the confidence their love gives them, they are strong enough to endure a temporary separation. In fact, he discovers ways of suggesting, through metaphysical conceit, that the two of them either possess a single soul and so can never really be divided, or have twin souls permanently connected to each other. A metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor or simile in which the poet draws an ingenious comparison between two very unlike objects. "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" ends with one of Donne's most famous metaphysical conceits, in which he argues for the lovers' closeness by comparing their two souls to the feet of a drawing compass—a simile that would not typically occur to a poet writing about his love!

Poem and its Summary

AS virtuous men pass mildly away,
 And whisper to their souls to go,
 Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
 "Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."
 So let us melt, and make no noise,
 No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
 'Twere profanation of our joys
 To tell the laity our love.
 Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears;
 Men reckon what it did, and meant;
 But trepidation of the spheres,
 Though greater far, is innocent.
 Dull sublunary lovers' love
 —Whose soul is sense—cannot admit
 Of absence, 'cause it doth remove
 The thing which elemented it.
 But we by a love so much refined,
 That ourselves know not what it is,
 Inter-assurèd of the mind,
 Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.
 Our two souls therefore, which are one,
 Though I must go, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to aery thinness beat:
 If they be two, they are two so
 As stiff twin compasses are two;
 Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show

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To move, but doth, if th' other do.
 And though it in the centre sit,
 Yet, when the other far doth roam,
 It leans, and hearkens after it,
 And grows erect, as that comes home.
 Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
 Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;
 Thy firmness makes my circle just
 And makes me end where I begun.

Generally, the poem is divided into two parts. The first part consists of stanza I to stanza IV and functions as an introduction to the following part. The second one consists of the rest. Here, the poet describes the subject matter of the poem, i.e. focusing on the love between himself and his lover related to his leaving. The following explanations are the analyses of each stanza.

*Stanza I: As virtuous men pass mildly away
 And whisper to their souls to go
 While some of their sad friends do say
 The breath goes now, and some say, no*

This stanza has a visual imagery of the dying of virtuous men. If virtuous men die, they will die so smoothly and painlessly that their relatives almost did not realize his leaving and wondered whether he has gone or not yet.

Here, the idea of death is associated with peaceful acceptance and mild sadness. From this description, it is likely that the speaker wants to compare his love toward his lover is so true that when he dies or leaves the separation will be less painful. The description is emphasized in the next stanzas.

*Stanza II: So let us melt, and make no noise
 No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move.
 T'were profanation of our joys
 To tell the laity our love*

With audial imagery, the speaker wants his lover not to cry and forbids her to make a big fuss upon his leaving because the speaker assumes that showing off the depth of their love is a betrayal to the joys they spent together.

From the description, it seems that the speaker wants his lover to be resilient when he leaves. He also wants her not to exaggerate her sorrow because the over-showed expression of sorrow only shows that her love is not deep. Since he forbids his lover not to exaggerate her sorrow, it is very likely that he wants to say that their love is extraordinary.

*Stanza III: Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears
 Men reckon what it did and meant
 But trepidation of the sphères
 Though greater far, is innocent*

The stanza describes that the moving of earth brings harms and fears to human being. However, the movement of the spheres (of the Ptolemaic universe conception) is innocent or pure.

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It seems safe to assume that the speaker wants to say that the greater their love is, the less pain they show when parting. It is analogized with the earth and the universe. If something happens on earth, people will feel it; but if there are two planets colliding in the universe, people will not feel the great impact of it. And so is love. The greater the love, the deeper it touches people, the lesser pain showed when parting because the love is more complex and perfect.

However, the phrase "trepidation of the spheres" can be related to the Ptolemaic theory of universe. Allen claims:

The Ptolemaic theory envisions the universe as a series of concentric spheres ... which move around the earth, and as they rub against each other they produce the music of the spheres, which ... represents the perfection of God's creation. Our problem is that as fallen humans, we have lost our ability to perceive the music of the spheres. Indeed, as a result of the fall of man, everything beneath the sphere of the moon is imperfect. (Allen, "Ptolemaic Universe")

Thus, it seems that the speaker wants to say that their love is like the celestial beings outside the moon's sphere-it means that their love is so pure, perfect, and heavenly. Therefore, parting is not a problem for them.

Stanza IV: *Dull sublunary lovers love*

(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit

Absence, because it doth remove

Those things which elemented it

The love of human beings on earth is dull and cannot admit absence because it removes those things which become the elements of the love. The word "sublunary" refers to earth because, according to Ptolemaic Universe, earth is located in the center, followed by Mercury, Venus, the Moon, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Fixed Stars, and the *Primum Mobile* (Allen, "Ptolemaic Universe"). Related to this, it is generally believed that nothing beneath the moon is pure.

Here, the speaker wants to explain the ordinary love of human being in general. People love only for physical reason, and this love cannot admit separation-if they separate, the factors that bring them together will disappear.

Stanza V: *But we by a love, so much refin'd*

That ourselves know not what it is,

Inter-assured of the mind

Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss

The love between the speaker and his lover is so much refined until they do not know what it is, and this love does not care about eyes, lips, and hands (physical).

Here, the speaker compares the love between him and his lover to the ordinary love on the previous stanza. In this stanza (stanza V), he wants to convey that their love is pure and above the ordinary love. Their love does not mind physical contact because it is not a big matter in their love. Their love is more to spiritual love that needs no physical closeness to keep it growing.

Stanza VI: *Our two souls therefore, which are one,*

Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion

Like gold to airy thinness beat

The soul of the speaker and his lover are actually one. Although the speaker has to go, it is not a break but an expansion, like gold beaten into airy thinness.

This stanza, especially lines one and two, shows that-actually-the soul of the speaker and his lover are bound to be one, so it cannot be separated. However, such as described in lines three and four, if they are separated, it is not a real separation that can break their love, but it is actually a means to develop and mature their love that is like gold: pure and unbeatable.

Stanza VII: *If they be two, they are two so*

As stiff twin compasses are two

Thy soul the fixed foot, makes no show

To move, but doth, if th' other do

The comparison between compass and the soul of the speaker is the central idea here. If the soul of the speaker and his love are two, they are like compass. His lover is compared as the stiff foot, while he himself is the moving one.

It is likely that the speaker wants to say that his lover is the main support and encouragement for himself, just like the stiff foot of a compass which supports the moving foot.

Stanza VIII: *And though it in the center sit,*

Yet when the other far doth roam,

It leans, and hearkens after it

And grows erect, as that comes home.

It is a description of a compass. Although the stiff foot stands in the center, if the other foot roams further, the stiff foot will lean. This stiff foot will stand again if the moving foot 'returns'.

This stanza is the continuing part of stanza VII. In this stanza, the speaker wants to emphasize his previous idea that his lover is his supporter who will always welcome him and support him no matter what (as the leaning foot of a compass that supports the other foot when it roams).

Stanza IX: *Such will thou be to me, who must*

Like th'other foot, obliquely run;

Thy firmness makes my circle just,

And makes me end, where I begun.

The stanza describes the meaning of the lover to the speaker. While the speaker is like the other foot that moves, the firmness of his lover makes the speaker's circle just and perfect and makes him end where he begun.

In this stanza, the speaker says that he compares his lover as the stiff foot while he himself is the moving one. It is clear that the speaker wants to say the real meaning of his lover to him. He wants to say that his lover is his everything; she is

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the one who makes his love and life perfect; and she is his sanctuary. The "circle" here is the representative of the speaker's pure and perfect love that is like gold since "circle is a symbol of perfection and gold" (Allen, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning").

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Analysis of the Poem

In John Donne's poem "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," a man is saying goodbye to his significant other as he prepares to leave. He is attempting to soften the blow of their separation by using metaphysical conceits, comparing their love to the most unlikely examples. Some of the examples used consisted of a noble man's death, the planets, and a drawing compass. Although this poem is stated to be one of the "great poems of mutual love" (Beliles), it seems really to be an excuse for the narrator to abandon his supposed love. Not only does he leave her, but also, he wants her to wait attentively for his arrival back, like a household pet awaiting her master. To this day, love is about compromise and sacrifice, and if the narrator really does love this woman, he wouldn't leave her to begin with.

Of course, there comes a time in some relationships when a couple will have to endure a separation from each other. An example of this could be a husband or wife leaving for the army. This is very common today due to various wars. In this situation, the partner has no choice but to leave his or her love. In cases like these the only thing that the couple could do is stay strong and wait patiently for their love to arrive home. However, there are times when a partner actually has a choice not to leave his or her significant love. In the poem, the narrator also faced the dilemma of going or staying with his wife, but in the end the narrator made the choice to leave his wife.

We know that the narrator had a choice in leaving his wife from the very beginning of the poem. In stanza 1, it states, "As virtuous men pass mildly away, / And whisper to their souls to go, / Whilst some of their sad friends do say / The breath goes now, and some say, No:" (Donne l. 1-4) the narrator is speaking about the noble men who die, and their friends' reaction to their death. Noble men accept their death and do not try to escape it. Some of their friends say his time has come to die while the others say it is not. So what this stanza means for their love is that his significant other must accept his leaving just like one must accept death. Death is something that has to happen. People can not decide on whether or not they want to die and just live forever. It is inescapable. For him to compare his departure to something as unavoidable as death proves how much he really wants to leave her.

The first two quatrains can be misleading since they discuss the way virtuous men die. However, the deaths referred to are a figurative element of a simile and not a literal reference to the poet's death. Virtuous men have led lives that make their death something to be welcomed rather than feared. Donne's message is "Let our parting from each other be as quiet and imperceptible as the departure of the souls from the bodies of the virtuous, for whom heavenly bliss is expected and deserved."

Themes/Motives/Examining the Poem

The nine stanzas of this Valediction are quite simple compared to many of

Donne's poems, which utilize strange metrical patterns overlaid jarringly on regular rhyme schemes. Here, each four-line stanza is quite unadorned, with an ABAB rhyme scheme and an iambic tetrameter meter.

Metaphor

.....Donne relies primarily on extended metaphors to convey his message. First, he compares his separation from his wife to the separation of a man's soul from his body when he dies (first stanza). The body represents physical love; the soul represents spiritual or intellectual love. While Donne and his wife are apart, they cannot express physical love; thus, they are like the body of the dead man. However, Donne says, they remain united spiritually and intellectually because their souls are one. So, Donne continues, he and his wife should let their physical bond "melt" when they part (line 5).

.....He follows that metaphor with others, saying they should not cry sentimental "tear-floods" or indulge in "sigh-tempests" (line 6) when they say farewell. Such base sentimentality would cheapen their relationship. He also compares himself and his wife to celestial spheres, such as the sun and other stars, for their love is so profound that it exists in a higher plane than the love of husbands and wives whose relationship centers solely on physical pleasures which, to be enjoyed, require that the man and woman always remain together, physically.

.....Finally, Donne compares his relationship with his wife to that of the two legs of a drawing compass. Although the legs are separate components of the compass, they are both part of the same object. The legs operate in unison. If the outer leg traces a circle, the inner leg—though its point is fixed at the center—must pivot in the direction of the outer leg. Thus, Donne says, though he and his wife are separated, like the legs of the compass, they remain united because they are part of the same soul.

Paradox

.....In the sixth stanza, Donne begins a paradox, noting that his and his wife's souls are one though they be two; therefore, their souls will always be together even though they are apart.

Simile

.....Stanza 6 also presents a simile, comparing the expansion of their souls to the expansion of beaten gold.

Alliteration

.....Donne also uses alliteration extensively. Following are examples:

Whilst some of their sad friends do say (line 3)

Dull sublunary lovers' love (line 13)

(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit (line 14)

That our selves know not what it is, (line 18)

Our two souls therefore, which are one (line 21)

Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show

Thy firmness makes my circle just, / And makes me end where I begun (lines 35-36)

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3.2.6 A LECTURE UPON THE SHADOW

Introduction to the Poem**NOTES**

"A Lecture upon the Shadow" seems to be a poem signalling the inevitable decline of love, but it is not. John Donne metaphorically equates the rising and setting of the sun with a love affair. The metaphor says that love grows, reaches a peak, and then quickly declines, as does the sun in its daily course. The metaphor applies if the poem were meant to be a subtle way for the narrator to inform his lover of his pessimistic view of love. However, Donne's hopeful tone, expressed through his repeated use of the words *except* and *if*, suggests that Donne does not believe that love will inevitably die. Donne believes that the high point of love can be maintained, but this conflicts with the metaphor in that the duration of noon can never be prolonged.

One of the most original and controversial poets in the history of English literature, Donne is best known for his metaphysical poetry on topics as diverse as the joys of lovemaking and humanity's subservience to God. Donne's poetry broke with the poetic conventions of the Elizabethan era, which favoured smooth, measured lines and use of classical allusions. Instead, insisting that a poem's form cannot be separated from its content or argument, Donne wrote energetic, rigorous but uneven lines characterized by complex, witty conceits—contrasts and paradoxes—startling extended metaphors, and striking imagery juxtaposing the earthly and the divine. Eighteenth-century critic Samuel Johnson noted that in Donne's work, "The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions." While not fully accepted in his day, Donne's poetry inspired the metaphysical school of English verse, whose members include Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughn, and George Herbert, among others. Donne was rediscovered in the twentieth century by modernists such as W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot, who wrote that Donne's poems, with their fusion of passion and intellect, demonstrate a "dissociation of sensibility." Today Donne is viewed as an extraordinary poet, an equally accomplished writer of prose, and an influence on many poets, notably the modernists of the first half of the twentieth century.

John Donne's "A Lecture Upon the Shadow" is about the length of a person's love life--it is too short. The "cares" were fears and uncertainties; the "disguises" were the pretenses that the lovers put on so that others wouldn't know they were in love. They are diligent in this, with love "still diligent lest others see." These fears disappear the way shadows disappear under their feet under the hot clarity of the noonday sun. The new shadows (fears) that appear in the afternoon are different from those experienced in the morning. The morning shadows stand for fears about others knowing of their love; the afternoon shadows stand for fears about the other's loyalty and sincerity.

Poem and its Summary

Stand still, and I will read to thee
 A lecture, love, in love's philosophy.
 These three hours that we have spent,
 Walking here, two shadows went
 Along with us, which we ourselves produc'd.

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But, now the sun is just above our head,
 We do those shadows tread,
 And to brave clearness all things are reduc'd.
 So whilst our infant loves did grow,
 Disguises did, and shadows, flow
 From us, and our cares; but now 'tis not so.
 That love has not attain'd the high'st degree,
 Which is'till diligent lest others see.
 Except our loves at this noon stay,
 We shall new shadows make the other way.
 As the first were made to blind
 Others, these which come behind
 Will work upon ourselves, and blind our eyes.
 If our loves faint, and west wardly decline,
 To me thòu, falsely, thine,
 And I to thee mine actions shall disguise.
 The morning shadows wear away,
 But these grow longer all the day;
 But oh, love's day is short, if love decay.
 Love is a growing, or full constant light,
 And his first minute, after noon, is night.

The morning, noon and evening described in this poem parallel the rise and fall of a relationship based on love. The first stanza details the progression of love from its beginnings to its peak. During the first stages of love, young lovers often keep their feelings private, wanting to be sure of their love before submitting it to public scrutiny. This is what the lovers in the poem have done: "So whilst our infant loves did grow, / Disguises did, and shadows, flow / from us". (ll.10 - 11) The lovers have worked diligently under the guise of the shadows they themselves produced in order to substantiate their love.

At noon, the narrator decides to stop walking and explain to his lover his "philosophy" of love. (l. 2) The narrator points out that "now the Sunne is just above our head", and no longer do they hide under the cover of morning shadows. (l. 6) Their "love hath attain'd the highest degree" and emerged from the shadows. (l. 13) At this point, the shadows they used as disguises are invisible below them and they stand in the "brave clearenesse" of unchallenged light. The lovers, and everyone who sees them, are aware of the virtue of their love.

However, according to the metaphor, this highest form of love is short-lived because the "first minute after noone, is night". (l. 26) The shadows that once blinded others will reappear and "these which come behinde / will worke upon" the lovers, blinding them. (ll. 17 - 18) As their love declines, these new shadows represent the disguises each lover will use to manipulate the other. The narrator goes on to say that "I to thee mine actions shall disguise", warning her of the lies and secrets that are to come between them. "The morning shadows weare away, / But" the shadows that blind the lovers "grow longer all the day" until they stand

in total darkness. (ll. 22 - 23) Though the lovers may attempt to deny that they are falling out of love, eventually, they will be unable to maintain their relationship.

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This cyclical metaphor of love as the day applies to many a romantic relationship, but the poet undermines his own metaphor by trying to stop the cycle at its highest point. The narrator and his love have been taking a morning walk for three hours. The shrinking shadows of the morning are representative of the disguises the lovers shed. At noon, they stand together with the sun above them illuminating their love. In the day, this point is a fleeting moment and, therefore, the metaphor deems it impossible for such a love to not degenerate.

In the second stanza, despite the unstoppable, cyclical nature of the day, the poet makes a plea to his lover to extend the moment and make their love last. When he says "Except our loves at this noone stay, / We shall new shadows make the other way", he is revealing his true optimistic philosophy of love that contradicts the metaphor. (ll. 14 - 15) The narrator tells his love that the lies and disguises that could separate them are dependent on "if our loves faint". (l. 19) Every day the sun rises and sets without exception, without regard to human action or emotion. If their love were metaphorically compatible with the day, it would inevitably deteriorate. Donne, nonetheless, continues trying to repudiate his own metaphor when he writes "But, oh, loves day is short, if love decay". (l. 24) Days do not vary in length, and if love and the day were synchronous, neither would love. In direct contradiction with the metaphor, the second stanza serves as a warning of what could happen should something go wrong, not as an unavoidable pronouncement of the future.

One argument against my reading is that Donne is aware of the inadequacies of the metaphor and is informing his lover of their fate in a roundabout way. Another argument is that the choice of the day is a subconscious, but telling choice. This implies that the author is trying to maintain an optimistic view because his love is currently doing well, but knows that it will end soon. However, if either of these arguments were valid, then Donne would not have used the conditional. He did not simply put these words in the poem to sustain the rhythm and meter; he chose them because he feels that the decline of this love affair is not inevitable.

Now that the faults in the metaphor have been established, one must question Donne's choice. Why would a poet opt to use the day as a metaphor if it does not fully apply to love? The conclusion I have come to is that the morning and noon parallel the model relationship he is describing, and though he hopes the relationship will not continue to follow the metaphor, the day is still the closest thing he could think of with which to compare love. Love is an often indescribable, human emotion that can never be wholly equated with anything else. Due to the complexity of human emotion, especially love, a perfect metaphorical comparison is impossible. A better choice for Donne would have been, perhaps, to describe love not in terms of the day but in terms of itself and the other human emotions and qualities that go along with it.

