

**M.A. English
Semester-1
MEG-102**

**History of English Literature I
(1550-1600)**



Message for Students

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Prof. (Dr.) Ami Upadhyay

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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University
(Established by Government of Gujarat)

MEG 102

History of English Literature 1550-1660

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UNIT-1

INTRODUCTION TO ELIZABETHAN AGE UP TO RESTORATION AGE

Structure:

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

- In this unit, students will understand the history of England.
- This unit will also explain the Royal Houses that ruled England until the Restoration age.
- Some of the most important events that affected Europe, like "Renaissance", "Growth of Science", and "Exploration", will be discussed in this unit.
- Students will get acquainted with the relationship between religion and the political situation in England during the 1600s.
- The unit will also cover critical social elements during the Elizabethan age.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Elizabethan Age, commonly called the Elizabethan Age or the Golden Age, is renowned for its outstanding literary, artistic, and cultural accomplishments and political and social advancements. In 1558, Queen Elizabeth I took the throne in place of her half-sister, Queen Mary I, who had passed away. She ended the Tudor dynasty's reign and became one of English's most recognizable and significant monarchs. Strong political savvy, knowledge, and leadership were hallmarks of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Significant religious tensions and disputes existed during the Elizabethan Period, especially between Catholics and Protestants. Establishing the Church of England, which combined elements of Catholicism and Protestantism, Elizabeth I followed a balanced approach to religion.

The Elizabethan Age was noteworthy for its exploration and expansion. In order to establish England's influence and widen trade channels, English explorers like Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh set sail for new countries in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. These endeavours helped England become a more powerful maritime and colonial nation. Due to the queen's love of costly attire and the court's proclivity for display, Elizabethan fashion was extravagant and opulent. With its pomp and ceremony, the Elizabethan court was a hub of political intrigue and cultural patronage. Political stability and economic expansion during this time brought in a period of largely tranquilly and prosperity for England. The Elizabethan Period played a vital role in the history and culture of England. Its effect may be seen in the classic literary works, the exploration and growth of England's influence, the intellectual and scientific advances, and the flourishing of theatre and the arts. Scholars, artists, and fans continue to be enthralled by and inspired by this period.

1.2 HISTORY OF ENGLAND

Julius Caesar invaded England in 55 and 54 BCE during his campaigns in Gaul (modern-day France). Roman general and politician Julius Caesar worked to increase the authority and power of the Roman Republic. He

was also motivated by a desire for personal success and military glory. Britain, which was seen to be a land rich in resources and possible allies against the Gauls, was where Caesar sought to establish a Roman presence. Caesar led a little force of two legions (about 10,000 soldiers) and a fleet over the English Channel to Britain in 55 BCE. Roman colonists may have arrived close to Dover on the southeast coast. Nevertheless, they encountered ferocious opposition from the local Celtic tribes led by Cassivellaunus.

Caesar's initial invasion faced several difficulties. Progress was challenging because of the challenging terrain, severe weather, and opposition of the British tribes. Caesar withdrew his men after a few conflicts because he had only had modest military success. Caesar launched a second invasion of Britain the following year, in 54 BCE, unfazed by the failures of his previous expedition. This time, He brought more troops, around 27,000 soldiers, including cavalry. When the Romans landed once more in southeast Britain, they were better equipped to handle the native tribes' resistance.

Through military strategies, diplomatic manoeuvres, and the installation of client monarchs devoted to Rome, Caesar defeated Cassivellaunus and numerous other British tribes during the second invasion. He successfully established limited control over regions in southeast Britain and demanded payment from the subjugated tribes. Although Caesar declared triumph in his conquests of Britain, their effects lasted only briefly. On the island, the Romans had no long-lasting settlements or presence. Instead, the missions served more as a display of Roman might and a chance for Caesar to enhance his standing and win political backing in Rome.

Caesar's missions built the foundation for future Roman invasions of Britain. The information gathered from these battles, notably regarding the island's geology, population, and resources, was helpful for later Roman conquests by Emperor Claudius in 43 CE. The invasions of Britain by Julius Caesar had a significant impact on Roman military strategy and

helped to shape the story of Roman-British relations throughout history. Although Caesar's voyages did not lead to long-term Roman dominance, they paved the way for later attempts to annex Britain and expand the Roman Empire. Thus, England was a Roman Britannia province for hundreds of years.

The Romans later gave up on the province, and England was settled by waves of Germanic people (Anglo-Saxons). Invasion by the Anglo-Saxons into England started in the fifth and sixth centuries CE. Although the exact dates are unknown, it is widely accepted that the invasions occurred between the middle of the fifth and the beginning of the seventh century. Germanic tribes from what is now modern-day Germany and Denmark made up the Anglo-Saxons. After the Roman Empire collapsed, they migrated to England, known as Britannia. The migration of the Anglo-Saxons and the successive invasions were gradual and intricate processes. It involved numerous waves of Germanic tribes coming to England and settling in various regions. The principal tribes were the Anglo-Saxons, the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes.