True love and the cycle of the day are simply not metaphorically compatible when we examine the poet's intent. The narrator wants his love to remain at the peak it has reached, but if love follows the path of the rising sun, then it must also follow the path of the setting sun. The poet establishes a correlation between the course of the day and love and then tries to nullify it when it no longer serves his goal. The one thing that Donne makes very clear in this poem is the difficulty of finding a metaphor appropriate for describing love.

Analysis of the Poem

The history of Donne's reputation is one of the most remarkable of any major writer in English; no other poet currently so admired has fallen from favour for so long and been so condemned as inept and crude. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Donne's unpublished poetry was highly prized within his small literary circle. The first collection of Donne's poetry, titled simply *Poems*, was published two years after his death and prefaced with elegies by Izaak Walton, Thomas Carew, and other contemporaries who admired his work. Donne's "strong lines" and metaphysical conceits continued to influence poets such as Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughn, and George Herbert—known now as the Metaphysical Poets—some thirty years after his death. However, not all contemporaries were enamored of Donne. Ben Jonson appreciated Donne's early poetry and declared him "the first poet in the World in some things" but also expressed frustration, stating, "Don[n]e for not keeping accent deserved hanging." Toward the end of the seventeenth century John Dryden characterized Donne as more a wit than a poet. Indeed, Donne was often accused of overdoing his wit. In the eighteenth century the essayist Samuel Johnson wrote a scathing critique of Donne's poetry in which he used the term "metaphysical" to describe poets who flaunted their cleverness to construct outlandish paradoxes. Johnson disapprovingly called Donne's witty conceits *discordia concors* or "harmonious discord." In the early nineteenth century, the Romantic poets, notably Samuel Taylor Coleridge, were struck by how Donne's poetry exhibited an agile mind at play. In "On Donne's Poetry" (1818), Coleridge wrote: "With Donne, whose muse on dromedary trots, / Wreathes iron pokers into true-love knots; / Rhyme's sturdy cripple, fancy's maze and clue. / Wit's forge and fire-blast, meaning's press and screw." The poet Robert Browning also admired Donne, but not until the 1890s was Donne's poetry celebrated by avant-garde writers such as the Symbolistes. Donne became something of a cult figure in the 1920s and 1930s when modernist poets Eliot and Yeats, among others, discovered in his poetry the fusion of intellect and passion that they aspired to in their own work. Eliot argued that Donne and the Metaphysical poets had written complex, emotionally charged celebrations of the joys, sorrows, and dilemmas of their own age. While modern criticism of Donne's poetry has not been universally favourable, since the first half of the twentieth century Donne has maintained a place of high regard in the canon of English literature. Donne is acknowledged as an accomplished and versatile poet who has profoundly influenced modern poetry. In "Whispers of Immortality" (1920), Eliot wrote that Donne "found no substitute for sense, / To seize and clutch and penetrate; / Expert beyond experience, // He knew the anguish of the marrow / The ague of the skeleton; / No contact possible to flesh / Allayed the fever of the bone."

Themes/Motives/Examining the Poem

The form of the poem resembles two Petrarchan sonnets which possess a most interesting structure: Each sonnet is not complete in the sense that it lacks the second *terzett*. Instead of ending with these, the last two lines are in both cases heroic couplets. By this means the poem is divided into two halves and each half possesses a declining number of "connected lines"¹ (4+4+3+2). This is true for the first half as well as for the second and accordingly the structure of both halves can be called absolutely parallel. In this way the form of the poem resembles the course of the sun: Its progression, "noon" and decline and therefore draws a close connection between form and content.

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3.3 HENRY VAUGHAN: THE RETREAT

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

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Vaughan is among the foremost of the seventeenth-century religious poets of the Commonwealth era, occupying a high position in the literature of his time along with John Donne and George Herbert. While his early poetry places him among the "Sons of Ben," imitators of Ben Jonson, his poetry from the late 1640s and 1650s, published in two editions of *Silex Scintillans* (1650 and 1655) places him in the School of Donne and the religious poets of the period. His transition from the influence of the Jacobean neoclassical poets to the Metaphysicals was one manifestation of his reaction to the English Civil War, which concluded with the Church of England outlawed and low-church Protestantism in ascendancy. Vaughan kept faith with Anglicanism largely through *Silex Scintillans*, his sympathetic poetic response to Herbert's poetic expression of Christian belief, *The Temple* (1633). Vaughan's reputation rests squarely upon *Silex Scintillans*, in which appear his best-known works, including "The Retreat," "The World," which begins with the often-quoted lines, "I saw Eternity the other night / Like a great Ring of pure and endless light," and the poem called by one scholar "the crown of Vaughan's poetry," "They are all gone into the world of light!"

3.3.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Henry Vaughan, the major English poet of the Commonwealth period, has been among the writers benefiting most from the twentieth-century revival of interest in the poetry of John Donne and his followers. Vaughan's early poems, notably those published in the *Poems of 1646* and *Olor Iscanus of 1651*, place him among the "Sons of Ben," in the company of other imitators of Ben Jonson, such as the Cavalier poets Sir William Davenant and Thomas Carew. His poetry from the late 1640s and 1650s, however, published in the two editions of *Silex Scintillans* (1650, 1655), makes clear his extensive knowledge of the poetry of Donne and, especially, of George Herbert.

Even though Vaughan would publish a final collection of poems with the title *Thalia Rediviva* in 1678, his reputation rests primarily on the achievement of *Silex Scintillans*. In the preface to the 1655 edition Vaughan described Herbert as a "blessed man ... whose holy life and verse gained many pious Converts (of whom I am the least)." Vaughan's transition from the influence of the Jacobean neoclassical poets to the Metaphysicals was one manifestation of his reaction to the English Civil War. During the time the Church of England was outlawed and radical Protestantism was in ascendancy, Vaughan kept faith with Herbert's church through his poetic response to Herbert's *Temple* (1633).

Recent attention to Vaughan's poetic achievement is a new phenomenon. Even though he published many translations and four volumes of poetry during his lifetime, Vaughan seems to have attracted only a limited readership. The second edition of his major work, *Silex Scintillans*, included unsold pages of the first edition. When, in 1673, his cousin John Aubrey informed him that he had asked Anthony Wood to include information about Vaughan and his brother Thomas in a volume commemorating Oxford poets (later published as *Athenæ Oxonienses*, 1691, 1692) his response was enthusiastic.

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Renewed appreciation of Vaughan came only at midcentury in the context of the Oxford Movement and the Anglo-Catholic revival of interest in the Caroline divines. Seeking a usable past for present-day experience of renewed spiritual devotion, Edward Farr included seven of Vaughan's poems in his anthology *Gems of Sacred Poetry* (1841). Awareness of Vaughan spurred by Farr's notice soon led to H. F. Lyte's edition of *Silex Scintillans* in 1847, the first since Vaughan's death. Yet wide appreciation of Vaughan as a poet was still to come.

Vaughan's *Complete Works* first appeared in Alexander B. Grosart's edition (1871), to be superseded by L. C. Martin's edition, which first appeared in 1914. Martin's 1957 revision of this edition remains the standard text. Together with F. E. Hutchinson's biography (1947) it constitutes the foundation of all more recent studies. Letters Vaughan wrote Aubrey and Wood supplying information for publication in *Athenæ Oxonienses* that are reprinted in Martin's edition remain the basic source for most of the specific information known about Vaughan's life and career.

Of Vaughan's early years little more is known beyond the information given in his letters to Aubrey and Wood. Images of childhood occur in his mature poetry, but their autobiographical value is unclear. "The Retreat," from the 1650 edition of *Silex Scintillans*, is representative; here Vaughan's speaker wishes for "backward steps" to return him to "those early dayes" when he "Shin'd in my Angell-infancy." As seen here, Vaughan's references to childhood are typically sweeping in their generalizations and are heavily idealized. Inevitably, they are colored by the speaker's lament for the interruptions in English religious life wrought by the Civil War. From the perspective of Vaughan's late twenties, when the Commonwealth party was in ascendancy and the Church of England abolished, the past of his youth seemed a time closer to God, during which "this fleshly dresse" could sense "Bright shootes of everlastingnesse."

In "Childe-hood," published in the 1655 edition of *Silex Scintillans*, Vaughan returns to this theme; here childhood is a time of "white designs," a "Dear, harmless age," an "age of mysteries," "the short, swift span, where weeping virtue parts with man; / Where love without lust dwells, and bends / What way we please, without self-ends." Now, in the early 1650s, a time even more dominated by the efforts of the Commonwealth to change habits of government, societal structure, and religion, Vaughan's speaker finds himself separated from the world of his youth, before these changes; "I cannot reach it," he claims, "and my striving eye / Dazles at it, as at eternity."

3.3.3 POEM AND ITS SUMMARY

HAPPY those early days, when I
 Shin'd in my angel-infancy!
 Before I understood this place
 Appointed for my second race,
 Or taught my soul to fancy ought
 But a white, celestial thought;

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When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back—at that short space—
Could see a glimpse of His bright face ;
When on some gilded cloud, or flow'r,
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound, ,
Or had the black art to dispense
A sev'ral sin to ev'ry sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.
O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track !
That I might once more reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train ;
From whence th' enlighten'd spirit sees
That shady City of palm-trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

In the first twenty line of the poem, the poet Henry Vaughan laments over the loss of his childhood vision and the fading away of the heavenly glory associated with that kind of vision. Not only that, he confesses how he has moved himself away from the glory by committing various sins of the body.

The poet begins the poem with an agonizing realization that he had been really happy in his childhood. The reason he cites is that at that time he had been in that period of life, which is marked of innocence and ignorance. At that time he only had in mind the memory of the ever-radiant supreme being, God. He feels that he was not far from God then, and that he could see His bright face from a distance. Not only that, during his childhood it was possible for him to see that reflection of the eternal glory of God in the transitory yet beautiful things of the world, like a sunlit cloudlet or flower. He confesses agonizingly that all that had happened long ago before he learnt the crooked ways of life and began committing all kinds of sins with all the senses.

On the philosophical level, what Vaughan's says in the poem, tallies with Plato's theory of anamnesis and transmigration of the soul. Plato said that before being transplanted into the human body, the human soul resides in the world of Ideas, of Beauty, Truth and Goodness. But once transplanted into matter it forgets its previous existence in the gradual growing contacts with the material world. But the next moment the poet uses an image, "a white, Celestial thought", which derives its symbolism from Neo-Platonic mysticism and Christian mythology. Neo-Platonism explains the manifest material world as merely an illuminated illusion of a light from a single, ever-radiant divine source, God.

The agony for the poet's loss of childhood vision of heavenly glory is, it may be said, felt on the same level as that for the loss of Eden and the subsequent degeneration in the archetypal Biblical theme. The poet finds a spiritual recovery in the Platonic doctrine of Love: he finds the reflections of the Universal Beauty in the particular things of physical beauty. That is to say, by meditating on the particular he tries to graduate to the understanding of the Universal Beauty of God.

In lines 21 to 32 Henry Vaughan makes a retrospection of the degeneration and degradation of his own personal life in contrast to what he had been during his childhood. The memory of that phase of life forces him to go back to that divine world, from which his soul, he believes, came to this world.

The poet comes to an agonizing realization that he had been really happy in his childhood. At that time he only had in mind the memory of the ever-radiant supreme being, God. He feels that he was not far from God then, and that he could see His bright face from a distance. Not only that, during his childhood it was possible for him to see that reflection of the eternal glory of God in the transitory yet beautiful things of the world, like a sunlit cloudlet or flower. He confesses agonizingly that all that had happened long ago before he learnt the crooked ways of life and began committing all kinds of sins with all the senses. That is why he expresses his peculiar desire to take a backward motion in order to reach the source, that is, heaven from which he came. Like Moses, who was once granted one side of the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, the poet wants to go back to "That city of Palm trees" or heaven. Now, he feels that his soul, after remaining for a long time in this world and drinking too much to the material things of this world, is feeble. He knows he is unsteady, yet he firmly expresses his renewed conviction that he will be able to reach the original home when his body dissolves into dust.

3.3.4 ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

In the poem, *The Retreat*, the author expresses a longing for the angelic innocence he once had as a child before being corrupted by the harsh realities of the world. In his tone and imagery he describes what he believes is waiting for him beyond this lifetime.

The imagery used in this poem to describe the past and present is very black in white. He uses childhood and the afterlife waiting for him as white, positive, celestial ideals while his experiences throughout life and his adulthood and used as black, negative connotations. To describe his early years he uses the term "angel infancy". The thought he perceived then were "white, celestial thought"; but as he

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grew older, he began teach "sin to every sense" (line 18). With his words he "taught the tongue to wound" and his conscience was changed into a "sinful sound".

He wishes to return to his previous state of innocence before he left his "glorious train, / From whence th' enlightened spirit sees/ That shady city of palm trees". But he has noticed the flaws in his ways, "my soul with too much too much stay/ Is drunk, and stagger in the way" When his "dust falls to the urn", he is confident that he will be returned to his original state, to everlastingness.

The poem is in two stanzas, which may represent the two stages of the past and present; though, the subjects are not separated into individual stanzas. He goes through great lengths to contrast the past to the present using symbols of light and darkness. He uses near rhyme and couplets, iambic tetrameter, alliteration, and figures of speech to add fluidity to the poem as it is read. This poem is a symbol of a longing for spiritual devotion, innocence, purity, and an end to the corruption the world has placed on each individual.

3.3.5 THEME/MOTIVE/SYMBOLS/ EXAMINING THE POEM

The theme is pre-existence and the purity and innocence of childhood that becomes tainted and sullied throughout life. A moving away from God and divinity and a yearning to retreat, till you return to the dust you came from.

3.3.6 EXAMINING THE POEM

The vocabulary used in this poem is calmed, reflective, but a little sad and even resigned.

Alliterations:

- Or taught my soul to fancy aught
- When yet I had not walk'd above
- A mile or two from my first Love.
- Before I taught my tongue to wound

Metaphors:

- Some shadows of eternity.
- Before I taught my tongue to wound.
- My Conscience with a sinful sound.
- But felt through all this fleshly dress.
- That shady City of Palm-Trees.
- Where first I left my glorious train
- And tread again that ancient track!
- And when this dust falls to the urn.

3.3.7 CRITICISM OF HENRY VAUGHAN

Vaughan's poetry was neglected by critics until it came to the attention of the Romantics near the end of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth acquired a copy of *Silex Scintillans*, and it is believed by many that Vaughan's "The Retreat" directly influenced his "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," with both poems being bittersweet, personal ruminations upon the divine source of childhood innocence. This question of influence is the source of much critical discussion, with recent

scholarship noting that though direct influence cannot be proved, it is certain that Vaughan's poetry and its metaphysical concerns were certainly "in the air" among Wordsworth's circle. Several editions of Vaughan's works were published during the nineteenth century, culminating in Alexander B. Grosart's four-volume omnibus collection in 1871. This edition was succeeded by L. C. Martin's collected edition of 1914, which roughly coincided with a rise in critical and popular interest in the poetry of John Donne and the Metaphysicals, due largely to H. J. C. Grierson's editions of their works. Martin's edition spurred much critical and biographical activity, eliciting comment and seminal studies by T. S. Eliot, E. L. Marilla, Frank Kermode, E. C. Pettet, and F. E. Hutchinson, author of the definitive biography. Kermode articulated one point of critical debate that endures: the question of Vaughan's alleged religious transformation before the publication of *Silex Scintillans*. Kermode contends that the poet's conversion "was rather a poetic than a religious experience," holding that Vaughan's poems should be appraised "as poetry rather than as prayer." Kermode has been answered by other scholars, notably H. J. Oliver. Another point, debated by many critics, is the question of whether Vaughan's accomplishment evidences sustained poetic power or, rather, mere flashes of occasional but undeniable brilliance. On these and other issues have many full-length studies of Vaughan's works been published since 1960.

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3.4 ANDREW MARVELL: THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM

One of the last of the seventeenth-century metaphysical poets, Marvell is noted for his intellectual, allusive poetry, rich in metaphor. His work incorporates many of the elements associated with the metaphysical school: the tension of opposing values, metaphorical complexities, logical and linguistic subtleties, and un-expected twists of thought and argument. Although in the past his work has been considered of minor stature next to the artistic genius of John Donne, the most renowned of the metaphysical poets, Marvell has come to be viewed as an important poet in his own right. The poems generally thought to be his best, including "To His Coy Mistress" and "The Garden," are characterized by an ambiguous complexity and a thematic irresolution which critics believe both define his talent and account for his appeal. In the latter half of the twentieth century, critics have paid increasing attention to Marvell's Cromwell poems, particularly "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland."

3.4.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Due to the inconsistencies and ambiguities within his work and the scarcity of information about his personal life, Andrew Marvell has been a source of fascination for scholars and readers since his work found recognition in the early decades of the twentieth century. Born in 1621, Marvell grew up in the Yorkshire town of Hull where



Andrew Marvell

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his father, Reverend Andrew Marvell, was a lecturer at Holy Trinity Church and master of the Charterhouse. At age twelve Marvell began his studies at Trinity College, Cambridge. Four years later two of Marvell's poems, one in Latin and one in Greek, were published in an anthology of Cambridge poets. After receiving his B.A. in 1639, Marvell stayed on at Trinity, apparently to complete an M.A. degree. In 1641, however, his father drowned in the Hull estuary and Marvell abandoned his studies. During the 1640's Marvell traveled extensively on the Continent, adding Dutch, French, Spanish, and Italian, to his Latin and Greek—missing the English civil wars entirely.

Marvell spent most of the 1650's working as a tutor, first for Mary Fairfax, daughter of a retired Cromwellian general, then for one of Cromwell's wards. Scholars believe that Marvell's greatest lyrics were written during this time. In 1657, due to Milton's efforts on his behalf, Marvell was appointed Milton's Latin secretary, a post Marvell held until his election to Parliament in 1660.

A well-known politician, Marvell held office in Cromwell's government and represented Hull to Parliament during the Restoration. His very public position—in a time of tremendous political turmoil and upheaval—almost certainly led Marvell away from publication. No faction escaped Marvell's satirical eye: he criticized and lampooned both the court and parliament. Indeed, had they been published during his lifetime, many of Marvell's more famous poems—in particular, "Tom May's Death," an attack on the famous Cromwellian—would have made him rather unpopular with Royalist and republican alike.