The invasions were a succession of migrations, battles, and settlements rather than a coordinated military operation. The native Celtic Britons who had previously lived on the island were eventually driven out or assimilated by the Anglo-Saxons. The migration of the Anglo-Saxons had a profound effect on the history and culture of England. New kingdoms were founded as a result of the invasion of the Germanic tribes, and the English nation itself was born. A distinctive Anglo-Saxon civilization, language (Old English), and legal and political systems emerged during the Anglo-Saxon period, sometimes called the Early Mediaeval period or the Dark Ages.

Historical descriptions of this time are rare and frequently rely on later writings, lore, and archaeological data should be noted. As a result, the precise timeline and specifics of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England still need to be determined. However, it is generally acknowledged that the

Anglo-Saxons were instrumental in creating England's history and national identity.

The Viking invasions of England started in the late eighth century and persisted throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. The Vikings were a group of seafaring warriors and traders from Scandinavia (present-day Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) who preyed upon various places in England, including coastal and river settlements. When Vikings invaded the Lindisfarne monastery in Northumbria in 793 CE, it was the first Viking raid on England. An era of Viking raids and assaults on English territory began with this raid.

During the ninth century, the attacks became more frequent, with the Vikings attacking a variety of sites, including monasteries, cities, and prosperous commercial hubs. They were looking for wealth, loot, and enslaved people. Because of their longships' speed and mobility, the Vikings could travel along rivers and beaches, conduct surprise attacks, and then flee with their treasure. Along with conducting raids on England, the Vikings built more substantial settlements, mainly in the eastern and northern regions. The Danelaw, which the Vikings governed, developed into a unique political and cultural realm with its traditions.

In addition to raiding and colonizing, the Vikings fought alongside nearby Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and formed political relationships with them. Conflicts like those sparked by the expeditions of the Great Heathen Army in the ninth century resulted from their desire to conquer and dominate portions of England. Guthrum, a Viking chief, even founded the Danelaw Kingdom in East Anglia. The Viking invasions and raids significantly impacted England. They created political unrest, harmed the local economy, and contributed to the downfall of monastic organizations. The Viking presence also impacted language and culture, with Norse terms and practices leaving a permanent mark on Old English.

The Danish monarch Sweyn Forkbeard invaded in 1013, and his son Cnut the Great ruled afterwards, becoming king of England in 1016. Over time,

the Viking attacks evolved into more organized military assaults. The Vikings' conquest of the entire kingdom signalled a crucial turning point in history. Remembering that the Viking Age in England was a tough time marked by warfare and cross-cultural exchange is critical. Ultimately, the Vikings assimilated into the local people and helped to forge a unified English identity.

King Edward the Confessor ruled England at the beginning of the 11th century; he had no natural successors. William, Duke of Normandy, and English noble Harold Godwinson were among the contenders for the throne of England. Despite Edward's earlier commitment to give the throne to William, Harold became king after Edward's passing in January 1066. William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy, believed Harold's crowning violated Edward's vow. William commanded an invasion force that crossed the English Channel in September 1066 and landed at Pevensey in Sussex. The Norman Invasion is the name for this occurrence. The Battle of Hastings, which took place on October 14, 1066, was the most important conflict of the conquest.

Near the East Sussex town of Hastings, William's Normans and Harold's men engaged in combat. According to historical records, the English were decimated after a day of ferocious combat, and Harold was dead. After the Battle of Hastings, William continued his military campaign, progressively crushing opposition and establishing his rule over England. Various English nobility opposed him, but over time many of them succumbed and acknowledged him as their king. William was crowned the king of England in Westminster Abbey in December 1066. His crowning served as a reminder that Norman control had been established formally. By erecting castles, imposing feudal systems, and enacting legislative and administrative changes, William aimed to increase his authority.

During his rule, the Domesday Book, a thorough inventory of England's territory and resources, was commissioned. England was profoundly and permanently affected by the Norman Conquest. The Normans established

a new ruling class led by French-speaking nobles. While English remained the language of the people, Norman French became the language of the court, government, and elite classes. England adopted feudalism following the Norman Conquest, when the land was retained in exchange for military service. William introduced a more centralised government structure and bureaucratic administration, which helped to consolidate power and increase royal authority.

Grand castles and cathedrals in the Romanesque style, such as Durham Cathedral and the Tower of London, were built by the Normans, who also had an impact on English architecture. English literature also reflected Norman influences, as seen in the renowned Bayeux Tapestry, which recounts the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings. The Norman Conquest forever changed England, which changed the country's political, social, and cultural landscape. It signalled the start of Norman authority in England and the blending of English and Norman customs, which resulted in the growth of a distinctive Anglo-Norman culture. The conquest linked England more closely with Europe and created one of the most powerful monarchies in Europe.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE ROYAL HOUSES

The following is an overview of the major royal houses that have ruled England. Queen Elizabeth belonged to the Tudor Royal House and was the monarch of England from 1558 till her death in 1603.