Marvell used his political status to free Milton, who was jailed during the Restoration, and quite possibly saved the elder poet's life. In the early years of his tenure, Marvell made two extraordinary diplomatic journeys: to Holland (1662-1663) and to Russia, Sweden, and Denmark (1663-1665). In 1678, after 18 years in Parliament, Marvell died rather suddenly of a fever. Gossip of the time suggested that the Jesuits (a target of Marvell's satire) had poisoned him. After his death he was remembered as a fierce and loyal patriot.

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), now considered one of the greatest poets of the seventeenth century, published very little of his scathing political satire and complex lyric verse in his lifetime. Although Marvell published a handful of poems in anthologies, a collection of Marvell's work did not appear until 1681, three years after his death, when his nephew compiled and found a publisher for *Miscellaneous Poems*. The circumstances surrounding the publication of the volume aroused some suspicion: a person named "Mary Marvell," who claimed to be Marvell's wife, wrote the preface to the book. "Mary Marvell" was, in fact, Mary Palmer—Marvell's housekeeper—who posed as Marvell's wife, apparently, in order to keep Marvell's small estate from the creditors of his business partners. Her ruse, of course, merely contributes to the mystery that surrounds the life of this great poet.

3.4.3 POEM AND ITS SUMMARY

How vainly men themselves amaze
 To win the Palm, the Oke, or Bayes;
 And their uncessant Labours see
 Crown'd from some single Herb or Tree,
 Whose short and narrow verged Shade

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Does prudently their Toyles upbraid;
While all Flow'rs and all Trees do close
To weave the Garlands of repose.
Fair quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence thy Sister dear!
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busie Companies of Men.
Your sacred Plants, if here below,
Only among the Plants will grow.
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious Solitude.
No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green.
Fond Lovers, cruel as their Flame,
Cut in these Trees their Mistress name.
Little, Alas, they know, or heed,
How far these Beauties Hers exceed!
Fair Trees! where s'eer you barks I wound,
No Name shall but your own be found.
When we have run our Passions heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The Gods, that mortal Beauty chase,
The Gods, that mortal Beauty chase,
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that She might Laurel grow.
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a Nymph, but for a Reed.
What wond'rous Life in this I lead!
Ripe Apples drop about my head;
The Luscious Clusters of the Vine
Upon my Mouth do crush their Wine;
The Nectaren, and curious Peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,
Insnar'd with Flow'rs, I fall on Grass.
Mean while the Mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
Does streight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,

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Far other Worlds, and other Seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green Thought in a green Shade.
Here at the Fountains sliding foot,
Or at some Fruit-tress mossy root,
Casting the Bodies Vest aside,
My Soul into the boughs does glide:
There like a Bird it sits, and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver Wings;
And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
Waves in its Plumes the various Light.
Such was that happy Garden-state,
While Man there walk'd without a Mate:
After a Place so pure, and sweet,
What other Help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a Mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two Paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.
How well the skilful Gardner drew
Of flow'rs and herbes this Dial new;
Where from above the milder Sun
Does through a fragrant Zodiack run;
And, as it works, th' industrious Bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome Hours
Be reckon'd but with herbs and flow'rs!

"The Garden," which comprises nine eight-line stanzas, opens with the assertion that people ordinarily confuse themselves ("amaze," with a possible pun on the "maze," a common feature of seventeenth century formal gardens) by pursuing recognition in only one field, as represented by wreaths associated with military (palm), civic (oak), and poetic (bay) achievements.

Palm: Romans awarded palm branches to victorious combattants (in games or war) - the palm was a symbol of Apollo, but is in Christianity associated with Christ's entry into Jerusalem, and is seen as a triumph of the soul over its enemies

Oak: The oak is seen as a symbol of virtue, strength or endurance, both personal and military (and was associated with the Norse god, Thor, as well as with the Greek god, Zeus). It was also adopted by the Christians as a symbol of worship, and in nearly all cases is related to the notion of rebirth.

Bay: "Bays" is a reference to the bay laurel, a wreath of which was awarded to champions in the ancient Pythian games - the bay laurel is related to Apollo based

on his pursuit of the nymph Daphne, who was transformed by Zeus into a tree, and to the Christian religion as a symbol of Christ's resurrection.

It was terribly clever of Marvell to invoke these three symbols, relating as they all do to ancient traditions (Greek, Roman, and Norse) as well on Christianity. Doing so subtly underlines his coming reference to Apollo (who is specifically associated with the palm and bay), while allowing those readers of his time (in Reformation England) to read them as being almost purely Christian references, should they so choose.

Marvell begins the poem with a stanza about how men rush around pursuing fame and glory, then moves to the second stanza, in which he discusses the garden he's in: he has turned his back on society, and is enjoying the quiet and solitude and finer aspects (such as innocence) found in the garden. He discusses the lushness of the garden, and turns his observations to romance, starting first with the carving of women's names into trees, and observing that nature (and its trees) are far more beautiful than (and preferable to) the company of any woman.

In the fourth stanza, he says that when love's passion has run its course, men find solace in nature. He then specifically references Apollo's pursuit of Daphne as well as Pan's pursuit of Syrinx, both of whom were transformed into a piece of nature in order to avoid the amorous attentions of the beings giving chase. In the fifth stanza, he speaks as if he is himself Adam, alone in the Garden of Eden with apples dropping about him - but he doesn't stop there. He provides a rather erotic description of the ripened juicy fruit available to him in a pre-Eve garden, and moves in the sixth stanza to discuss the pleasures of time spent alone in thought.

In the seventh stanza, Marvell enters a transcendental sort of state involving, perhaps, astral projection, as his soul leaves his body and revels in the boughs of the trees in the garden. In the eighth stanza, he says, in essence, "See how wonderful the Garden was before Eve turned up." First, there's a play on the word "helpmeet", a word used at the time to refer to a wife, saying "What other help could yet be meet!" - (why did he need anything else?) He says in the final four lines of the eighth stanza that being in the garden was one form of paradise, and being alone was another, but that having a double helping of good things was too much for mortals; the implication is that the addition of Eve to the mix was a sort of punishment or burden, removing one of the states of paradise. Given that Marvell was a close friend of Milton's, who had a decidedly unusual vision of paradise that was not squarely within Christian parameters, the use of the word paradise in this stanza (and the reference to the winged soul in the prior stanza) are quite likely nods to Milton and his philosophies.

In the ninth and final stanza, Marvell steps back from his closer association with Adam, closing the poem by saying that the creator ("the skillful gard'ner") established the plants in the garden as a way of marking time. To my way of thinking, the zodiac of flowers represents the turning of the seasons, and the industriousness of the bee is a reference not only to nature, but to the need for man to engage in labour now that he has been cast out of the garden.

3.4.4 POEM OVERVIEW

Andrew Marvell seeks a sort of spiritual hermitage in his poem "The Garden." With a plethora of varied images, he embraces nature in its unadulterated form, as he creates his own Garden of Eden. Weaving together allusions to both love and sacred poetry, Marvell worships the garden for its beauty, yet, also uses it as a

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place from which he propels himself towards the heavens. He creates distinctions between wholesome purity, and the love of man and the demigods, which he mocks within the text. The garden and its contents come to represent paradise before the fall of Adam, and Marvell shuns man's resultant world, "annihilating all that's made" since the corruption of humanity. He seeks the solitude with which he believes he can erase the mark of man, and reduce himself to "a green thought in a green shade," and begin to realize the garden's innocence. Yet, he struggles to balance his own humanity with his spirituality. Ironically, Marvell can never achieve his desires in this world because he is in fact mortal, and innately embodies everything he disdains in man.

The religious tones in the text are patently evident, although Marvell often intertwines allusions to traditional love poetry. Personifying the garden, he grants it many characters as it moves between multiple roles. He finds that its "innocence" is his "sister dear", yet later addresses it as a lover, saying "how far her beauties hers exceed". Marvell attempts to distinguish this love from that of man, as "no red nor white" of Petrarchan love can compare to the "lovely green". Yet, he is clearly connected to humanity in the text, as human lovers are "cruel as their flame" and he "ha[s] run [his] "passion's heat". Even as he declares dramatically that he shall only carve the tree's own name into its bark, he aligns himself with those who "cut in these trees", as he himself will "wound" them. In a consistently simply rhymed poem, the words "wound" and "found" are the most deliberate out of few slant rhymes, serving to emphasize the inconsistency of his statement. This inconsistency continues, as he seeks out this peaceful garden, yet is "ensnared with flowers," reminiscent of an enchanting mistress. The fruit seems to come towards him, and the diction is sensual with the "luscious clusters" that "crush their wine" "upon his mouth". It is as if the garden is seducing him, and as he "stumble [es]" and "fall[s]", the entire image is remarkably suggestive of a drunken stupor. Yet, it is important to note that Marvell acknowledges a difference between man and mortality, which in fact triumphs over the demigods. Apollo and Pan Chase "mortal beauty" in the nymphs, but ironically, the mortal nymphs physically transform into those "sacred plants". Marvell attempts to emulate this mortal transcendence into purity, but has trouble reconciling with his own humanity.

There is an abrupt shift from the physical love poetry of the first half, towards that which focuses on both the mind and spirituality. Marvell finds difficulty in accepting the innocent bliss of Eden, and his diction bespeaks uneasiness as "the mind" "withdraws into its happiness". Yet, he continues to be inconsistent, and employs a metaphor for the mind as it is an ocean, that "creates" "far other worlds, and other seas", "transcending" others who are essentially all alike. Although he attempts to rely wholly on a "green thought in a green shade", Marvell must paradoxically create "other worlds and other seas" in order to annihilate "all that are made". Even the "green shade" is limited, as it is earlier described to be "short and narrow". The text persists in maintaining a human aspect in spirituality, and when "[his] soul" takes flight as "a bird" with "silver wings", suggestive of a holy dove, he unexpectedly "whets", alluding to his previous stanza concerning the mind. Marvell acknowledges the impossible aspect of attaining "that happy garden state", as it "'twas beyond a mortal's share/ to wander solitary there", in spite of his obsession with "this delicious solitude". Marvell is tainted with man's original sin, and thus, cannot escape the constraints of mortality.

Despite an obvious disdain towards man, Marvell cannot break away from those innate human characteristics. The text is constantly shifting and riddled with paradoxes as to man's relationship with this garden.

Marvell alternately separates himself from the general mankind of his poem in direct contrasts, and seems to align himself with mortality. There is an underlying tone of reluctance, even as he is patently eager to seek that spiritual solitude of paradise. Undernably, he desires to be pure like this garden, yet, cannot reconcile this with his human desires, especially those of the mind. Marvell cannot achieve this state of garden bliss because he is gifted, or cursed, with the logic of humanity.

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3.4.5 ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

The nine stanzas of *The Garden* follow naturally on from one to another. It is not difficult to see each stage of the argument or train of thought, though individual points of interpretation may be hard. The poem works very much the same way as Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*. It is a meditation in a particular place; the place influences the course of the meditation; and at times the poet seems to enter a new world of the imagination. At the end, the poet returns to where he is, not quite ready, perhaps. Keats remains unsettled; Marvell accepts the quiet reality of his world.

Ambition

The *Garden* opens on the theme of ambition. Human efforts seek recognition. Symbolically, the recognition is in the form of a crown made from some tree or shrub 'the Palm, the Oke, or Bayes' - at least that is how victors were crowned in classical times. However, to make these crowns, branches have to be cut down and therefore their life is shortened. They fade, cut off from their natural source of life. If left in their natural state, they would offer people peace and tranquillity. 'Amaze' here means 'confuse'.

Tranquillity

Marvell speaks to the quiet he has found 'here', that is, in this garden. He compares his life now to what it was, when he was trying to gain success in the world. We are perhaps reminded of Herbert's *Affliction I*. That society 'was all but rude' - by 'rude' he means uncivilised. So he reverses what we associate with civilisation: the city. The pastoral ideal is the true civilisation. He is not alone in this: we can go back to the Roman poet Horace for such thoughts.

Sexual Passion

The third stanza picks up on sexual passion, the white and red. The symbolism of green is disputed by critics, some suggesting green was then still a colour of love, while we tend to associate it with innocence. The sense, however, is of contrast, so innocence or freedom from passion would seem to be its meaning. 'Flame' obviously means the fire of passion. If he is going to carve any names in any trees, it will be their own.

The Garden

Marvell now turns back to himself. The richness of the garden he describes anticipates Milton's description of the Garden of Eden in his poem *Paradise Lost*, books IV and IX. The Bible suggests it is fertile but little more (Genesis 2:8-14). Poets

ever since have been expanding on the biblical text. The only 'fall' he experiences is not into sin, but being tripped by the luxuriant vegetation, a thought he uses also in *Upon Appleton House* (ll.650ff.).

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The Joys of Meditation

Stanza six is the centre of the poem, and also the site of many interpretations. The one offered here is not the only one, but quite widely accepted. He talks of the *joys of meditation*, and this is where the Platonic idealism can be seen: the world of ideas is actually a greater reality than that of sense data. For the poet, that world is expressed through the shaping power of the imagination.

These created worlds are more real and powerful, and intuitively, have greater truth in them. In the conditions of tranquillity which the garden affords, the poet is free to be able to do this. The couplet:

Annihilating all that's made
To a green Thought in a green shade

Is the most perfect and concise way of expressing this. Its meaning teases us: it seems clear, and yet when we try to explain it, the meaning suddenly becomes elusive. This is how real poetry should work so that it simply cannot be paraphrased in prose. Donne created his own little world out of the lovers' mutual love (as in *The Sunne Rising*): here Marvell creates his own world from the power of the imagination.

Mystical Experience

Marvell even suggests a mystical experience: the soul appears to escape the body and to be transported up into the trees where 'like a Bird it sits, and sings'. The symbolism of the soul as a bird is an ancient one, found in various myths, though Marvell may be describing a real experience in this simile. The soul is preparing itself 'for longer flight', that is, the journey back to heaven. We are at the other extreme from Donne's love poetry, as seen in *The Extasie*, where the out-of-body experience must end by a return to the body. Marvell would be happy if he never returned.

Adam Alone in Eden

Stanza eight returns to the thought of the Garden of Eden, suggested in stanza five. Here he refers to the ideal state as being, not after the creation of Eve, but before it, when Adam was solitary. This doesn't mean Marvell was anti-women, just that Adam alone was in the solitary state where sexual passion would not even be a temptation. Genesis 2:18-25 suggests quite the opposite, so Marvell is being decidedly unorthodox here in Christian terms. However, the comment is somewhat tongue-in-cheek.

A Floral Clock

In the last stanza, Marvell returns to where he is, and for the first time he remarks on the clock made out of plants and flowers. These can still be seen sometimes in old gardens or parks: Time does go by; he is not yet in the timelessness of eternity. However, it goes by so slowly that no-one is threatened by it. Time and eternity are very close together, and there is no sense at all of the transience of life, the consciousness which haunted so many of Marvell's contemporaries, and even

Marvell himself in *To his Coy Mistress*. The power of the imagination, without the destructive force of sexual love, can bring them close together.

3.4.6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *THE GARDEN*

As with many of his poems, Andrew Marvell wrote *The Garden* to put forward his point of view and then argue it logically. In *The Definition of Love*, for example, he writes about unrequited passions, insisting that Fate itself acts against true love; in *The Garden* he takes a similarly pessimistic viewpoint and takes it to its misanthropic limits, attempting to argue that being at one with nature and away from other people is the best way to live.

All poets have traits and habits that define their own style - some more so than others. Marvell's style is particularly recognizable, as he commonly uses several easily identifiable techniques and images. Of the latter, *The Garden* features many of Marvell's staple ingredients. Central to the entire poem is the idea of pure nature, of a world without the intrusion of mankind: Marvell's own Eden. In his poetry, he takes every opportunity to extol the virtues of a type of hermitage, of being at peace with oneself and the universe as a whole; this can also be seen as central themes in poems such as *The Picture of little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers* and *Bermudas*, to name but two. *The Garden* takes it to its extremes, however, and presents its case most fervently.

Society is all but rude,
To this delicious Solitude.

The two-line epigram summarizes his argument concisely - Marvell would much prefer a life of isolation to the hectic interaction with other people that is part of an ordinary life. Also, this seems to be very much Marvell's opinion: often in poetry it is unclear as to whether the poet shares the same views as the narrator; with Marvell's work, it always seems apparent that it contains his own views.

Another of Marvell's regular themes that is utilized in *The Garden* is that of classical and biblical references. The paradise he depicts is very much like the garden of Eden, and Greek and Latin references abound:

Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that She might Laurel grow.
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a Nymph, but for a Reed.

In a similar vein, he often uses exotic references (for the time). "Stumbling on Melons and mentioning "The Nectaren would have greatly impressed people of Marvell's time; these fruits had only recently been discovered in the New World - it was indeed a time of discovery, and Marvell tries to show his knowledge of current events in any way he can.

The language used is also typically Marvellian. The very first line - "How vainly men themselves amaze - uses a distorted syntax that is akin to having Marvell's signature on the poem (as with "And yet I quickly might arrive in *The Definition of Love*).

Structurally, the poem looks at the argument in a logical manner. Not relying on the reader's simple acceptance of his own ideas, Marvell continuously drives the point home that a misanthropic, peaceful existence is far preferable to the chaos and noise of society. He begins by laying down his main point, culminating

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in the aforementioned epigram, then argues that the trees are more beautiful than women; later he describes the luscious greenery of the garden in succulent detail, includes a few exotic and classical references to lend weight to his argument, and finishes with some philosophical discussion of how the soul is at home amongst the greenery. The comparison between the plants and women is something of a conceit; normally, one would not think of comparing the two - Marvell uses this technique in many of his poems to illustrate a point in an unusual and interesting way; probably to give his theories a different perspective.

Ultimately, *The Garden* is a poem that wears its Marvellian origins on its sleeve for all to see; the common writing techniques and themes that he uses are clear and undisguised.

3.4.7 THEMES/ MOTIVES/ SYMBOLS/ EXAMINING THE POEM

In general, Marvell is describing a mystical perception in *The Garden*, though his focus is not on God as such, but a perception of the divine (similar to that which Wordsworth was to experience in the Romantic era). At the same time, he is denying the completeness of the lovers' world. Completeness is possible, he is saying, but only in solitary meditation amidst nature. He moves beyond the traditional forms of pastoral quiet to a theological statement of Platonic idealism. This is his form of Personal freedom: the freedom of the soul to escape its physical limitations.

The imagery in *The Garden* is necessarily pastoral. Unlike other metaphysical poets, Marvell derives some of it from classical references, though most comes from where he actually is, whether that is Nun Appleton House or some similar idyllic retreat.

The classical images are of crowning the victor in stanza one, and the myths of Apollo and Pan, in stanza four. The image of the bird with the silver wings is quite Platonic, too. The neo-platonic Irish poet, W.B. Yeats, uses similar images.

Critics commenting on the colour symbolism Marvell uses have discussed endlessly the meaning of 'green Thought' and 'green Shade', and the force of 'annihilating', which literally means 'to reduce to nothing'. Here as throughout the poem, green is the literal colour of the garden, but Marvell also plays with the other meanings of the word: mild, jealous, immature, tender, flourishing, gullible, unseasonal, perceptibly fresh and new.

The mind as an ocean may be a more difficult image. It derives from the belief that what is underwater corresponds to what is on land. Thus, the mind also constructs a world which corresponds to (and is better than) the material world.

'The Bodies vest' is a Platonic image: the body is just a garment, which the soul can slip out of 'like a Bird' since, birds have freedom of movement, as the imagination does, and can soar up to heaven, as the soul.

Once again, the language is pastoral and natural. It is particularly rich and luxurious: this is a garden where the fruit is perpetually ripe and the flowers in full bloom. Stanza five has a list of the most succulent fruit. 'Ripe Apples' has associations with the Fall of Humankind, since traditionally the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden was an apple, though it is not actually named in the Bible. Here, any references to the fall are playfully negated, since he only falls 'on Grass' - there is no harm done.

The tone is meditative, but in the sensuous and quite passionate way we find in Keats' Ode to a Nightingale. For a poet talking of withdrawing from the world, the attractiveness of the world of the garden is very fully described. This is what the first Garden of Eden must have been like: a perfect creation, where bad weather and decay are kept out. Even when the fruit falls, it doesn't seem to decay or attract wasps!

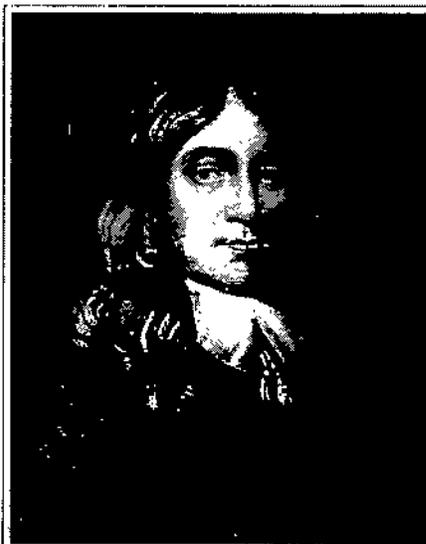
3.4.8 EXAMINING THE POEM

The metre he uses in *The Garden* is Marvell's favourite, the iambic tetrameter arranged as couplets. Here the couplets sit in octaves, but typically the couplets carry the units of sense, whilst the stanzas act as paragraphs. It is a very ordered verse, and reinforces the sense of order within the garden and in Marvell's life itself. Whatever crazy energy he once had (stanza one), it is all well under control now. The couplet form allows these marvelously succinct, epigrammatic statements to be made, as in ll.47-48 or in stanza eight. Marvell has learned from the disciplines of classical verse, but the terseness is mitigated by the sensuousness of description. It must be one of the most perfectly controlled and ordered poems in the English language.

3.5 JOHN MILTON: PARADISE LOST BOOK I

3.5.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Milton, an English poet, polemicist and civil servant for the Commonwealth of England, was born on December 9, 1608, on Bread Street in Cheapside, London, England to the composer John Milton and his wife Sarah Jeffrey. Milton's parents had six children, and Milton was one of the three who survived. Milton's father insisted that his son was educated daily. At the age of 16 Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge. Perhaps the finest student in his class, Milton received his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1629 and degree of Master of Arts in 1632. Milton was well versed in Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and Hebrew. In addition to this, Milton was also an excellent swordsman.



John Milton

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Milton had gone to Cambridge to become a clergyman, but he was dissuaded from this occupation due to the "tyrannical" attitude of the church. So, he decided to spend the next 6 years after getting his M.A. reading the Greek and Latin classics and studying mathematics and music. Milton's initiation into the public literary scene was done with a eulogy he'd written on Shakespeare. This was published in 1632 and was incorporated in the second folio edition of Shakespeare. Milton grew so fond of writing that none of the personal events affected his writing. Even as his father was the subject of a lawsuit for misappropriating money and his mother died, he continued to write.

Following his mother's death, Milton wrote the pastoral work "Lycidas" in 1637. A year later, he had the opportunity to visit Italy and meet Galileo. He returned to England 1639 and began to think about writing an Arthurian epic. But he gave up the idea soon and wavered between writing on Biblical subjects and heroic figures in British history. In 1640, he decided to write his most famous poem, *Paradise Lost*.

In 1642, at the age of 34, Milton married Mary Powell, age 17. Sadly, his wife ran away before the year was through and Milton proceeded to write his famous treatise advocating divorce. He and his wife reconciled in 1645 and Milton's first daughter Anne was born in 1646. Thereafter, he had another daughter, Mary in 1648, a son, John in 1651 and a daughter, Deborah in 1652.

In 1649, he started working as a secretary for the government, but in 1652 he became blind. The same year, his wife Mary and his son John died, leaving him a blind widower with three young children to take care of. He remarried in 1656. His second wife, Katherine Woodcock, died in childbirth a year later, ending "the happiest time" in Milton's life. In the years following Katherine's death, Milton wrote against the Royalists, mysteriously escaping the gallows for his comments, which were considered to be outrageous and extremely controversial. In 1663, Milton remarried again saying that his rebellious daughters did not care for him.

Milton passed away on November 8, 1674, just before turning 66. He died of gout-fever. He was buried in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, beside his father.

Milton was an educated man of letters, a polemical writer and an official serving under Oliver Cromwell. He wrote at a time when England was in the midst of a religious flux and political upheaval. This is the reason, why traces of inherent convictions can be seen in his poetry and prose, especially when dealing with contemporary issues, such as his treatise condemning licensing, *Areopagitica*.

Apart from English, he also wrote in Latin and Italian and had an international reputation during his lifetime. At an early stage, Milton became the subject of political biographies. Examples of this included his biography by John Toland, Anthony à Wood and Samuel Johnson. Toland wrote from a nonconformist perspective and Anthony à Wood wrote a hostile account. Samuel Johnson wrote unfavourably of Milton's politics as those of "an acrimonious and surly republican". At the same time, he praised *Paradise Lost*. He said "a poem which, considered with respect to design may claim the first place and with respect to performance, the second, among the productions of the human mind". Another author called William Hayley, wrote Milton's biography in 1796 and called him the "greatest English author". Milton is generally heralded "as one of the preeminent writers in the English language and as a thinker of world importance." After his death,

Milton's critical reception vacillated. This mixed reception continues through the centuries.

Milton's views were influenced by his voracious reading, travelling and personal experiences. His most influential years were his student days of the 1620s during which the English Revolution raged. By the time of his death in 1674, Milton was impoverished and on the margins of English intellectual life, yet unrepentant for his political choices and of Europe-wide fame.

A sense of religiosity and nationalism drove Milton's work. On one hand, he felt that he could best serve God by following his vocation as a poet, and on the other he felt that his poetry would serve England by putting before it noble and religious ideas in the highest poetic form. In other words, Milton sought to write poetry which, if not directly or overtly didactic, would serve to teach delightfully. The body of work emerging from these twin impulses, that is, one religious and the other, political, witnessed his development as a Christian poet and a national bard. In fact, it is in *Paradise Lost* that Milton is able to harmonize his two voices as a poet and becomes the Christian singer, as it were, of epic English poems.

Of all his works, *Paradise Lost* is nothing short of a poetic masterpiece. Along with Shakespeare's plays, Milton's *Paradise Lost* is the most dominant poem in English literature as well as being a basis for or proof text of modern poetic theory.

An unfinished religious manifesto, *De Doctrina Christiana*, probably was written by Milton, lays out many of his heterodox theological views and was not discovered and published until 1823. Milton's key beliefs were eccentric, not those of an identifiable group or faction and often they went well beyond the orthodoxy of the time. Their tone, however, came from the Puritan importance on the centrality and inviolability of principles. He was his own man, but it is *Areopagitica*, where he was anticipated by Henry Robinson and others that has lasted best of his prose works.

3.5.2 JOHN MILTON'S THOUGHT PROCESSES

Philosophy: By the late 1650s, Milton was a proponent of monism or animist materialism, the concept that a single physical substance which is "animate, self-active and free" composes everything in the universe: from stones and trees and bodies to minds, souls, angels and God. Milton devised this position to avoid the mind-body dualism of Plato and Descartes as well as the mechanistic determinism of Hobbes. Milton's monism is most notably manifested in *Paradise Lost* when he has the angels eat and engage in sexual intercourse and in the *De Doctrina*, where he denies the dual nature of man and argues for a theory of Creation ex Deo.

Political Thought: In his political writing, Milton addressed particular themes at different periods. The years 1641 and 1642 were dedicated to church politics and the grapple against episcopacy. After his divorce writings, during 1649 to 1654, he wrote in the aftermath of the execution of Charles I. These writings were in polemic justification of the regicide and the existing Parliamentary regime. Then, in 1659 and 1660, he foresaw the Restoration and wrote to head it off.

Milton's own beliefs were in some cases both disliked and considered treacherous and this was true especially for his writings which showcased his commitment to republicanism. In the coming centuries, Milton would be claimed as an early apostle of liberalism.

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A friend and ally of Milton in pamphlet wars was Marchamont Nedham. Scholars like Austin Woolrych said that though both Milton and Nedham were quite close, there is little real affinity between them apart from a broad republicanism. Other scholars like Blair Worden remark that both Milton and Nedham, along with others like Andrew Marvell and James Harrington, would have taken the problem with the Rump Parliament to be not the republic, but the fact that it was not a proper republic. Woolrych also says that there is a very big vacuum between Milton's vision of the Commonwealth's future and the reality. This is because of Milton, in the early version of *History of Britain* (1649), he was already writing off the members of the Long Parliament as incorrigible.

Milton praised Oliver Cromwell as the Protectorate was set up, though consequently he appeared to be quite reluctant to do so. When Cromwell seemed to be losing out as a revolutionary, after a couple of years in power, Milton started moving closer to the position of Sir Henry Vane. He wrote a sonnet in honour of Sir Henry Vane in 1652. He also commended Overton, along with Edmund Whalley and Bulstrode Whitelocke, all republicans, in his *Defensio Secunda*.

As Richard Cromwell fell from power, Milton visualized a step towards a freer republic or "free commonwealth", writing in this hope in early 1660. Milton had argued for an uncomfortable position, in the Ready and Easy Way, because he wanted to invoke the Good Old Cause and gain the support of the republicans, but without offering a democratic solution of any kind. His suggestion, backed by reference to the oligarchical Dutch and Venetian constitutions, was for a council with permanent membership. This approach cut right across the core of popular opinion of the time, which backed the restoration of the Stuart monarchy which happened later in the year. Milton, a partner of and advocate on behalf of the regicides, was hushed on political matters with the return of Charles II.

Theology: Like many Renaissance artists before him, Milton tried to amalgamate Christian theology with classical modes. In his early poems, Milton expresses a tension between vice and virtue, the latter invariably related to Protestantism. In *Comus* it may appear that Milton made ironic use of the Caroline court masque by elevating notions of purity and virtue over the rules and regulation of court revelry and superstition. In his later poems, Milton's theological concerns become more pronounced. In 1648, his hymn *How Lovely are Thy Dwelling Fair*, clearly expresses his view on God.

Milton embraced many unorthodox Christian theological views. He rebuffed the Trinity, saying that the Son is subordinate to the Father, a position known as Arianism. His agreement or interest was probably engaged by Socinianism. In August 1650, he licensed for publication by William Dugard the *Racovian Catechism*, based on a non-trinitarian doctrine. A source has interpreted him as broadly Protestant, if not always easy to locate in a more defined religious category.

In his 1641 treatise, *Of Reformation*, Milton articulated his dislike for Catholicism and episcopacy, presenting Rome as the modern Babylon and bishops as Egyptian taskmasters. These comparisons correspond to Milton's puritanical preference for Old Testament imagery. He knew at least four commentaries on Genesis: those of John Calvin, Paulus Fagius, David Pareus and Andreus Rivetus.

Through the *Interregnum*, Milton often presents England, rescued from the trappings of a worldly monarchy, as an elect nation akin to the Old Testament

Israel and shows its leader, Oliver Cromwell, as a latter-day Moses. These views were bound up in Protestant views of the Millennium, which some sects, such as the Fifth Monarchists predicted would arrive in England. Milton, however, would later condemn the "worldly" millenarian views of these and others and expressed traditional views and opinions on the prophecy of the Four Empires.

The Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 began a new phase in Milton's work. In *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, Milton grieved the end of the godly Commonwealth. The Garden of Eden may allegorically reflect Milton's view of England's recent Fall from Grace, while Samson's blindness and detention – mirroring Milton's own lost sight – may be a metaphor for England's unquestioned acceptance of Charles II as its king. He also uses *Paradise Lost* to exemplify the belief that the soul lies dormant after the body dies. This belief was called mortalism.

Despite the Restoration of the monarchy Milton did not lose his personal faith. He used *Samson* to demonstrate how the loss of national escape did not essentially disqualify the escape of the individual. On the other hand, he used *Paradise Regained* to express his continuing belief in the promise of Christian salvation through Jesus Christ.

Though he may have maintained his personal faith in spite of the defeats suffered by his cause, the *Dictionary of National Biography* recounts how he had been alienated from the Church of England by Archbishop William Laud and then moved similarly from the Dissenters by their denunciation of religious tolerance in England.

Milton had come to stand apart from all sects, though seemingly finding the Quakers most affable. He never went to any religious services in his later years. When a servant brought back descriptions of sermons from nonconformist meetings, Milton became so cynical that the servant at last gave up his efforts.

On Divorce: Milton's views on divorce put him in considerable trouble with the authorities. An orthodox Presbyterian view of the time was that Milton's views on divorce constituted a one-man heresy. The fervently Presbyterian Edwards had included Milton's divorce tracts in his list in *Gangraena* of unorthodox publications that jeopardized the religious and moral fabric of the nation. Milton responded by scoffing at him and calling him "shallow Edwards" in the satirical sonnet "On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament," usually dated to the latter half of 1646.

Even here, though, his originality is qualified: Thomas Gataker had already identified "mutual solace" as a principal goal in marriage. Milton abandoned his campaign to legitimise divorce after 1645, but he expressed support for polygamy in the *De doctrina christiana*, the theological treatise that provides the clearest evidence for his views.

Poetic and dramatic works

- 1631: *L'Allegro*
- 1631: *Il Penseroso*
- 1634: *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*, 1634 commonly known as *Comus* (a masque)
- 1638: *Lycidas*

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- 1645: Poems of Mr John Milton, Both English and Latin
 - 1655: On the Late Massacre in Piedmont
 - 1667: Paradise Lost
 - 1671: Paradise Regained
 - 1671: Samson Agonistes
 - 1673: Poems, &c, Upon Several Occasions
- Political, Philosophical and Religious Prose
- *Of Reformation* (1641)
 - *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* (1641)
 - *Animadversions* (1641)
 - *The Reason of Church-Government Urged against Prelaty* (1642)
 - *Apology for Smectymnuus* (1642)
 - *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643)
 - *Judgement of Martin Bucer Concerning Divorce* (1644)
 - *Of Education* (1644)
 - *Areopagitica* (1644)
 - *Tetrachordon* (1645)
 - *Colasterion* (1645)
 - *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649)
 - *Eikonoklastes* (1649)
 - *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano [First Defence]* (1651)
 - *Defensio Secunda [Second Defence]* (1654)
 - *A treatise of Civil Power* (1659)
 - *The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings from the Church* (1659)
 - *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660)
 - *Brief Notes Upon a Late Sermon* (1660)
 - *Accedence Commenced Grammar* (1669)
 - *History of Britain* (1670)
 - *Artis logicae plenior institutio [Art of Logic]* (1672)
 - *Of True Religion* (1673)
 - *Epistolae Familiaries* (1674)
 - *Prolusiones* (1674)
 - A brief History of Moscovia, and other less known Countries lying Eastward of Russia as far as Cathay, gathered from the writings of several Eye-witnesses (1682)[97]
 - *De Doctrina Christiana* (1823)

3.5.3 BACKGROUND OF PARADISE LOST

John Milton, a 17th century English poet began writing Paradise Lost in 1658.

He completed the poem in 1664 and published it for the first time in 1667 after the Great Plague and the Great Fire. At the time of the first edition, *Paradise Lost* was divided in a series of ten books that had a total of over ten thousand individual lines of verse. But, in the second edition, published in 1674, the poem was redivided into twelve books. This division was based on Virgil's 12 book division of *Aeneid*. The second edition had minor revisions throughout the book and it also contained a note on the versification of the same.

In 1667, Milton finally concluded an agreement with a publisher for the printing of *Paradise Lost*. Scholars were perplexed when the poem came out, since it shunned the rhyming of other epic poems in its blank verse. But in 1669, the first edition was sold out. In 1671 *Paradise Regained* came out, and in the last year of Milton's life, 1674, the second edition of *Paradise Lost* was published. The poem, originally arranged in ten books, was now arranged in twelve.

The length of all the twelve books varies. The longest book is Book IX, with 1,189 lines, and the shortest is Book VII, with only 640 lines of poetry. In the second edition, each book was preceded by a summary titled "The Argument". The poem follows the classic practice of starting in *medias res* (Latin for "in the midst of things"), the background story being told in Books V-VI.

Paradise Lost, an epic poem in blank verse, is considered to be one of the greatest poems in the English language. It is often described as the culmination of a long cherished ambition of Milton to write a definitive English epic. He wanted to do for the English language what Homer and Virgil had done for Greek and Latin and what Dante had done for Italian.

Milton had originally planned to base his epic on the Arthurian legends, which were the foundational myths for English nationalism, but later turned his attention to more general and widespread questions. He decided to focus on the foundational myth of humanity itself by writing something on the original account of creation and fall. The poem describes the temptation of Adam and Eve by the fallen angel Satan and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Though, it was an ambitious project, for Milton was determined to attempt "things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme", yet his success is reflected by the appreciation which the poem receives even today.

Milton's epic poem received mixed reactions even in the seventeenth century and, over the years, has continued to arouse both praise and blame.

Milton wrote very little of the poem in his own hand, for he was blind on account of Glaucoma. He would dictate the poem to an amanuensis, who would read it back to him so that he could make necessary revisions. The poet claimed that a divine spirit inspired him during the night, leaving him with verses that he would recite in the morning. Besides lending itself to mythologization, his blindness accounts for at least one troubling aspect of the poem: its occasional inconsistencies of plot. Because he could not read the poem back to himself, Milton had to rely on his memory of previous events in the narrative, which sometimes proved faulty. Milton's daughters later described their father being like a cow ready for milking, pacing about his room until the amanuensis arrived to "unburden" him of the verse he had stored in his mind.