1. House of Wessex (880-1013), (1014-1016), (1042-1066)
2. House of Denmark (1013-1014), (1016-1042)
3. House of Normandy (1066-1135)
4. House of Blois (1135-1154)
5. House of Plantagenet (1154-1485)

- 5.1. House of Lancaster (1399-1461)
- 5.2. House of York (1461-1485)
6. House of Tudor (1485-1603)
7. House of Stuart (1603-1649)
8. Interregnum period (1649-1660)
9. House of Stuart (1660-1714)

1.4 POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

From 1337 to 1453, The Hundred Years' War took place. It was a long struggle between England and France over succession to the French throne. From 1455 to 1487, The Wars of the Roses took place between Lancaster and York for the throne of England. In 1485, the Tudor dynasty came to power in England with Henry VII (1485-1509). After Henry VII, his son Henry VIII, came to power (1509-1547). Henry VIII was a volatile and cruel person. Obsessed for a son to become his heir, he married six times.

Because his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, could not bore him a son, he decided to annul his marriage. The Pope (Roman Catholic Church) refused. So, Henry VIII decided that the church could not be allowed to have powers over the monarch of England. He ended the Catholic church's role and declared that the king would be the supreme political ruler of England and its spiritual leader. He brought the church of England closer to Protestantism, which began with Martin Luther King in 1517 in Germany. Henry VIII had three children: Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. During Edward VI's reign (1547-1553), Protestantism became the official religion of England.

After Edward VI, Mary I came to power. (1553-1558). Determined to restore England to the Catholic faith. She had many Protestants burned at the stake. (about 284, including 56 women) Because of this, she is now referred to as 'Bloody Mary'. After Mary I, Elizabeth I became the monarch of England. (1558-1603) She gave stability to England. The

religious question that had divided the country since Henry VIII was put to rest by the Elizabethan Religious Settlement. In 1559, the Parliament of England passed the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. Act of Supremacy gave complete control of the Church of England to Elizabeth. Act of Uniformity is a form of worship where church services should be conducted according to the 1552 Book of Prayer, and church attendance became compulsory.

England's new church (Anglican church) was established in December 1559 at Canterbury, with Matthew Parker consecrated as the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Elizabeth and Parker drew on the aspects of Catholicism and Protestantism, and both opposed religious extremism and avoided extreme practices and beliefs of both Protestantism and Catholicism. Elizabeth did not marry, hence remained childless.

After her death, James VI (great-great-grandson of Henry VII), cousin of Elizabeth, King of Scotland, succeeded to the English throne in 1603 as James I in the Union of the Crowns. (Jacobean Age 1603-1625) Being a King of Scotland and now ruling England and Ireland, England, Ireland, and Scotland was unified. However, the 'perfect union' King James hoped for was still far away. Scotland and England kept their parliaments and laws and minted their coinage.

After James I and VI, Charles I became the monarch of England. (Caroline, Age 1625-1649). He quarreled with the Parliament of England and levied taxes without parliament's consent. His religious policies were also disputable. He believed in the divine right of kings and thought he could govern according to his conscience. People perceived his actions as those of a tyrannical absolute monarch. Hence, civil wars started in 1642. Civil wars were between Parliamentarians (also known as Roundheads as they supported the parliament of England and Scotland) and Royalists (also known as Cavaliers as they supported Charles I). The result was that Charles I was executed in 1649, his son Charles II was exiled, and Republican Commonwealth was established. Oliver Cromwell became the

Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. (Interregnum Period 1649-1660)
The period ended in 1660 with the Restoration of Charles II as the Monarch of England.

1.5 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The Elizabethan Age, which corresponds to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I from 1558 to 1603, was a period of significant social, cultural, and economic change in England. The following are some critical aspects of the social conditions during this time.

A. Renaissance: Renaissance is a French word which means ‘rebirth’, ‘revival’ or ‘reawakening’. It began in Italy around the 14th century. There was a revival of ancient classical mythology, literature, painting, sculpture and architecture. In literature, Petrarch and Boccaccio were the pioneers of the revival of classical literature (humanism). Humanism includes all aspects of the study of humans: medicine, philosophy and psychology. From Italy, Renaissance spread to Germany, Spain, France, Netherlands and finally England.

There were some important events associated with Renaissance:

- a. The Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Ottoman Empire had defeated the Byzantine (Roman) Empire. Hence, Islam spread in Europe. Several Greek and non-Greek intellectuals fled the city and migrated mainly to Italy. Many of these refugees took vast riches of ancient art and knowledge, helping ignite the Renaissance.
- b. European invention of printing by movable type: The invention of printing by movable type came into being around 1450. Johannes Gutenberg of Germany invented it. It was a highly advanced method of printing made with movable components. Mass-produced books replaced the hand-crafted manuscript. In England, the first printing press was set up by William Caxton in 1476.
- b. Social hierarchy: The queen was at the pinnacle of the tight social structure in England, including the nobles, gentry, and commoners.