Milton incorporates Paganism, classical Greek references and Christianity within the poem. It deals with diverse topics which ranged from marriage, politics

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(Milton was politically active during the time of the English Civil War) and monarchy and struggles with many complex theological issues, including fate, destiny, doom, the Trinity and the introduction of sin and death into the world, as well as angels, fallen angels, Satan and the war in heaven. For this poem, Milton drew on his knowledge of languages and other diverse sources which primarily included Genesis, much of the New Testament, the deuterocanonical Book of Enoch and other parts of the Old Testament. It is also for this reason that Milton's epic is generally considered one of the greatest literary works in the English language.

Milton's story contains two arcs: one of Satan (Lucifer) and another of Adam and Eve. The story of Satan follows the epic convention of large-scale warfare. It begins after Satan and the other rebel angels have been defeated and cast by God into Hell, or as it is also called in the poem, Tartarus. In Pandæmonium, Satan employs his rhetorical skill to organize his followers; he is aided by his lieutenants Mammon and Beelzebub. Belial and Moloch are also present. At the end of the debate, Satan volunteers himself to poison the newly created Earth. He braves the dangers of the Abyss alone in a manner reminiscent of Odysseus or Aeneas.

In spite of its plot defects, the admirers of *Paradise Lost* have always been more numerous than its detractors. The poem has influenced many authors and artists, from John Dryden to William Blake, Mary Shelley to Philip K. Dick, C. S. Lewis to Gene Roddenberry. Aside from the sheer beauty of its language and the power of its characterization, the subject matter of the poem has continued to absorb readers of every generation. Milton does not hesitate to ask the most difficult of questions. If the world was created by a good, just, and loving God, why is there little evidence of goodness and justice in the world? What does it mean for humankind to be created in the image of that God, and how does humanity endure in a fallen world? It is this aspect of the poem which will continue to enthrall readers, as they continue to ask the same difficult questions and turn for answers to Milton's exploration of one of the foundational myths of Western culture.

It should be noted, then, that in *Paradise Lost* Milton was not only justifying God's ways to humans in general; he was justifying His ways to the English people between 1640 and 1660. That is, he was telling them why they had failed to establish the good society by deposing the king, and why they had welcomed back the monarchy. Like Adam and Eve, they had failed through their own weaknesses, their own lack of faith, their own passions and greed, their own sin. God was not to blame for humanity's expulsion from Eden, nor was He to blame for the trials and corruption that befell England during the time of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell. The failure of the Puritan revolution was tantamount, for Milton, to the people's failure to govern themselves according to the will of God, rather than of a royal despot. England had the opportunity to become an instrument of God's plan, but ultimately failed to realize itself as the New Israel. *Paradise Lost* was more than a work of art. Indeed, it was a moral and political treatise, a poetic explanation for the course that English history had taken.

3.5.4 A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO PARADISE LOST: BOOK 1

The first book of *Paradise Lost* starts with a short account of man's disobedience. It then goes on to detail man's disobedience and the loss of Paradise, as a consequence of his disobedience. After establishing the loss of paradise, the

book talks about the chief cause of man's fall, the Serpent. This serpent is actually Satan in the body of a Serpent. Satan has collected and organized a team of angels, and leading them, he rebelled from God. God, angry at Satan for doing this, orders him and all his crew out of Heaven and sends them in the great Deep.

Once this action is over, the book goes on to describe Satan with his fallen Angels in Hell. Hell, over here, does not mean the center for Heaven and Earth, as these were not yet made. Hell, here means a place that is very dark and filled with chaos. Here Satan lies with his Angels on the burning lake. After a while, when he recovers from the confusion and the shock of being thrown out of heaven, he calls upon the second in command and they discuss their deplorable condition.

Satan then calls and organizes all the fallen Angels, who till that time, are still coming to terms with reality. They rise, their numbers recorded and their chief leaders are named. The leaders are named according to the Idols known afterwards in Canaan and the Countries adjoining. Satan directs his Speech to these angels comforting them with the hope of regaining Heaven. In this speech he also tells them about a new World and a new kind of Creature that is to be created. This, he said was in accordance to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven. Satan appeals to everybody to form a counsel so that they can find out the truth of this prophecy and what to determine thereof.

3.5.5 SUMMARY OF THE POEM

Lines 1-26: The Prologue and Invocation

Milton opens *Paradise Lost* by formally declaring his poem's subject: humankind's first act of disobedience toward God, and the consequences that followed from it. The act is Adam and Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, as told in Genesis, the first book of the Bible. In the first line, Milton refers to the outcome of Adam and Eve's sin as the "fruit" of the forbidden tree, punning on the actual apple and the figurative fruits of their actions. Milton asserts that this original sin brought death to human beings for the first time, causing us to lose our home in paradise until Jesus comes to restore humankind to its former position of purity.

Milton's speaker invokes the muse, a mystical source of poetic inspiration, to sing about these subjects through him, but he makes it clear that he refers to a different muse from the muses who traditionally inspired classical poets by specifying that his muse inspired Moses to receive the Ten Commandments and write Genesis. Milton's muse is the Holy Spirit, which inspired the Christian Bible, not one of the nine classical muses who reside on Mount Helicon—the "Aonian mount" of I.15. He says that his poem, like his muse, will fly above those of the Classical poets and accomplish things never attempted before, because his source of inspiration is greater than theirs. Then he invokes the Holy Spirit, asking it to fill him with knowledge of the beginning of the world, because the Holy Spirit was the active force in creating the universe.

Milton's speaker announces that he wants to be inspired with this sacred knowledge because he wants to show his fellow man that the fall of humankind into sin and death was part of God's greater plan, and that God's plan is justified.

Lines 27-722: Satan and Hell

Immediately after the prologue, Milton raises the question of how Adam and

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Eve's disobedience occurred and explains that their actions were partly due to a serpent's deception. This serpent is Satan, and the poem joins him and his followers in Hell, where they have just been cast after being defeated by God in Heaven.

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Satan lies stunned beside his second-in-command, Beelzebub, in a lake of fire that gives off darkness instead of light. Breaking the awful silence, Satan bemoans their terrible position, but does not repent of his rebellion against God, suggesting that they might gather their forces for another attack. Beelzebub is doubtful; he now believes that God cannot be overpowered. Satan does not fully contradict this assessment, but suggests that they could at least pervert God's good works to evil purposes. The two devils then rise up and, spreading their wings, fly over to the dry land next to the flaming lake. But they can undertake this action only because God has allowed them to loose their chains. All of the devils were formerly angels who chose to follow Satan in his rebellion, and God still intends to turn their evil deeds toward the good.

Once out of the lake, Satan becomes more optimistic about their situation. He calls the rest of the fallen angels, his legions, to join him on land. They immediately obey and, despite their wounds and suffering, fly up to gather on the plain. Milton lists some of the more notable of the angels whose names have been erased from the books of Heaven, noting that later, in the time of man, many of these devils come to be worshipped as gods.

Among these are Moloch, who is later known as a god requiring human sacrifices, and Belial, a lewd and lustful god. Still in war gear, these fallen angels have thousands of banners raised and their shields and spears in hand. Even in defeat, they are an awesome army to behold.

Satan's unrepentant evil nature is unwavering. Even cast down in defeat, he does not consider changing his ways: he insists to his fellow devils that their delight will be in doing evil, not good. In particular, as he explains to Beelzebub, he wishes to pervert God's will and find a way to make evil out of good. It is not easy for Satan to maintain this determination; the battle has just demonstrated God's overwhelming power, and the devils could not even have lifted themselves off the lake of fire unless God had allowed it. God allows it precisely because he intends to turn their evil designs toward a greater good in the end. Satan's envy of the Son's chosen status led him to rebel and consequently to be condemned. His continued envy and search for freedom leads him to believe that he would rather be a king in Hell than a servant in Heaven. Satan's pride has caused him to believe that his own free intellect is as great as God's will. Satan remarks that the mind can make its own Hell out of Heaven, or in his case, its own Heaven out of Hell.

Satan addresses his comrades and acknowledges their shame in falling to the heavenly forces, but urges them to gather in order to consider whether another war is feasible. Instantly, the legions of devils dig into the bowels of the ground, unearthing gold and other minerals. With their inhuman powers they construct a great temple in a short time. It is called Pandemonium (which means "all the demons" in Greek), and the hundreds of thousands of demonic troops gather there to hold a summit. Being spirits, they can easily shrink from huge winged creatures to the smallest size. Compacting themselves, they enter Pandemonium, and the debate begins.

Lines 1–26

The beginning of *Paradise Lost* is similar in gravity and seriousness to the book from which Milton takes much of his story: the Book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible. The Bible begins with the story of the world's creation; and Milton's epic begins in a similar vein, alluding to the creation of the world by the Holy Spirit. The first two sentences, or twenty-six lines, of *Paradise Lost* are extremely compressed, containing a great deal of information about Milton's reasons for writing his epic, his subject matter, and his attitudes toward his subject. In these two sentences, Milton invokes his muse, which is actually the Holy Spirit rather than one of the nine muses. By invoking a muse, but differentiating it from traditional muses, Milton manages to tell us quite a lot about how he sees his project. In the first place, an invocation of the muse at the beginning of an epic is conventional, so Milton is acknowledging his awareness of Homer, Virgil, and later poets, and signalling that he has mastered their format and wants to be part of their tradition. But by identifying his muse as the divine spirit that inspired the Bible and created the world, he shows that his ambitions go far beyond joining the club of Homer and Virgil. Milton's epic will surpass theirs, drawing on a more fundamental source of truth and dealing with matters of more fundamental importance to human beings. At the same time, however, Milton's invocation is extremely humble, expressing his utter dependence on God's grace in speaking through him. Milton thus begins his poem with a mixture of towering ambition and humble self-effacement, simultaneously tipping his hat to his poetic forebears and promising to soar above them for God's glorification.

Milton's approach to the invocation of the muse, in which he takes a classical literary convention and reinvents it from a Christian perspective, sets the pattern for all of *Paradise Lost*. For example, when he catalogues the prominent devils in Hell and explains the various names they are known by and which cults worshipped them, he makes devils of many gods whom the Greeks, Ammonites, and other ancient peoples worshipped. In other words, the great gods of the classical world have become—according to Milton—fallen angels. His poem purports to tell of these gods' original natures, before they infected humankind in the form of false gods. Through such comparisons with the classical epic poems, Milton is quick to demonstrate that the scope of his epic poem is much greater than those of the classical poets, and that his worldview and inspiration is more fundamentally true and all-encompassing than theirs. The setting, or world, of Milton's epic is large enough to include those smaller, classical worlds. Milton also displays his world's superiority while reducing those classical epics to the level of old, nearly forgotten stories. For example, the nine muses of classical epics still exist on Mount Helicon in the world of *Paradise Lost*, but Milton's muse haunts other areas and has the ability to fly above those other, less-powerful classical Muses. Thus Milton both makes himself the authority on antiquity and subordinates it to his Christian worldview.

The *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* are the great epic poems of Greek and Latin, respectively, and Milton emulates them because he intends *Paradise Lost* to be the first English epic. Milton wants to make glorious art out of the English language the way the other epics had done for their languages. Not only must a great epic be long and poetically well-constructed, its subject must be significant and original, its form strict and serious, and its aims noble and heroic. In Milton's view, the story

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he will tell is the most original story known to man, as it is the first story of the world and of the first human beings. Also, while Homer and Virgil only chronicled the journey of heroic men, like Achilles or Aeneas, Milton chronicles the tragic journey of all men—the result of humankind's disobedience. Milton goes so far as to say that he hopes to "justify," or explain, God's mysterious plan for humankind. Homer and Virgil describe great wars between men, but Milton tells the story of the most epic battle possible: the battle between God and Satan, good and evil.

Lines 27–722

Throughout the first two or three books of *Paradise Lost*, Satan seems as if he's the hero of the poem. This is partly because the focus of the poem is all on him, but it is also because the first books establish his struggle—he finds himself defeated and banished from Heaven, and sets about establishing a new course for himself and those he leads. Typically, the hero or protagonist of any narrative, epic poem or otherwise, is a person who struggles to accomplish something. Milton plays against our expectations by spending the first quarter of his epic telling us about the antagonist rather than the protagonist, so that when we meet Adam and Eve, we will have a more profound sense of what they are up against. But even when the focus of the poem shifts to Adam and Eve, Satan remains the most active force in the story.

One important way in which the narrator develops our picture of Satan—and gives us the impression that he is a hero—is through epic similes, lengthy and developed comparisons that tell us how big and powerful Satan is. For example, when Satan is lying on the burning lake, Milton compares him to the titans who waged war upon Jove in Greek mythology. Then, at greater length, he compares him to a Leviathan, or whale, that is so huge that sailors mistake it for an island and fix their anchor to it. In other epics, these sorts of similes are used to establish the great size or strength of characters, and on the surface these similes seem to do the same thing. At the same time, however, the effect of these similes is to unsettle us, making us aware that we really do not know how big Satan is at all. No one knows how big the titans were, because they were defeated before the age of man. The image of the Leviathan does not give us a well-defined sense of his size, because the whole point of the image is that the Leviathan's size generates deception and confusion.

More than anything, the similes used to describe Satan make us aware of the fact that size is relative, and that we don't know how big anything in Hell is—the burning lake, the hill, Pandemonium, etc. Milton drives this fact home at the end of Book I with a tautology: while most of the devils shrink in size to enter Pandemonium, the important ones sit "far within / And in their own dimensions like themselves" (I.792–793). In other words, they were however big they were, but we have no way of knowing how big that was. Finally, it is important to note that the first description of Satan's size is the biggest we will ever see him. From that point on, Satan assumes many shapes and is compared to numerous creatures, but his size and stature steadily diminishes. The uncertainty created by these similes creates a sense of irony—perhaps Satan isn't so great after all.

The devils in *Paradise Lost* are introduced to the story here in Book I in almost a parody of how Homer introduces great warriors in the *Iliad*. The irony of these descriptions lies in the fact that while these devils seem heroic and noteworthy in certain ways, they just lost the war in Heaven. As frightening and vividly presented as these creatures are, they did not succeed in killing a single angel.

In Book I, Milton presents Satan primarily as a military hero, and the council of devils as a council of war. In doing so, he makes *Paradise Lost* resonate with earlier epics, which all center around military heroes and their exploits. At the same time, Milton presents an implicit critique of a literary culture that glorifies war and warriors. Satan displays all of the virtues of a great warrior such as Achilles or Odysseus. He is courageous, undaunted, refusing to yield in the face of impossible odds, and able to stir his followers to follow him in brave and violent exploits. Milton is clearly aware of what he's doing in making Satan somewhat appealing in the early chapters. By drawing us into sympathizing with and admiring Satan, Milton forces us to question why we admire martial prowess and pride in literary characters. Ultimately he attempts to show that the Christian virtues of obedience, humility, and forbearance are more important.

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3.5.7 CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

His depiction is nightmarish in nature and creates feelings of dread and fear for his audience. Satan's character is reflective of the setting, and illustrative of the darker side of human nature.

Character of Satan

In Book One, Milton uses language to create the character of Satan as a gallant figure that inspires and commands the legion of angels at his requisition. Satan's dark, and ultimately evil façade, is overshadowed by his charismatic, dominant and powerful affectation. He becomes an extremely attractive and compelling figure to the fallen cherubs.

The most powerful aspect of Milton's use of language can be witnessed by the charismatic nature of Satan. In the first few books in *Paradise Lost*, Satan becomes a heroic figure, although, as the poem progresses, he loses his foothold and unwillingly reclaims his common reputation -- of deceitfulness.

Satan's Appeal to Human Nature

Satan is shown to be very arrogant and desirous. He is described as an "infernal Serpent," which plays to Christianity's ingrained association of Satan from the book of Genesis. The angels are portrayed as rebels due to their behaviours and strong allegiance to the Dark Prince.

Milton plays to human nature in his description of the angels. The audience catches a glimpse of themselves in the portrayal of these ethereal figures as they witness some of their own characteristics reflected. Both Satan and the angels exhibit very human traits. They succumb to the common temptations and sins that people struggle with -- such as vanity, greed, lust and gluttony.

Satan's Ambition and Greed

Satan is extremely ambitious and dedicated to his pursuit of power, position and image. He yearns to be in control and have his followers admire him while, at the same time, seeking comfort from him. Satan feels he will become their Saviour. He is determined to do so. He sees it as something he is owed.

The charismatic nature with which Satan speaks is extremely effective. Since their descent into Hell, the angels now view Satan as their leading voice and

salvation. Though other angels may be fully capable of taking the reins as leader, no one would dare attempt to threaten Satan's position.

Satan's Physical Stature

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Milton's physical description of Satan matches the enormity of his personality. His armour is described as massive in size and weight. The massive weight and size of his shield alone, which "... hung on his shoulders like the moon," apparently is plenty to be thought intimidating. His spear "... to equal ... the tallest pine" further demonstrates his immense height and strength.

Satan's Inner Struggle

Regardless of the number of angels Satan has at his command, such faithfulness does not diminish his resentment over his defeat in Heaven. Losing the happiness he once knew contributes greatly to the animosity that he directs inwardly. He makes conscious attempts to preserve his calm demeanor for the sake of his followers; to make it easier for him to place the blame on God. It can be argued that Satan feels some regret over his actions, but since he has won the affections of his legion he cannot allow such feelings to show. To allow the angels to see this kind of uncertainty would be interpreted as weakness.

3.5.8 THEMES/MOTIVES/EXAMINING THE POEM

The first words of *Paradise Lost* state that the poem's main theme will be "Man's first Disobedience." Milton narrates the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience, explains how and why it happens, and places the story within the larger context of Satan's rebellion and Jesus' resurrection. Raphael tells Adam about Satan's disobedience in an effort to give him a firm grasp of the threat that Satan and humankind's disobedience poses. In essence, *Paradise Lost* presents two moral paths that one can take after disobedience: the downward spiral of increasing sin and degradation, represented by Satan, and the road to redemption, represented by Adam and Eve.

While Adam and Eve are the first humans to disobey God, Satan is the first of all God's creation to disobey. His decision to rebel comes only from himself—he was not persuaded or provoked by others. Also, his decision to continue to disobey God after his fall into Hell ensures that God will not forgive him. Adam and Eve, on the other hand, decide to repent for their sins and seek forgiveness. Unlike Satan, Adam and Eve understand that their disobedience to God will be corrected through generations of toil on Earth. This path is obviously the correct one to take: the visions in Books XI and XII demonstrate that obedience to God, even after repeated falls, can lead to humankind's salvation.

One important way in which the narrator develops our picture of Satan—and gives us the impression that he is a hero—is through epic similes, lengthy and developed comparisons that tell us how big and powerful Satan is. For example, when Satan is lying on the burning lake, Milton compares him to the titans who waged war upon Jove in Greek mythology. Then, at greater length, he compares him to a Leviathan, or whale, that is so huge that sailors mistake it for an island and fix their anchor to it. In other epics, these sorts of similes are used to establish the great size or strength of characters, and on the surface these similes seem to do the same thing. At the same time, however, the effect of these similes is to unsettle us, making us aware that we really do not know how big Satan is at all.

No one knows how big the titans were, because they were defeated before the age of man. The image of the Leviathan does not give us a well-defined sense of his size, because the whole point of the image is that the Leviathan's size generates deception and confusion.

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3.6 THOMAS CAREW: TRUE BEAUTY

3.6.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas Carew (pronounced Carey) (1595 - 1645?) was an English poet.

He was the son of Sir Matthew Carew, master in chancery, and his wife, Alice Ingpenny, widow of Sir John Rivers, Lord Mayor of London. The poet was probably the third of the eleven children of his parents, and was born at West Wickham in Kent, in the early part of 1595; he was thirteen years old in June 1608, when he matriculated at Merton College, Oxford. He took his degree of B.A. early in 1611, and proceeded to study at the Middle Temple. Two years later his father complained to Sir Dudley Carleton that he was not doing well. He was therefore sent to Italy, as a member of Sir Dudley's household, and when the ambassador returned from Venice, he seems to have kept Thomas Carew with him, for he was working as secretary to Carleton, at the Hague, early in 1616. However, he was dismissed in the autumn of that year for levity and slander; he had great difficulty in finding another job. In August 1618 his father died, and Carew entered the service of Edward Herbert, Baron Herbert of Cherbury, in whose train he travelled to France in March 1619, and it is believed that he remained with Herbert until his return to England, at the close of his diplomatic missions, in April 1624. Carew "followed the court before he was of it," not receiving the definite commitment of the chamber until 1628.



Thomas Carew

While Carew held this office, he displayed his tact and presence of mind by stumbling and extinguishing the candle he was holding to light Charles I into the queen's chamber, because he saw that Lord St Albans had his arm round her

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majesty's neck. The king suspected nothing, and the queen heaped favours on the poet. Probably in 1630, Carew was made "server" or taster-in-ordinary to the king. To this period may be attributed his close friendships with Sir John Suckling, Ben Jonson and Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon; the latter described Carew as "a person of pleasant and facetious wit." John Donne, whose celebrity as a court-preacher lasted until his death in 1631, exercised a powerful if not entirely healthy influence over the genius of Carew. In February 1633 a masque by the latter, *Coelum Britannicum*, was acted in the Banqueting House at Whitehall, and was printed in 1634.

The close of Carew's life is absolutely obscure. It was long supposed that he died in 1639, and this has been thought to be confirmed by the fact that the first edition of his *Poems*, published in 1640, seems to have a posthumous character. But Clarendon tells us that "after fifty years of life spent with less severity and exactness than it ought to have been, he died with the greatest remorse for that licence." If Carew was more than fifty years of age, he must have died in or after 1645, and in fact there were final additions made to his *Poems* in the third edition of 1651. Walton tells us that Carew in his last illness, being afflicted with the horrors, sent in great haste to "the ever-memorable" John Hales (1584-1656); Hales "told him he should have his prayers, but would by no means give him then either the sacrament or absolution."

Carew's poems are sensuous lyrics. They open to us, in his own phrase, "a mine of rich and pregnant fancy." His metrical style was influenced by Jonson and his imagery by Donne, for whom he had an almost servile admiration. Carew had a lucidity and directness of lyrical utterance unknown to Donne. It is perhaps his greatest distinction that he is the earliest of the Cavalier song-writers by profession, of whom John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, was a later example, poets who turned the disreputable incidents of an idle court-life into poetry which was often of the rarest delicacy and the purest melody and colour. The longest and best of Carew's poems, "A Rapture," would be more widely appreciated if the rich flow of its imagination were restrained by greater reticence of taste.

3.6.2 POEM AND ITS SUMMARY

HE that loves a rosy cheek
 Or a coral lip admires,
 Or from star-like eyes doth seek
 Fuel to maintain his fires;
 As old Time makes these decay,
 So his flames must waste away.
 But a smooth and steadfast mind,
 Gentle thoughts, and calm desires,
 Hearts with equal love combined,
 Kindle never-dying fires
 Where these are not, I despise
 Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

In the first stanza, he describes the typical lover in all of us, attracted to the physical virtues of rosy cheeks, luscious lips, and sparkling eyes. The imagery is

familiar to the point of being archetypal and yet perhaps it is too general to convince us that the feeling runs very deep. Yet for the lover, his passion is everything. In his madness, his beloved is transformed into a veritable goddess, whose eyes are like stars. He is her slave, pining for a single look. In his depiction of this feverish state, Carew curiously employs the same metaphor for desire favoured by the Buddha: As fuel is added to fire, so sensual appetite perpetuates the craving for more and more of the same. It only worsens our misery when impermanence steals beauty away. Age destroys youth and all emotional ties built on mere appearance.

In the second stanza, we go beyond the cosmetic. We pass from the ephemeral to what persists. We pass from the flesh to the mind and, furthermore, to moral character. Such attributes as gentleness and calm may not strike us as particularly exciting or sexy, but Carew makes them the very seat of passion. In the absence of such virtues, love turns to hate because it is based on the love for truth. Carew rejects the courtly love tradition of the Middle Ages, in which the lover quailed at the feet of his beloved and yet was kept at a distance. Carew's celebration of equality—and thus reality—in love is certainly one that speaks to us and is one we can recognize and respect.

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3.7 ROBERT HERRICK'S "TO THE VIRGINS TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME"

3.7.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM

Ever heard the line "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may"? Nope, it's not Shakespeare; it's the first line of Robert Herrick's "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time."

Herrick was probably inspired to write "To the Virgins" by a line from a Latin poet named Ausonius (c. 310–395), who penned the following line: "Collige, virgo, rosas, dum flos novus et nova pubes, / et memor esto aevum sic properare tuum." Hmm. In English? OK, here we go: "Maidens, gather roses, while blooms are fresh and youth is fresh, and be mindful that your life-time hastes away." Sounds familiar, right? Well, people weren't as picky about plagiarism back in 17th century as they are today.

We're not entirely sure when Herrick wrote "To the Virgins," but he published it in 1648 in a collection of poems called *Hesperides*. Many of the poems in the volume take beauty, love, eroticism, and various spiritual matters as their subject. "To the Virgins" is no exception. The poem is about making the most of one's time on earth – a favourite theme of Herrick's that shows up in several other poems, most notably "To Daffodils," "To Blossoms," and "Corinna Going a-Maying."

Even though "To the Virgins" encourages the virgins – and by implication us, its readers – to take advantage of the opportunities they have, we shouldn't take this as an encouragement to go totally crazy. By the end of the poem it becomes clear that the speaker wants the virgins to get married while they're still eligible, attractive, capable of bearing children, etc. – that's what he means by "gather ye rosebuds while ye may."

It turns out, in other words, that the poem is about participating in what was – in the 17th century and even now, for a lot of people – an important religious ceremony and sacrament (marriage). Anything that might seem too wild and crazy is reigned in at the end of the poem by an overriding spirituality, a promotion of marriage, and a suggested equivalence between it and being "merry."

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3.7.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Herrick (baptized August 24, 1591 - October 1674) was a 17th century English poet. Born in Cheapside, London, he was the seventh child and fourth son of Nicholas Herrick, a prosperous goldsmith. In November, 1592, when Robert was fourteen months old, the elder Herrick wrote his will and then died by "falling" from the fourth story window of his house. Whether or not it was a suicide has never been determined. There is no record of Robert's schooling, but he might have attended school in Westminster. In 1607 he became apprenticed to his uncle, Sir William Herrick, who was a goldsmith and jeweller to the king. The apprenticeship ended after only six years, and Herrick, at age twenty-two, matriculated at Saint John's College, Cambridge. He graduated in 1617.



Robert Herrick

Robert Herrick became a member of the Sons of Ben, a group of Cavalier poets centred around an admiration for the works of Ben Jonson. In or before 1627, he took religious orders, and, having been appointed chaplain to the duke of Buckingham, accompanied him on his disastrous expedition to the Isle of Rhé (1627). He became vicar of the parish of Dean Prior, Devon in 1629, a post that carried a term of thirty-one years. It was in the secluded country life of Devon that he wrote some of his best work.

In the wake of the English Civil War, his position was revoked on account of his refusal to make pledge to the Solemn League and Covenant. He then returned to London. His position was returned to him in the Restoration of Charles II and he returned to Devon in 1662, residing there until his death in 1674. A bachelor all his life, many of the women he refers to in his poems are thought to be fictional.

His reputation rests on his *Hesperides*, a collection of lyric poetry, and the much shorter *Noble Numbers*, spiritual works, published together in 1648. He is well-known for his bawdy style, referring frequently to physical love.

3.7.3 POEM AND ITS SUMMARY

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old Time is still a-flying:
 And this same flower that smiles to-day

To-morrow will be dying.
 The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
 The higher he's a-getting,
 The sooner will his race be run,
 And nearer he's to setting.
 That age is best which is the first,
 When youth and blood are warmer;
 But being spent, the worse, and worst
 Times still succeed the former.
 Then be not coy, but use your time,
 And while ye may, go marry:
 For having lost but once your prime,
 You may for ever tarry.

Lines 1-2

*Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old Time is still a-flying:*

- The poem opens with the speaker telling the virgins to gather their ("ye") rosebuds while they still can ("while ye may"). "Old Time," after all, is passing quickly ("a-flying").
- The "a" in "a-flying" doesn't really mean anything; it's just an older way of pronouncing a verb.
- "Ye" is an old word for "your" and "you."
- It's not clear if the speaker is referring to actual rosebuds, or if they are a metaphor for something else. We'll have to wait and see.

Lines 3-4

*And this same flower that smiles today
 Tomorrow will be dying.*

- The speaker elaborates on the advice of the first two lines, telling the virgins that "this flower" will die soon – although he probably means that *everything* eventually dies.
- Flowers don't literally smile, so the phrase likely means something like "blooms."
- In Renaissance usage, "die" frequently meant "have an orgasm." That meaning may or may not be at work here. See "Quotes" for more on this possibility.

Lines 5-8

*The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
 The higher he's a-getting,
 The sooner will his race be run,
 And nearer he's to setting.*

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- The speaker continues with another example of the passage of time.
- The higher the sun gets (the further west it moves), the "sooner" will its journey be over, because it's "nearer" to "setting."
- The speaker calls the sun a "glorious lamp" because it gives off light.
- "A-getting" is just an older or poetic way of saying "getting."
- The sun isn't actually running a race; "race" can mean "journey, voyage, path."
- The progress of the sun through the sky, which is how we measure a day, recalls the first stanza's discussion of "today" and "tomorrow."

Lines 9-10

That age is best which is the first,

When youth and blood are warmer;

- The speaker divides life into several periods and says that the "first" (i.e., young adulthood) is the best because "youth and blood" are "warmer."
- "Age" just means "period of time" here.
- "Youth and blood" probably aren't literally warmer, but we often think of dead people as cold, so perhaps the speaker means something like "farther from death."
- Alternatively, "warmer" might even mean something like "more vigorous and healthy."

Lines 11-12

But being spent, the worse, and worst

Times still succeed the former.

- Youth is the "best" time of life, so the speaker says. Once it's gone, the "worst/ Times" follow.
- "Spent" means "used up" or "gone."
- "Worst/ Times" refers to the period after youth is "spent," so it most likely means old age or something to that effect.
- We're not quite sure what to do with "worse." We might have to supply syntax from the previous two lines and read the line as "being spent, [that age is] the worse [rather than the best]."
- That, however, doesn't make a whole lot of sense. It seems easier to read the lines as "the worse, and [even] worst / Times" will follow.

Lines 13-14

Then be not coy, but use your time,

And while ye may, go marry:

- Since youth is fleeting, old age sucks, and death is always right around the corner, the speaker urges the virgins to make use of what they have ("use your time") while they still can.
- In other words, don't be "coy," meaning shy, reserved, or inactive.
- The speaker doesn't just encourage the virgins to "use" their time, but to "go marry" (as in, to go get married!) while they still can.
- So this whole time – all that stuff about death being close, youth being

short – the speaker's been gearing up to talk about marriage? Yes indeed.

Lines 15-16

For having lost but once your prime

You may for ever tarry.

- The virgins should get married, the speaker suggests, because once they lose their "prime" (i.e., their youth and beauty) they might not get another chance.
- "Tarry" means "delay" or "prolong," and here the speaker wants to imply that if the virgins don't get married while they can, they might put it off (marriage) forever!

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3.7.4 ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

Robert Herrick's poem, "To the Virgins to make much of Time" extols the 'carpe diem' motif, the rose being a powerful emblem of the brevity of life. 'Carpe diem' is a Latin phrase meaning 'seize the day.' It was a common theme in the Cavalier poetry. The rose also symbolizes the beauty of youth and its ephemeral nature. The poem was penned in 1648 and published in a collection of verse entitled *Hesperides*. The theme of the poem is similar to Ben Jonson's poem "Song: To Celia" where the speaker stresses on the transient nature of life, but advises to seek union in holy matrimony and not in adulterous association. The latter combined with the 'carpe diem' motif was utilized in Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress". The combination of Christianity and the carpe diem motif is singular to Robert Herrick, and has not been employed in conventional poetry. The influence emerges from Herrick's position as vicar of Dean Prior, as appointed by King Charles I. The background of the poem is the political turbulence that led to Britain's Civil War. Therefore it emphasized the relishing of the present while it lasted.

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

The idea of gathering the rose buds underlines the idea of making hay while the sun shines; utilizing youth to the most. The rose is utilized as an extended metaphor here. Time is apostrophized as an old Man who is passing by embracing everything within his grasp. In Elizabethan slang, "dying" referred both to mortality and to orgasm. The poet also stresses that the flower must smile as much as possible, for tomorrow may be non-existent. In other words, the poem echoes the idea of living life to the fullest.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a getting;
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

The sun is personified and is termed as The glorious lamp of heaven. The poet quips that the swift rising and falling of the sun may stand for the passing of life without realization. Moreover, it may also emblemize the blooming of youth and

its deterioration with the passage of time. This is an apt metaphor, as the image also connotes glow, sunshine and rays of hope.

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That age is best, which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.

The age that precedes the other years of life always seem to be best. Childhood that precedes youth is better than the latter as it a carefree age. As youth is spent, it becomes worse and worsen. Time always seems to succeed over the former whichever comes first.

Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, go marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

Therefore one must not be coy and succumb to social inhibitions but utilize time wisely and appropriately. For the prime of life comes only once in one's life, and there is no looking back. The line: "You may forever tarry" implies that one may always long for that lost opportunity and regret the same. Why later await an opportunity that exists in the now?

3.7.5 THEMES/ MOTIVES/EXAMINING THE POEM

General Theme

Act now to make the most of your life. In other words, says the poem, aggressively pursue a goal rather than sitting idly by waiting for good things to happen. Be proactive. Take a risk. You can't dream your way to your goal.

Specific Theme

You young ladies should pursue opportunities for marriage before time turns you into old maids.

The meter of the poem varies. Most of the lines, however, are in iambic tetrameter and in iambic trimeter with catalexis (extra syllable at the end of a line). Following are examples of the metric formats.

Rhyme

.....In each stanza, the first line rhymes with the third, and the second line rhymes with the fourth (abab). Notice that in lines 1 and 3 of each stanza the rhyme involves only the final syllable of each line. However, in lines 2 and 4 of each stanza the rhyme involves the final two syllables of each line. The former type of rhyme is called masculine rhyme; the latter is called feminine rhyme. Here is a presentation of the first stanza with the masculine rhymes and the feminine rhymes.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

.....A special type of rhyme, consonance, occurs in line 9: That age is best which is the first. Consonance pairs words with different vowel sounds but the same final consonants.

Figures of speech

.....Following are examples of figures of speech in the poem.

Metaphor

Comparison of unlike things without using like, as, or than

Comparison of rosebuds to opportunities in general; specifically, comparison of rosebuds to opportunities to win a husband.

Comparison of time to a flying creature (bird, insect, etc.).

Comparison of flower to a maiden.

Comparison of the sun to a lamp.

Personification

Type of metaphor that compares a thing to a person

Comparison of a flower to a human being. (Only humans can smile.)

Comparison of the sun to a human being through the use of the pronouns he and his.

Alliteration

Repetition of a consonant sound

And this same flower that smiles to-day / To-morrow will be dying

The higher he's a-getting

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3.8 ABRAHAM COWLEY: A SUPPLICATION

3.8.1 INTRODUCTION

Abraham Cowley was the foremost poet of his time, celebrated for his versatility, his erudition, and his unique contributions to English verse and prose. He is frequently referred to as the last of the metaphysical poets, although it's widely agreed that he regarded himself as a follower of Spenser and Jonson rather than Donne. Throughout his career he employed a variety of poetic forms and styles, adapting classical and Renaissance models as well as imitating his immediate predecessors' use of elaborate, paradoxical metaphors. Cowley's prose style has been highly praised, from his own day to the present, for its naturalness, grace, and simplicity. His aesthetic theories, never codified, are implicit in many of his odes as well as more directly in prefaces and notes to major works. He regarded the concepts of order and decorum as central to the poet's art and believed that the study of natural philosophy would heighten the poet's ability to create a true representation of Divine order. His *Davideis* is the first English epic on a biblical theme, preceding Milton's *Paradise Lost* by more than two decades. In his adaptations of Anacreon, Horace, and Pindar, Cowley became the earliest English writer to repudiate word-for-word and line-for-line transcriptions in favour of much freer translations, and eighteenth-century translators and imitators of classical writings, including Alexander Pope, acknowledged their indebtedness to him. His Pindaric odes introduced the irregular ode in English and influenced such poets as Gray, Collins, Wordsworth, and Shelley. The Horatian themes of solitude,

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freedom, and the simple joys of rural life recur throughout Cowley's poems and essays, and these were taken up and developed by such Restoration poets as Lovelace, Vaughan, and Marvell. Cowley's literary reputation declined in the second half of the eighteenth-century, and two hundred years later commentators are divided on the question of his stature. While some stress his indebtedness to Donne, others emphasize the innovative nature of his most important work.