Most of the population comprised peasants and labourers, while the nobility and gentry held considerable wealth, territory, and political influence.

The Elizabethan period saw a significant wealth disparity. Large country estates and opulent residences were common among the wealthy aristocracy and gentry. Conversely, some of the populace needed help to meet their basic requirements. The Poor Laws were implemented to combat poverty, yet many people continued to live in appalling circumstances.

- c. Agriculture: During this time, common lands were enclosed, turning them into privately owned land and uprooting many rural peasants. Increased agricultural output was the outcome, but a labouring class without access to land was also produced.
- d. Religious conflict: During Elizabeth, I's rule, England underwent a conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism. In order to please both Catholic and Protestant factions, the Elizabethan Religious Settlement created the Church of England as the official state church while also attempting to preserve some Catholic customs.
- e. Growth of Science: In 1543, Nicolaus Copernicus argued that the sun is at the centre of the universe. Earlier, the theory endorsed by the church was the Ptolemaic theory which mentioned that the Earth is at the centre of the universe. Kepler and Galileo discovered several planets. 'Reason' and 'Rationality' became the crucial driving force for finding explanations for human behaviour, physiology and appearance. This ultimately led to the reduction of the influence of religion.

- f. Exploring: Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492. Commercial transactions began. English people went to West Indies and South Africa and returned with silver, gold, pearls, silk, spices and others.

- g. Growth of nationalism and patriotic spirit: The defeat of the Spanish Armada was a significant event. The Spanish Armada was a vast fleet of 130 ships intended to invade England and depose Queen Elizabeth I. However, the English fleet, which had about 200 ships, used creative strategies and had better maneuverability, which was essential to their success. The Armada arrived off the coast of England on July 21, 1588, sparking the start of the conflict. The English sent out fire ships—uncrewed ships set ablaze and sent in the direction of the Spanish fleet. In a state of panic, Spanish ships broke apart their formation by dispersing to avoid the fire ships.

The English fleet subsequently fought the scattered Armada over the ensuing days in more minor engagements. With their smaller, more maneuverable ships, the English ships could significantly damage the larger Spanish galleons. The English also effectively used their long-range weapons to keep the Armada at bay. The Spanish Armada was forced to retire northward through Scotland and Ireland after several days of combat to return to Spain. However, unfavourable weather, such as storms and strong winds, resulted in more damage and ship losses.

The remaining members of the Armada had sustained severe losses by the time they made their way back to Spain. Around 50 ships perished, were taken, or were wrecked, and hundreds of Spanish sailors perished. An important turning point in the Anglo-Spanish War was the destruction of the Spanish Armada, which weakened

Spain's naval supremacy and cemented England's position as a significant maritime power. This led to the growth of patriotism and nationalism in England, and England became the most potent force on the seas.

- h. Commercial gains: In 1600, merchants were granted a 'charter' for foreign trade. This led to the formation of the East India Company. Eventually, England became the greatest empire in the world.
- i. Individualism: There was an emphasis on individualism. Individualism was a feature of Greek literature. The result of this individualism was that the Renaissance men did not care for authority, and were free in making their own decisions.
- j. Civility: A significant feature of individualism was the insistence on a well-rounded man. An accomplished courtier of the Renaissance should be able to fence, ride, read Latin and Greek, organize a siege of a city, or write a sonnet to a lady. Rise in 'courtesy' and 'manners'. All over Europe, there was growth in courtesy books. For e.g., Castiglione's *Courtier*.
- k. Gender: Elizabethan England was highly patriarchal. The husband or father was at the top of the hierarchy. Women did not enjoy too much freedom as compared to men. They were to maintain silence in the public sphere. They were instructed to practice chastity. Gender roles are defined in texts such as *The Book of Common Prayer* and *The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights*.
- l. Patronage: The court of Queen Elizabeth was a hub of politics, culture, and entertainment. The queen's courtiers vied with one another for favour and support, creating a thriving literary and cultural scene. Several playwrights, including William

Shakespeare, rose to prominence during this time, thanks to the court's encouragement.

- m. Age of drama and poetry: Elizabethan age was an age of significant thought and great action, appealing to the eyes, imagination, and intellect. Only a couple of literary expressions expressed the whole man, precisely his thought, feeling, action, and the resulting character. Hence in the age of Elizabeth, literature turned instinctively to drama and poetry and brought it rapidly to the highest stage of its development.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

The period from 1558 to 1603 that included Queen Elizabeth I of England's reign is known as the Elizabethan Age. It is seen as a period of significant political, social, and economic changes and a flourishing of the arts, intellect, and culture. The daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth I, ascended to the throne at 25 and ruled for 45 years. Due to England's wealth and stability under her reign, this period is frequently called the "Golden Age." Queen Elizabeth became a respected ruler due to her capable leadership, sharp intelligence, and political savviness.