3.8.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Abraham Cowley (1618 – 28 July 1667) was an English poet born in the City of London late in 1618. He was one of the leading English poets of the 17th century, with 14 printings of his works published between 1668 and 1721. As early as 1628, that is, in his tenth year, he composed his Tragical History of Píramus and Thisbe, an epical romance written in a six-line stanza, of his own invention. It is not too much to say that this work is the most astonishing feat of imaginative precocity on record; it is marked by no great faults of immaturity, and possesses constructive merits of a very high order.



Abraham Cowley

Two years later, the child wrote another and still more ambitious poem, *Constantia and Philetus*, being sent about the same time to Westminster School. Here he displayed the most extraordinary mental precocity and versatility, and wrote in his thirteenth year yet another poem, the *Elegy on the Death of Dudley, Lord Carlton*. These three poems of considerable size, and some smaller ones, were collected in 1633, and published in a volume entitled *Poetical Blossoms*, dedicated to the head master of the school, and prefaced by many laudatory verses by schoolfellows.

The author at once became famous, although he had not, even yet, completed his fifteenth year. His next composition was a pastoral comedy, entitled *Love's Riddle*, a marvellous production for a boy of sixteen, airy, correct and harmonious in language, and rapid in movement. The style is not without resemblance to that of Randolph, whose earliest works, however, were at that time only just printed.

In 1637 Cowley was elected into Trinity College, Cambridge, where he betook himself with enthusiasm to the study of all kinds of learning, and early

distinguished himself as a ripe scholar. It was about this time that he composed his scriptural epic on the history of King David, one book of which still exists in the Latin original, the rest being superseded in favour of an English version in four books, called the *Davidis*, which he published a long time after. This his most grave and important work is remarkable as having suggested to Milton several points which he afterwards made use of. The epic, written in a very dreary and turgid manner, but in good rhymed heroic verse, deals with the adventures of King David from his boyhood to the smiting of Amalek by Saul, where it abruptly closes.

In 1638 Love's Riddle and a Latin comedy, the *Naufragium Joculare*, were printed, and in 1641 the passage of Prince Charles through Cambridge gave occasion to the production of another dramatic work, *The Guardian*, which was acted before the royal visitor with much success. During the civil war this play was privately performed at Dublin, but it was not printed till 1650. It is bright and amusing, in the style common to the "sons" of Ben Jonson, the university wits who wrote more for the closet than the public stage.

3.8.3 POEM BY ABRAHAM COWLEY

Awake, awake, my Lyre!
 And tell thy silent master's humble tale
 In sounds that may prevail;
 Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire:
 Though so exalted she
 And I so lowly be
 Tell her, such different notes make all thy harmony.
 Hark, how the strings awake:
 And, though the moving hand approach not near,
 Themselves with awful fear
 A kind of numerous trembling make.
 Now all thy forces try;
 Now all thy charms apply;
 Revenge upon her ear the conquests of her eye.
 Weak Lyre! thy virtue sure
 Is useless here, since thou art only found
 To cure, but not to wound,
 And she to wound, but not to cure.
 Too weak too wilt thou prove
 My passion to remove;
 Physic to other ills, thou'rt nourishment to love.
 Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre!
 For thou canst never tell my humble tale
 In sounds that will prevail,
 Nor gentle thoughts in her inspire;

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all thy vain mirth lay by,
 Bid thy strings silent lie,
 Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre, and let thy master die.

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3.8.4 CRITICISM OF ABRAHAM COWLEY

During Cowley's lifetime and throughout the Restoration, critics praised his ingenuity and eloquence. Milton is reported to have declared that Spenser, Shakespeare, and Cowley were England's three greatest poets. Well into the eighteenth-century, commentators hailed the range and scope of Cowley's work, his inventiveness, and his versatility. Samuel Johnson's evaluation, published in 1779, reflects a change in attitude and has remained extremely influential, particularly with respect to his categorization of Cowley as one of the last of the metaphysical poets. For nearly two hundred years thereafter, Cowley had few defenders. Commentators generally patronized him as a transitional figure, the ultimate practitioner of a style in decline, sensitive to popular tastes and movements but lacking any deeply held convictions about his art. In 1931, Arthur Nethercot published a book-length study of Cowley that emphasized the author's unique contributions to English literature. Twenty-five years later, Robert Hinman similarly attempted to resuscitate Cowley's reputation, calling attention to the poet's repeated attempts to reconcile seventeenth-century intellectual movements with traditional aesthetic and religious thought. In 1963, David Rawlinson advanced modern appreciation of Cowley's work by stressing his originality, immediacy, and clarity of expression. Five years later, Harvey Goldstein offered a close reading of the ode "Of Wit," interpreting it as an embodiment of Cowley's conviction that the poet should subordinate linguistic elements to the superior concerns of design and structure. Also examining Cowley's poetic theories, Paul Korshin found evidence in several works of an increasing movement away from the excesses of the metaphysical style toward an emphasis on balanced judgment and the regulation of wit by the intellect. Comparing the influence of disparate traditions on Cowley's work, Timothy Dykstal discerned in the *Davideis* a conflict between Christian rationalism and classical ideals; in the critic's judgment, the epic is incomplete because Cowley's religious perspective prevented him from representing the virtues of pagan heroism in the context of a biblical narrative. Three critics who have emphasized the impact of topical events on Cowley's work include Allan Pritchard, Thomas Osborne, and James Keough. Pritchard evaluated *The Civil War* in the context of its composition during the early days of that conflict. Calhoun focused on other partisan propaganda written by Cowley during this period: his two verse satires. And Keough offered a new reading of the "Brutus" ode—written in 1655, after the establishment of the Protectorate—as a statement of resigned acceptance of the Royalist defeat.

SUMMARY

After going through this whole unit, you will be able to understand the poems of some of the great English Poets along with the summary of the poems. You will also be able to understand the literary devices used, the critical acclaim received and the background of the poet while writing those poems.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think *Paradise Lost* was attempted?
2. What influenced John Milton during the writing of *Paradise Lost*?
3. Write a brief account of John Milton's life.
4. Had you had an opportunity to define John Milton's political views, how would you do it?
5. Theologically, where did John Milton stand?
6. What do you expect from *Paradise Lost: Book 1* after going through the brief introduction provided?
7. Collect words and phrases from *The Garden* that suggests richness and luxury.
8. Pick out words and phrases in the poem by Andrew Marvell that suggest peace.
9. Analyze the poem Robert Herrick's "To the Virgins to Make Much of Time"

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FURTHER READINGS

- Berthoff, A.E. *The Resolved Soul: A Study of Marvell's Major Poems*. (1970)
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UNIT - 4**SOME POETS****NOTES****STRUCTURE**

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 John Dryden: Mac Flecknoe
- 4.3 Thomas Gray: Elegy Written in the Country Churchyard
 - Summary
 - Review Questions
 - Further Readings

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to teach you about English poetry that was prevalent in the era which can be categorized by Chaucer at the start and Pope at the end. At the end of this unit, you will be able to do the following:

- understand the context of the poem
- examine the characterization of the poem
- main quotations and their explanations
- understand the background of the author
- understand the poem

4.2 JOHN DRYDEN: MAC FLECKNOE**4.2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM**

The poem "Mac Flecknoe" or "A satyr upon the True-Blew-Protestant Poet, T.S" penned by John Dryden is in the mock-heroic tradition. It was written in 1678 and is the outcome of a series of disagreements between Thomas Shadwell and Dryden. Their quarrel blossomed from the following disagreements - their different estimates of the genius of Ben Jonson, the preference of Dryden for comedy of wit and repartee and of Shadwell, the chief disciple of Jonson, for humours comedy, a sharp disagreement over the true purpose of comedy, contention over the value of rhymed plays, and plagiarism.

Flecknoe comprehends that it is time for his departure as he has for long reigned over the realms of dullness beginning his tenure like Augustus at an early age. The only common aspect between Flecknoe and Augustus was that both of them began to rule young; the insignificance of Flecknoe is contrasted against

the stature of Augustus, in keeping with the mock-heroic tradition. Flecknoe was indubitably the undisputed King of Dullness in the realms of prose and verse. He has produced a large number of dunces and now seriously contemplates over a successor. Flecknoe pitches on Shadwell owing to a persistent dullness right from his literary infancy. There is a Biblical allusion as to how God created man in his own image. Again following the mock-heroic tradition the grandeur of God is contrasted against the conformed stupidity of Shadwell.

The other dunces have occasionally showed flashes of genius while Shadwell has consistently exemplified his expertise in the field of dullness. Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* is an attack on what he calls dullness, "Nonsense, absolute", which refers to second ratedness and mediocrity. The violence of a lampoon is couched in the finesse of portraiture. *Mac Flecknoe* is the perfect example how "the distorting poetic line" of Augustan satire used to "reduce a victim to visual incongruity" (Hagstrum). Wit, elegance and urbanity may all be appealed to but ultimately what we have is a reputation thrown to shreds. The distance between Augustan precepts and Augustan practice is indeed staggering.

In "*Mac Flecknoe*" Dryden responded to these boasts by imagining a grotesque coronation ceremony, in which Richard Flecknoe, a notoriously bad Irish poet and current monarch of "all the Realms of Non-sense", hands over the throne of his kingdom to Shadwell. Shadwell is solemnly enjoined by Flecknoe always to uphold the sacred traditions of Dullness which have been so lovingly cherished during his own reign.

The object of this kind of poetry is not to ridicule the classical epic (in the manner of burlesque), but rather to bring out the paltriness of the figures and events being satirised by employing an epic style and register which is felt to be ludicrously inappropriate to its subject. Thus Shadwell progresses up the Thames to his coronation just as Virgil's Aeneas had sailed in stately dignity up the Tiber, Flecknoe entrusts power to Shadwell, just as Aeneas had entrusted the future of Rome to his son Ascanius. Shadwell's temples are crowned with poppies, just as the heads of the Roman emperors had been wreathed with laurels on their accession. In this way Shadwell's *Jonsonian*, and thus classical aspirations (for Jonson had thought of himself as the dramatic heir of the Ancients) is exposed. Through his mock-heroic strategy Dryden brings home the difference between True Wit and its opposite, Dullness.

4.2.2 CHARACTERIZATION

Shadwell is presented as a 'son' of Flecknoe, a notoriously bad Irish poet who died in 1678. Dryden had Flecknoe choose a successor in Shadwell who is presented here as a literary dunce, and as the person who will bring dullness and lack of wit to their triumphant culmination. The poem opens on an elevated note. The throne Flecknoe sits on is a pile of his own ridiculous plays. Shadwell is compared with Ascanius, Aeneas' son in Virgil's Roman epic the *Aeneid*. But Ascanius' Rome in *Mac Flecknoe* is the capital of dullness. His brows are surrounded by thick fogs, and rays of dullness light up his face. Flecknoe is also compared mockingly to Roman emperor Augustus and *Mac Flecknoe* (Shadwell) to Romulus, one of the founders of the city of Rome.

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4.2.3 IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS WITH EXPLANATIONS

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Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through and make lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye
And seems design'd for thoughtless Majesty:
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign"

The full seriousness of this deficiency becomes clear only when one recalls the several meanings Dryden attached to wit in discussing the qualifications of a poet. In the years preceding Mac Flecknoe he used wit synonymously with imagination, as in the character sketches of Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Jonson in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) or in the preface to *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), where he explicitly equated wit with imagination ("wit in the poet... is no other than the faculty of imagination"), which he explained was characterized by three principle traits, invention, fancy, and elocution— or finding, shaping, and expressing the materials of a poem—all the major aspects of poetic creation. A few years later, in the preface to *An Evening's Love* (1671), he used wit to mean "genius, or literary ability"; "the conceiving faculty, that is imagination"; and "verbal agility". The last meaning predominates in Dryden's discussion, in the same preface, of the comedy of wit, a genre which requires more of the poet than "the representations of folly"; it demands "sharpness of conceit", and he would like to see in comedy "more of the urbana, venusta, salsa, jaceta, and the rest which Quintilian reckons up as the ornaments of wit.

4.2.4 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Dryden, (1631-1700), English poet, literary critic, dramatist and leader in Restoration comedy wrote the comedic play *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1672), and the tragedy *All for Love* (1678). John Dryden was born in Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, England, the eldest of fourteen children of Erasmus Dryden (c.1602–1654) and Mary Pickering (d. 1676).

Dryden was a King's scholar studying the classics at Westminster. He contributed to the collection of tributes to honour Henry, Lord Hastings, an elegy in *Lachrymæ Musarum* (1649). He entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1650, graduating in February of 1654, the same year his father died. While living in London in 1657 Dryden started working with the civil service and began in earnest writing plays of heroic tragedy and satires of varying success. *Heroic Stanzas* (1658), on the death of Oliver Cromwell is his first important work. With the protectorate crumbling, Dryden sought other work including writing for a bookseller. With the return of Charles II he celebrated the King's divine right with, among other works, his poem *Astræa Redux* (1660). To His Sacred Majesty, a Panegyrick on his Coronation (1661) came next, Dryden courting favour with the new regime which would later bring allegations of insincere and self-serving allegiance.

His first play *The Wild Gallant* was first staged in 1662. *The Rival Ladies* (1663) also had Spanish influences. Attached to it is one of his famous Prefaces where he describes his principles of dramatic criticism. His first successful play, written in

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heroic couplets was *The Indian Emperor* (1665). The same year of the Great Fire in London, *Annus Mirabilis* (1666) celebrates the English Navy's victory over the Dutch. Dryden had retired to the country with the plague threat, where his first son was born, and he continued to write. *The Maiden Queen* composed in blank verse, rhyming couplets and prose and *The Assigination, or Love in a Nunnery* were produced in 1667. *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) was written two years after the Restoration with the reopening of the theatres. Dryden entered into a contract in 1668 with the King's Theatre Company in which he would produce three plays a year. For his efforts the Archbishop of Canterbury awarded him an M.A. in 1668. The same year he became Poet Laureate and in 1670 Royal Historiographer which would provide a stable income for him.

The play *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1672) was followed by his unsuccessful work on the theme of *Paradise Lost*, *The State of Innocence*, staged in 1674. After 1676, he began to use blank verse, and he produced his best play, *All for Love* in 1678. It is Dryden's most famous masterpiece based on Anthony and Cleopatra. He had mastered the art of comparative criticism, using prose and dialogue for debate, and wit and satire to illustrate disparities between church and state. A year later Dryden was beaten by thugs, an attack that had been ordered by the Earl of Rochester when Dryden was suspected of collaboration on *An Essay upon Satire*, which vilified various prominent figures, of which the real author was never realised.

The well-known political satire of Shaftesbury under the transparent guise of the Old Testament, *Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden's allegorical poem appeared in 1681 and his didactic poem *Religio Laici* (1682) followed, which argues the case for Anglicanism. *Threnodia Angustalis* (1685) is an ode to Charles II. *The Hind and the Panther* (1687) marked Dryden's final conversion to Roman Catholicism.

After the Revolution of 1688 he lost his Laureateship with the accession of William III. Refusing to take an oath of allegiance, his politics and religion left him out of favour with the court, and his sole source of income was from his plays and translations of poetry from Latin and Greek. The tragi-comedy *Don Sebastian* (1690) was on a par with *All for Love*. Another tragi-comedy *Love Triumphant* (1694) would be his last play. Included in his ensuing critical essays was *A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*. Dryden would also take on the massive task of translating the works of Virgil to prose.

John Dryden died on 12 May 1700 from inflammation caused by gout. He is buried in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey, London, England, nearby to his longtime friend William Congreve.

4.2.5 SUMMARY OF THE POEM

In "*Mac Flecknoe*", the organizing metaphors are those of classical poetry and empire. The poem's subject is Thomas Shadwell, a minor dramatist who had been employed, like Dryden, in the Cromwellian government service, and with whom Dryden had been engaged in literary disputes since the late 1600s. Shadwell and Dryden had, for nearly a decade before the composition of the poem, been airing in print their disagreements about a number of critical questions, such as the stature of Ben Jonson as a playwright and the relative merits of comedy based on displays of wit and repartee, as against the type of comic play which is devoted to the delineation of "humours" (extravagances of habit or personality which differentiate a particular character from his fellows). They had also exchanged

views about the ultimate purpose of comedy, about the value of rhyme in dramatic verse, and about the nature of literary plagiarism.

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The poem illustrates Shadwell as the heir to a kingdom of poetic dullness, represented by his association with Richard Flecknoe, an earlier poet Dryden disliked, but Dryden does not use belittling techniques to satirize him.

The multiplicity of allusions to 17th Century literary works and to classic Greek and Roman literature with which the poem is riddled, demonstrates Dryden's complex approach to satire, and the fact that he satirizes his own work as well shows his mastery over and respect towards the mock-heroic style in which the poem is written.

4.2.6 CRITICISM

While *Mac Flecknoe* is surely "the best lampoon" of the Restoration, an "excoriating piece of invective", most critics realize that it is more exuberant comedy, as Alan D. McKillop implies when he speaks of the poem's "magnificent unscrupulousness", and literary satire. Earl Miner remarks that *Mac Flecknoe* continues Dryden's dramatic criticism into poetry — "an important subject of the poem is art — especially literature, and more particularly drama.

Dryden, as speaker of this poem, employs his satire as a way of preaching truth to a literary world often composed of unsuspecting readers. He uses Shadwell and Flecknoe to personify bad literature ("false wit") and offers his own verse as a piece of quality literature ("true wit"). Dryden indirectly compares himself to Shadwell, asserting his own authority and literary prowess above a poet "confirmed in full stupidity". Dryden sets himself up as a deliverer to the common readers of London, promoting his literature as a true example of literary superiority.

4.2.7 MAIN CHARACTER LIST

MacFlecknoe" is the mocking Scottish form for "son-of-Flecknoe," and the character stands for Thomas Shadwell, whose pretention to be taken for the inheritor of Ben Jonson's poetic tradition Dryden skewers by making him the son of Richard Flecknoe, a poet even Shadwell would see was dull. Other characters represent contemporary or recent poets (Heywood, Decker, Shirley, Fletcher), or they are allegorical, part of the epic "machinery of the gods" by which Dryden mocks Shadwell, making him inherit the throne of Nonsense. "Annus Mirabilis" personifies London as a Queen in ways that strongly evoke the late Elizabeth I, but in the context of Dryden's imperial vision, she is courted now by merchant fleets who bring her jewels and other trade goods from the Empire's far-flung colonial "suitsors."

4.2.8 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

River Thames running through London is where the fictional poet, Mac Flecknoe, first catches sight of Shadwell, his true heir in literary ineptitude. Flecknoe beholds the ample form of Shadwell rowing a small boat in the river that reflects his relative unimportance in the currents of literary history. Augusta is the alternative name for London that stresses its connection to the cultural flowering of ancient Augustan Rome, a part of the inflated description of Shadwell's surroundings that contrasts sharply with their vulgar reality.

Flecknoe chooses ancient watchtower, near the Roman wall surrounding the old city of London for the coronation of his successor, Shadwell. Ireland Island in the British Isles that fell under English rule several decades before Dryden wrote Mac Flecknoe. Dryden cites it as one of two places over which Shadwell might reign. Both Ireland and Barbados had reputations for savagery, which make them appropriate for Shadwell's lack of civilized talent. Shadwell, the poem implies, has transgressed against the rules of writing and churns out his hack work like one condemned to a fate of drudgery.

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4.2.9 THEMES, MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS USED

Mac Flecknoe is a direct attack on the poetry of Thomas Shadwell. Dryden believed that Shadwell was writing poetry with a deliberate political bias (whig and anti-Stuart) as a way of furthering his popularity and career. In Mac Flecknoe, Dryden argues that poetry needs to have its own values, independent of political fashion. Dryden might have accepted a lesbian feminist poet laureate, but he would never have accepted the idea that a laureate should be chosen because she was a lesbian feminist.

Themes

A. Literary Theme

The major theme of the poem is an attack on bad writing, which conversely will establish what Dryden felt were the criteria of good writing: subtlety, wit and deep learning. However, since Flecknoe (and his literary "heir" Shadwell) exhibited no understanding of these qualities of good writing, the poem praises the following touchstones of bad writing.

B. Political Theme

The literary theme is explored in terms of a political crisis. "Mac Flecknoe" opens with a political problem familiar in the Restoration, a crisis of succession. Thus, the poem uses the political concerns over proper succession to discuss a problem in the literary kingdom. The parallel between the literary theme and the political theme is discussed below under structure. Here a listing of the stages of the literary/political correlation is briefly given:

Lines 1-63: An old king Flecknoe decides to abdicate; he judiciously selects the "son" he feels will continue his political line/ literary dynasty of dullness — Shadwell.

Lines 64-93: The time and the place of the coronation of the heir apparent are set.

Lines 94-105: A procession of the old king, his heir, and their guard of honour makes its way through the ruler's cheering subjects to the coronation site.

Lines 106-38: The heir apparent is invested by the old king.

Lines 139-210: The old king delivers a speech praising his successor.

Lines 211-17: The length of the speech upsets some of the new king's supporters, so they stage a quick political/literary coup d'état.

Style of Writing

The form of the work is MOCK HEROIC (sometimes termed MOCK EPIC), a literary genre which satirizes or burlesques a trivial subject by treating it with the lofty style and solemn tone of epic poetry. "Mac Flecknoe" is a Mock Heroic/Epic poem since in it a hack writer is treated as a ruler or king. In the poem, Shadwell is frequently associated with excrement.

4.3 THOMAS GRAY: ELEGY WRITTEN IN THE COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

4.3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM

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Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" was first published in 1751. Gray may, however, have begun writing the poem in 1742, shortly after the death of his close friend Richard West. An elegy is a poem which laments the dead. Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is noteworthy in that it mourns the death not of great or famous people, but of common men. The speaker of this poem sees a country churchyard at sunset, which impels him to meditate on the nature of human mortality. The poem invokes the classical idea of *memento mori*, a Latin phrase which states plainly to all mankind, "Remember that you must die." The speaker considers the fact that in death, there is no difference between great and common people. He goes on to wonder if among the lowly people buried in the churchyard there had been any natural poets or politicians whose talent had simply never been discovered or nurtured. This thought leads him to praise the dead for the honest, simple lives that they lived.

Gray did not produce a great deal of poetry; the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," however, has earned him a respected and deserved place in literary history. The poem was written at the end of the Augustan Age and at the beginning of the Romantic period, and the poem has characteristics associated with both literary periods. On the one hand, it has the ordered, balanced phrasing and rational sentiments of neoclassical poetry. On the other hand, it tends toward the emotionalism and individualism of the romantic poets; most importantly, it idealizes and elevates the common man.

The elegy is the most natural form of poetry because of its disassociation with metrical form, and lack of requirement of pattern, cadence or repetition. Within the elegy, Strand and Boland point out how the poet is permitted to express loss, mourn for the dead, and list the deceased person's virtues, while seeking consolations beyond the momentary event. It heeds to customs and is guided by laws and codes, which are part of the history and tradition of the society in which the poem has evolved. The works of Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" demonstrate how the elegy is written in a natural form because of the forces guiding this type of poetic writing.

4.3.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas Gray was one of the most important poets of the eighteenth century. This scholar and poet was the most famous for his poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." Thomas Gray was born on December 26, 1716 in Cornhill section of London, England. He was the only child in his family of eight to survive infancy. Gray was saved by his brave mother. She opened one of his veins with her own hand to prevent suffocation. His father was Philip Gray, a scrivener and exchange broker. Philip Gray was indolent, selfish, abusive, and insane. He depleted the fortune. In addition, he treated his wife with extreme cruelty. As a result, Dorothy Antrobus Gray left him. She looked forward to filing a legal action against him. However, because of her love for him, she managed to return. It was Gray's mother who saw to her son's education. She, therefore, conducted a millinery business to earn money for Gray's education. At the age of eight, he was sent to Eton College where her brothers, Robert and William Antrobus, were teaching. (Eton College

is neither public nor a college. It is the equivalent of a prep school for boys who expected to go to Cambridge or Oxford.) He had a good classical training at Eton as well as the personal interest of his uncles. Robert Antrobus taught his nephew the fundamentals of botany and bequeathed him his scientific books. Robert Antrobus died in 1730. However, Eton gave him the most important thing -- companionship with other boys, especially with ones who had the same interest, such as books and poetry, as he. It was here where he and his three friends--Horace Walpole, son of England's prime minister, Thomas Ashton, and Richard West, son of Ireland's lord chancellor and grandson of the famous Bishop Burnet--formed the Quadruple Alliance. Because his highborn companions as West and Walpole had much influence on him, he brought out his poetical side. The poetical genius displayed imagination and emotion for the love of literature.

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In 1734 he entered Peterhouse College, Cambridge University where he studied for four years. He was deeply interested in literature and history; he was bored by mathematics, philosophy and metaphysics. He decided not to take a degree; however, he held two scholarships. Instead, he decided to change interests into law at the Inner Temple in London. However, he decided to make a Grand Tour of the continent with Walpole who paid all the expenses in March 29, 1739. Gray was a guest on this poetic journey to France, Switzerland, and Italy. Gray concluded the tour alone and returned to London in September, 1741. He was not reconciled with Walpole until 1745. After Gray's return from the Continental tour, he faced a tragic moment. In November Gray's father died. His mother, aunt, and he moved to the Village of Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire. Here he wrote his first important English poems: the "Ode on the Spring," "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," "Hymn to Adversity." Here too he began his greatest masterpiece, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." The poem was said to be the most famous and diversified of all graveyard poems written. It was these poems that solidified his reputation.

Not getting a chance to overcome the grief of his father's death, he was once again stricken with the loss of his best friend. Richard West, at the age of twenty-four, died of tuberculosis the following year. West's death inspired some of Gray's best works: "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West." This period was depicted as Gray's most emotional period. In October of 1742, Gray returned to Peterhouse College, Cambridge, as a Fellow-commoner. In December of 1743, he achieved his degree of Bachelor of Civil Law (LL.B.) at Cambridge. However, he was never called to practice law. He remained at Cambridge, and tolerated it only because it had libraries to study Greek. He wrote and rewrote but was never satisfied; as a result, he left most of his work unfinished. Walpole insisted on having some of them printed on his own press. Gray was always reluctant to publish his works. Unlike other poets, he did not want the world's applause. Throughout the years, he spent most of his time writing poetry, such as "Ode on the Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes," which he had published. Most of the poems are elegant, gloomy, and artificial: exactly what mid-century taste demanded. His other poems anticipated the Romantic age.

He was often with his mother and aunt at Stoke Poges. He traveled a great deal to London and to other parts of England, Scotland and Wales after his mother's death on March 11, 1753. On her tomb, he wrote that she was "the tender careful mother of many children: one of whom had the misfortune to survive her." When

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the British Museum (now the British Library) was opened to the public in 1759, he spent two years working in the great library. In 1762 he applied for the Regius Professorship of Modern History but was declined. However, in 1768 he was given the position because the successful candidate was killed. Although he was made professor of history at Cambridge, he never delivered any lectures, which is all that a professor did in those days.

In 1764 he had an operation from which he never recovered. At the age of fifty-five, Gray suffered a violent attack of gout in the stomach and finally died in his room on July 30, 1771 in Cambridge, London. He was buried beside his beloved mother at Stoke Poges churchyard, the scene of the "Elegy".

Gray was an exceptional poet. He wrote with sincerity, honesty, and integrity. He wrote of true thoughts, feelings, inspirations, and experience. Every word he wrote reflected upon his emotion. His works were written about peacefulness, passiveness, thoughts of joy, of nostalgia, and most importantly, of innocence. He shared his values experiences through his writings about life and displayed his intelligence, unique outlook on life, and righteous standards. His words will always be valued. Still, his words wave a heavy impact on life.

"ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD"

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

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:

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.

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

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

For them no more the blazing hearth shall 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,

Off did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

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.

The boast of heraldry, 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.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.
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?

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 ecstasy the living lyre:

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

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Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.
Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

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, --

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 upland lawn;

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.
'Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

'One 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;

'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 yon aged thorn.'

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The Epitaph

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*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.*

*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.*

4.3.3 SUMMARY

The poem begins in a churchyard with a narrator who is describing his surroundings in vivid detail. The narrator emphasizes both aural and visual sensations as he examines the area in relation to himself.

The poem starts off dark and dreary often rousing images of death. The first four stanzas establish the time and setting of the poem. There was a curfew around the time that this was written and the first line supports this. It was rung at eight o'clock as a signal for extinguishing fires and marked the end of the day. The first stanza also includes a "plowman" (line 3) who, after a hard day, is on his way home. There is a "solemn stillness" (line 6) which also suggests twilight or some time in the evening. Line 15 places the speaker in the poem in a graveyard. "Each in his narrow cell forever laid" (line 15) describes people resting eternally in their narrow cells, which are usually associated with coffins or the narrow graves that they were placed into.

The speaker of the poem then goes on to talk about the lost pleasures of the dead. Line 21 starts describing these pleasures by using a hearth or a fireplace which symbolises the light of life. The "forefathers" mentioned in the fourth stanza will no longer feel the warmth of the fire (line 21) or the love of a woman (line 22). They will not experience being welcomed by their kids when they come home from work or the fields (line 23) and having them "climb their knees" for a kiss. All these things are worldly pleasures that the dead will no longer experience.

Stanzas seven through nine deal with death as a part of life. For instance, in line 29 and 30 the speaker states that they shouldn't let their ambitions confuse their destiny, meaning the dead. Every one of us awaits the "inevitable hour" (line 35) and all our work, wealth, possessions and beauty that our life bestows on us all lead to the same "paths". "The paths of glory" (line 36) which "lead but to the grave". This also evokes the feeling of hopelessness (brought about by the death

of his friend) which Gray must have been going through at the time he wrote this. The basic concept of these few stanzas is that no matter what one does in his or her life and how valuable he or she believes it is one can not escape death; death is inevitable.

The next section of the elegy (stanzas 10 -15) goes into the description of the unhonoured dead or people who received no recognition for their life's work. We first see this in line 45 where the speaker poses a question. "Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid / Some heart...fire" are the two lines that present the question who lies in this grave and are they important? The speaker then says that there are many great people born who are never recognised. Like a flower in a desert they "blush unseen" and "waste their sweetness on the desert air"(lines 55-56) They could have been a "village Hampden"(line57) in reference to John Hampden who defied King Charles I by resisting his revival of a tax on shipping without the consent of the Parliament. The speaker also includes Milton and Cromwell. These people could have been famous but "They kept the noiseless tenor of their way"(line 76) and chose a different way of life. They were never important but they will always be a "part of history in a nations eyes"(line 64). They will live on in the memories of their friends and relatives.

The people who are being described by the speaker could have been "pregnant with celestial fire"(line 46), in other words they might have been special, but they never were. However they will live on forever as ordinary people in our memories: "...in our ashes live their wonted fires"(line 92). This is exemplified in stanza 24 when the speaker makes a reference to Gray himself. The speaker states that Gray is mindful of the "unhonoured dead"(line 93) and by relating their "artless tale"(line 94) forever burns their memory into our minds. The Elegy takes a sudden turn in stanza 24. Gray now incorporates himself as an individual who might also be remembered. "Haply some hoary-headed swain may say" (line 97) or perhaps some grey-haired man may one day remember Gray as he walked with "hasty steps"(line 99) at "the peep of dawn"(line 98) to see the sunrise on the "upland lawn" or plateau. This account continues up to and including stanza 29 where Gray walks into a graveyard and reads his own gravestone which is included as the last three stanzas of the Elegy as the Epitaph. It is not, however, his gravestone but that of his friend. He sees his friend in himself just as we presently see our forefathers in ourselves and so he places his own name on the gravestone.

By the end of the Elegy the speaker learns to accept his loss. The realisation that life goes on and that the memory of his friend will live on, just as his will live on, helps to cope with the loss. Gray started the Elegy by presenting the reader with a dilemma. In this case that dilemma was How do I cope with my loss? By the end of the Elegy that dilemma was answered. The answer was that his friend will live on in his heart and later in his remains as supported by line 92: "...in our Ashes live their...fires".

4.3.4 CRITICISM OF THE LITERARY WORK BY THOMAS GRAY

Critics have spent entire books interpreting Gray's "Elegy." Is it ironic, as Cleanth Brooks would have us believe, or is it sentimental, as Samuel Johnson might say? Does it express Gray's melancholic democratic feelings about the oneness of human experience from the perspective of death, or does Gray discuss the life and death of another elegist, one who, in his youth, suffered the same obscurity as the "rude forefathers" in the country graveyard? Should Gray have added the final "Epitaph" to his work?

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Readers whose memories have made Gray's "Elegy" one of the most loved poems in English -- nearly three-quarters of its 128 lines appear in the *Oxford Book of Quotations* -- seem unfazed by these questions. What matters to readers, over time, is the power of "Elegy" to console. Its title describes its function: lamenting someone's death, and affirming the life that preceded it so that we can be comforted. One may die after decades of anonymous labour, uneducated, unknown or scarcely remembered, one's potential unrealized, Gray's poem says, but that life will have as many joys, and far fewer ill effects on others, than lives of the rich, the powerful, the famous. Also, the great memorials that money can buy do no more for the deceased than a common grave marker. In the end, what counts is friendship, being mourned, being cried for by someone who was close. Gray's restraint, his habit of speaking in universals rather than particulars, and his shifting from one speaker to another, control the powerful feelings these lines call up. They frame everything at some distance from the viewer.

The poem opens with a death-bell sounding, a knell. The lowing of cattle, the droning of a beetle in flight, the tinkling of sheep-bells, and the owl's hooting mourn the passing of a day, described metaphorically as if it were a person, and then suitably the narrator's eye shifts to a human graveyard. From creatures that wind, plod, wheel, and wander, he looks on still, silent "mould'ring" heaps, and on turf under a moonlit tower where "The rude forefathers" "sleep" in a "lowly bed." Gray makes his sunset a truly human death-knell. No morning bird-song, evening family life, or farming duties will wake, welcome, or occupy them. They have fallen literally under the sickle, the ploughshare, and the axe that they once wielded. They once tilled glebe land, fields owned by the church, but now lie under another church property, the parish graveyard.

4.3.5 THEMES/ MOTIVES/ EXAMINING THE POEM

The poem is similar to many British poems that contemplate death and sought to make it more familiar. The elegy contemplates the death of the poet and is similar to other works within the British tradition, including Jonathan Swift's *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, a satirical version of a eulogy. When compared to other poems within the Graveyard School, such as Blair's *The Grave* (1743), the poem has less emphasis on common images. His description of mundane things diverges from the grim nature of other poems and Gray uses euphemisms instead of blatant mention of a grave.

The two versions of the elegy differ in that the early one ends with an emphasis on the narrator joining with the obscure common man, while the later version ends with an emphasis on how it is natural for humans to want to be known. The later ending also explores the narrator's own death, whereas the earlier version serves as a Christian consolation regarding death.

The first version of the elegy is among the few early poems composed by Gray in English, including "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West," his "Eton Ode", and his "Ode to Adversity". All four contain Gray's meditations on mortality that were inspired by West's death. The later version of the poem kept the stoic resignation regarding death, as the narrator still accepts death. The poem concludes with an epitaph, which reinforces Gray's indirect and reticent manner of writing. Although the ending reveals the narrator's repression of feelings surrounding his inevitable fate, it is optimistic. The epitaph describes faith in a "trembling hope" that he cannot know while alive.

Gray's "Elegy" is one of the best-known poems about death in all of European literature. The poem presents the reflections of an observer who, passing by a churchyard that is out in the country, stops for a moment to think about the

significance of the strangers buried there. Scholars of medieval times sometimes kept human skulls on their desktops, to keep themselves conscious of the fact that someday they, like the skulls' former occupants, would die: from this practice we get the phrase *memento mori*, which we say to this day to describe any token one uses to keep one's mortality in mind. In this poem, the graveyard acts as a *memento mori*, reminding the narrator to not place too much value on this life because someday he too will be dead and buried.

Gray wrote the poem in four-line stanzas (quatrains). Each line is in iambic pentameter - each line has five pairs of syllables for a total of ten syllables, in each pair, the first syllable is unstressed (or unaccented), and the second is stressed (or accented), as in the two lines that open the poem:

The CUR few TOLLS the KNELL of PART ing DAY.

The LOW ing HERD wind SLOW ly O'ER the LEA

In each stanza, the first line rhymes with the third and the second line rhymes with the fourth (abab), as follows:

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

SUMMARY

After going through this unit, you will be able to understand the poem along with the author's perspective. You will be able to analyse the poem with its characters and in what context the poet has said it.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Criticize the literary work of John Dryden.
2. Who has been referred to in the poem *Mac Flecknoe*?
3. What was the theme/motive behind *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*?
4. What metaphors/ rhymes were used by Thomas Gray?
5. Analyse the work of Thomas Gray.

FURTHER READINGS

- Oden, Richard, L. Dryden and Shadwell. *The Literary Controversy and 'Mac Flecknoe': 1668-1679*
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- Harold Child. *William Cowper in Ward & Trent et al: The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1907-21

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