Politically speaking, the Elizabethan period was relatively stable, especially compared to the Tudor age that came before it. The religious persecutions under her half-sister, Queen Mary I, stopped under Queen Elizabeth's skillful balancing of Catholic and Protestant forces. The Elizabethan Religious Settlement, established by Queen Elizabeth I, sought to create a middle ground between Protestant and Catholic beliefs. It maintained some Catholic customs and practices while establishing the Church of England as the official state church. This agreement reduced religious strife and helped to stabilize the religious landscape.

The Elizabethan Period was contemporaneous with the Renaissance, a time of artistic and intellectual Renaissance. Humanist theories rose to prominence, emphasizing the study of ancient literature, rhetoric, and philosophy. Classical works served as an inspiration for contemporary literary masterpieces that academics, poets, and playwrights wrote. English literature and play from the Elizabethan era are frequently praised as exceptional. During this period, playwrights like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Ben Jonson flourished, creating timeless masterpieces that are still admired today. Public theatres like the Globe Theatre flourished as theatre grew in popularity as entertainment.

English exploration and colonization endeavours increased significantly throughout the Elizabethan Period. Explorers like Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh set out on expeditions that increased trade with other countries and enlarged England's foreign holdings. The first English colonies in the New World were founded at this time. Trade, overseas endeavours, and the growth of sectors like the textile and mining industries all contributed to the considerable economic boom that characterized the Elizabethan Age. Wealth growth and middle-class expansion in England sparked a rise in consumerism and a booming domestic economy.

Elaborate and intricate attire for both men and women characterized the fashion trends of the Elizabethan era. Literature and portraiture from the era provide insights into the social and cultural ideals of the day, showing the significance of symbolism, social hierarchy, and courtly etiquette. The history and culture of England were forever changed during the Elizabethan Period. The reign of Queen Elizabeth I served as a beacon of stability and advancement during a time of astounding achievements in literature, exploration, and the arts. The era's contributions to drama, literature and the continuing influence of its leading people continue to be honored today.

1.7 KEYWORDS

Aristocracy-the people of the highest social class who often have notable titles

BCE-Before Common Era or Before Current Era or Before Christian Era: used when referring to a year before the birth of Jesus Christ when the Christian calendar starts counting years

CE-Common Era or Christian era: used when referring to a year after the birth of Jesus Christ when the Christian calendar starts counting years:

Consecrated-to state formally in a special ceremony that a place or an object can be used for religious purposes

Dynasty-a series of rulers who are from the same family

Endeavours-to try hard

Enthralled to hold somebody's interest and attention completely

Exploration-the act of travelling around a place in order to learn about it

Gentry-people belonging to a high social class

Half-sister-a person's brother or sister who has one parent in common.

Interregnum period-the time during which a throne is vacant between two successive reigns or regimes

Manuscript-a ancient book or document that was written by hand

Medieval-connected with the period in history between about 1100 and 1500 AD (the Middle Ages)

Nobles-(in past times) a person who belonged to the highest social class and had a unique title

Opulent-made or decorated with expensive materials

Patriarchal-(used about society or system) controlled by men rather than women; passing power, property, etc., from father to son rather than from mother to daughter

Peasant-(used especially in past times) a person who owns or rents a small piece of land on which he/she grows food and keeps animals in order to feed his/her family

Renaissance-the revival of European art and literature under the influence of classical models in the 14th–16th centuries

Savvy-shrewdness and practical knowledge; the ability to make sound judgments

Subjugated-to defeat somebody/something and make them obey you; to gain control over somebody/something

Succession-a number of people or things that follow each other in time or order; a series

Tyrannical-using, showing, or relating to the unfair and cruel use of power over other people in a country, group, etc.

1.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct option:

1) Queen Elizabeth I ascended the English throne in ____.

- a) 1557 b) 1558 c) 1559 d) 1560

2) Which present-day nation is not a part of Scandinavia?

- a) Denmark b) England c) Norway d) Sweden

3) When was Charles I executed?

- a) 1603 b) 1625 c) 1660 d) 1649

4) In which year did the Parliament of England pass the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity?

- a) 1559 b) 1563 c) 1576 d) 1582

5) 'Renaissance' is a ____ word.

- a) Italian b) French c) German d) Greek

6) Constantinople fell in ____.

- a) 1452 b) 1473 c) 1453 d) 1482

7) William Caxton set up the first printing press in England in _____.

- a) 1465 b) 1489 c) 1476 d) 1477

8) Christopher Columbus discovered America in _____.

- a) 1499 b) 1493 c) 1492 d) 1496

9) The Spanish Armada was defeated in _____.

- a) 1588 b) 1582 c) 1584 d) 1586

10) The Interregnum period was from _____.

- a) 1558-1603 b) 1603-1625 c) 1625-1649 d)

1649-1660

Answer in brief:

1) What was the 'Renaissance'?

2) Why is Mary I known as 'Bloody Mary'?

3) What was the religious conflict that England experienced during the Elizabethan age?

4) What led to the growth of nationalism and patriotic spirit?

5) What was the social hierarchy during the Elizabethan age?

Write a detailed note on the following questions:

1) Write a detailed note on the history of England before the Elizabethan age.

2) What were the social and political factors during the Elizabethan age?

1.9 SUGGESTED READING

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Structure:**2.0 Objectives****2.1 Introduction: The Elizabethan Age****2.2 Literary Characteristics of the Elizabethan Age****2.3 Major Writers of the Elizabethan Age****2.4 The Renaissance and the Reformation****2.5 Elizabethan Drama****2.6 Elizabethan Poetry****2.7 Elizabethan Prose****2.8 Introduction: The Caroline Age****2.9 Major writers of the Caroline Age****2.10 The Metaphysical School of Poetry****2.11 The political and social conflicts of the Caroline Age****Questions****MCQs****2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

To understand the major literary characteristics of the Elizabethan Age, including its contributions to drama, poetry, and prose.

- To explore the works of significant writers of the Elizabethan Age and their impact on English literature.
- To examine the historical and social context of the Elizabethan Age and its influence on literary production.
- To analyse the themes and techniques employed in metaphysical poetry and its prominent poets.
- To comprehend the political and social conflicts of the Caroline Age and their impact on literature and culture.

- To identify the major writers of the Caroline Age and their notable contributions to English literature.
- To discuss the legacy of the Elizabethan and Caroline Ages and their significance in shaping subsequent literary movements and periods.

2.1 INTRODUCTION: THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

The Elizabethan Age, also known as the Elizabethan era or the Golden Age, refers to the period of English history that coincided with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Spanning from 1558 to 1603, this epoch is widely regarded as one of the most remarkable and transformative periods in English history, characterized by significant advancements in various fields such as literature, arts, exploration, and politics.

The Elizabethan Age derives its name from Queen Elizabeth I, the daughter of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, who ascended to the throne in 1558. Elizabeth's reign marked a significant turning point in English history, following the tumultuous reigns of her half-siblings, Edward VI and Mary I. Known for her intelligence, political astuteness, and diplomatic skills, Queen Elizabeth I played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural, social, and political landscape of England during this period.

One of the defining features of the Elizabethan Age was its flourishing artistic and literary scene. The period witnessed the emergence of some of the greatest literary figures in English history, including William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, and Ben Jonson. These playwrights and poets produced enduring works that continue to captivate audiences to this day. The theatres, such as the famous Globe Theatre in London, were bustling with performances of plays and masques, attracting people from all walks of life.

The Elizabethan era was also a time of great exploration and expansion for England. With the rise of naval power, explorers such as Sir Francis Drake

and Sir Walter Raleigh embarked on daring voyages, discovering new lands and establishing colonies. These endeavours not only brought wealth and prestige to England but also expanded its influence on the world stage. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, a significant naval victory over Spain, further solidified England's position as a rising global power.

In addition to artistic and exploratory achievements, the Elizabethan Age witnessed substantial advancements in science, medicine, and philosophy. Scholars like Francis Bacon and Thomas Harriot contributed to the development of the scientific method and made significant strides in various fields of study. The period also witnessed the flourishing of humanism, with thinkers such as Sir Philip Sidney and Roger Ascham advocating for the pursuit of knowledge, virtue, and a well-rounded education.

The Elizabethan Age was not without its challenges. Religious tensions, particularly between Protestants and Catholics, simmered beneath the surface and occasionally erupted into acts of violence. The era also saw the expansion of England's involvement in international conflicts, including wars with Spain and Ireland. Nevertheless, the reign of Queen Elizabeth I provided stability and a sense of national unity that allowed the country to thrive in spite of these challenges.

The Elizabethan Age was a remarkable period in English history, characterized by a flourishing of artistic, intellectual, and cultural achievements. It was a time of great exploration, scientific advancements, and the emergence of iconic literary works. Queen Elizabeth I's reign provided a stable and prosperous environment for these developments, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to shape English culture and identity to this day.

2.2 LITERARY CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ELIZABETHAN AGE:

The Elizabethan Age is renowned for its literary achievements and is often considered the pinnacle of English Renaissance literature. This period saw the emergence of some of the greatest writers in the English language, who produced enduring works that continue to be celebrated today. Here are some of the key literary characteristics of the Elizabethan Age:

- i. **Drama and Playwriting:** The Elizabethan era is often referred to as the "Age of Shakespeare" due to the unparalleled contributions of William Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The period saw the establishment of public theatres in London, such as the Globe Theatre, where plays were performed for a diverse audience. The Elizabethan drama encompassed a wide range of genres, including tragedies, comedies, histories, and romances. Shakespeare's plays, such as "Hamlet," "Romeo and Juliet," and "Macbeth," showcased intricate plots, vivid characters, and profound exploration of human nature.
- ii. **Sonnets and Poetry:** The Elizabethan Age witnessed a flourishing of poetry, particularly in the form of sonnets. Sonnet sequences became popular, with writers like William Shakespeare, Sir Philip Sidney, and Edmund Spenser crafting intricate and emotionally expressive poems. These sonnets often explored themes of love, beauty, time, and the fleeting nature of human existence. Shakespeare's collection of sonnets, in particular, is considered a masterpiece of the form.
- iii. **Language and Rhetoric:** The Elizabethan writers revealed in the richness and versatility of the English language. They employed vivid imagery, metaphors, wordplay, and rhetorical devices to captivate their audiences. Shakespeare, in particular, was known for his mastery of language, his ability to create memorable speeches, soliloquies, and dialogues that showcased the breadth and depth of human expression.
- iv. **Humanism and Classical Influence:** The Elizabethan writers drew inspiration from classical Greek and Roman literature and philosophy.

Humanism, a cultural movement that emphasized the importance of human values, education, and individualism, greatly influenced the literature of the era. Writers like Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser incorporated humanist ideals into their works, exploring themes of virtue, love, and honour.

- v. Historical and Political Themes: The Elizabethan Age was a time of political intrigue and significant historical events. Writers often drew inspiration from historical figures, legends, and events, crafting plays and poems that explored political power, loyalty, and the consequences of ambition. Shakespeare's historical plays, such as "Richard III" and "Henry V," exemplify this trend, providing insights into the complex political landscape of the time.
- vi. Metaphysical Poetry: Alongside the more popular sonnet sequences, the Elizabethan Age witnessed the rise of metaphysical poetry. Poets like John Donne and George Herbert explored complex metaphysical ideas, blending religious and philosophical concepts with wit, intellectualism, and intricate wordplay. Their poems often tackled profound questions about the nature of love, faith, and existence.

The literary characteristics of the Elizabethan Age reflect a period of tremendous creativity, innovation, and exploration of human emotions, ideas, and societal concerns. The works produced during this era continue to inspire and resonate with readers, leaving an indelible mark on the English literary tradition.

2.3 MAJOR WRITERS OF THE ELIZABETHAN AGE:

The Elizabethan Age was a period of exceptional literary output, characterized by the emergence of some of the greatest writers in the English language. These writers not only shaped the literary landscape of their time but also left an enduring legacy that continues to inspire and

influence literature to this day. Here is a detailed note on some of the major writers of the Elizabethan Age:

William Shakespeare (1564-1616):

Undoubtedly the most celebrated playwright of the Elizabethan Age, William Shakespeare is renowned for his extraordinary contributions to English literature. His plays, such as "Hamlet," "Romeo and Juliet," "Macbeth," and "Othello," are considered masterpieces of dramatic art. Shakespeare's works display unparalleled insight into human nature, complex characters, rich language, and profound exploration of themes ranging from love and jealousy to power and destiny. His legacy is immeasurable, and his plays continue to be performed and studied worldwide.

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593):

A contemporary of Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe was a highly influential playwright and poet. His works, such as "Tamburlaine the Great" and "Doctor Faustus," broke new ground in terms of poetic grandeur, dramatic intensity, and exploration of tragic themes. Marlowe's plays often centered around ambitious and conflicted protagonists and dealt with issues of power, morality, and the human condition.

Edmund Spenser (1552/1553-1599):

Edmund Spenser was a poet and author best known for his epic poem, "The Faerie Queene." This ambitious work, composed of six books, celebrates the virtues of chivalry, morality, and the Tudor dynasty. Spenser's poetic style, characterized by rich imagery, allegory, and intricate verse, had a profound influence on subsequent generations of poets. His contributions to the development of the English language and poetic tradition are highly regarded.

Ben Jonson (1572-1637):

Ben Jonson was a versatile playwright, poet, and critic. Known for his wit and satirical prowess, Jonson's comedies, such as "Volpone" and "The Alchemist," exhibit sharp social commentary and biting humor. Jonson was also a prominent figure in the literary circles of his time, known for his involvement in the intellectual and cultural life of London. His works reflect a keen understanding of human nature and society, showcasing his skill as a playwright and poet.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586):

Sir Philip Sidney was a poet, courtier, and soldier whose works had a significant impact on Elizabethan literature. His sonnet sequence, "Astrophel and Stella," explores themes of love, desire, and the complexities of human relationships. Sidney's prose work, "The Defense of Poesy," defends the value and significance of poetry as a means of moral and intellectual exploration. His writings exemplify the spirit of humanism and the blending of poetic artistry with philosophical depth.

John Donne (1572-1631):

John Donne, a metaphysical poet, is renowned for his complex and intellectually challenging verse. His poems, such as "The Flea," "Holy Sonnets," and "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," explore themes of love, faith, and the spiritual dimensions of human existence. Donne's poetry displays a remarkable combination of wit, metaphysical conceits, and emotional depth, making him a leading figure in the metaphysical poetry movement of the Elizabethan era.

These are just a few of the major writers who emerged during the Elizabethan Age. Their works, marked by creativity, innovation, and profound insights into the human condition, continue to be celebrated and studied.

2.4 THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION:

The Renaissance: The Renaissance was a period of cultural and intellectual rebirth that took place in Europe from the 14th to the 17th centuries. It marked a transition from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern period and saw a revival of interest in classical learning, art, science, and humanistic philosophy. Here are some detailed notes on the Renaissance:

Humanism: The Renaissance was characterized by the rise of humanism, an intellectual and cultural movement that focused on human potential and achievements. Humanists emphasized the importance of education, individualism, and the study of classical texts, including those from ancient Greece and Rome. Humanist scholars sought to reconcile classical wisdom with Christian teachings and placed a greater emphasis on secular subjects such as literature, history, and philosophy.

Art and Architecture: Renaissance art witnessed a shift from the symbolic and stylized forms of the Middle Ages to a more realistic and naturalistic representation of the world. Artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael produced iconic works that reflected the ideals of beauty, proportion, and harmony inspired by classical aesthetics. Renaissance architecture, characterized by its grandeur, symmetry, and use of classical elements, produced notable structures such as Brunelleschi's dome in Florence and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Scientific Advancements: The Renaissance was a time of significant scientific progress and discovery. Scholars such as Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, and Johannes Kepler challenged traditional beliefs about the structure of the universe and made ground-breaking astronomical observations. The development of the scientific method, championed by Francis Bacon and René Descartes, revolutionized the approach to scientific inquiry. The period saw advancements in fields such as anatomy, mathematics, and physics, laying the foundation for modern scientific thought.

Literature and Language: Renaissance literature flourished with notable works in various languages. In Italy, Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy"

and Petrarch's sonnets showcased the exploration of the human condition and the themes of love and spirituality. In England, writers like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Edmund Spenser produced enduring plays, sonnets, and epic poems that continue to shape the literary canon. The printing press, invented by Johannes Gutenberg, facilitated the spread of knowledge and the democratization of literature.

The Reformation: The Reformation was a religious and social movement that began in the 16th century and led to the splintering of Western Christianity. It challenged the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and resulted in the establishment of Protestant denominations. Here are detailed notes on the Reformation:

Martin Luther and the 95 Theses: The Reformation is often associated with Martin Luther, a German theologian and monk who famously posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg in 1517. Luther's grievances centered on the corruption and abuses within the Catholic Church, particularly the sale of indulgences. His actions sparked a widespread movement that questioned the authority of the Pope and sought to reform Christian doctrine and practices.

Protestantism and Denominationalism: The Reformation gave rise to various Protestant denominations that broke away from the Catholic Church. Lutheranism, founded by Martin Luther, emphasized justification by faith alone and the priesthood of all believers. John Calvin's teachings in Switzerland led to the development of Reformed theology, with its emphasis on predestination and the sovereignty of God. Other significant Protestant branches included Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, and Anabaptism. The Reformation led to religious divisions and conflicts across Europe.

Translations of the Bible: A significant outcome of the Reformation was the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages. Prior to the Reformation, the Bible was predominantly in Latin, inaccessible to the common people. Reformers, such as Luther and William Tyndale,

translated the Scriptures into languages like German and English, making them accessible to a broader audience. This fostered religious literacy and allowed individuals to engage directly with the Word of God.

Religious and Social Changes: The Reformation brought about profound religious and social changes. Monasticism and the veneration of saints were challenged, and the role of clergy was redefined. Protestant churches emphasized the importance of individual faith, the priesthood of believers, and the direct relationship between individuals and God. The Reformation also had implications for social and political structures, with the rise of Protestant rulers and the increased autonomy of secular authorities in religious affairs.

Counter-Reformation: In response to the challenges posed by the Reformation, the Catholic Church initiated the Counter-Reformation, also known as the Catholic Reformation. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) implemented reforms within the Catholic Church, addressing issues such as corruption, clerical education, and religious practices. The Counter-Reformation reaffirmed Catholic doctrine and emphasized the importance of faith and good works.

The Renaissance and the Reformation were interconnected movements that reshaped European society and culture. While the Renaissance celebrated human achievements, secular knowledge, and artistic expression, the Reformation focused on religious reform, the authority of Scripture, and the questioning of traditional Catholic practices. These movements left a lasting impact on various aspects of society, shaping the trajectory of Western civilization.

2.5 ELIZABETHAN DRAMA:

Elizabethan drama refers to the vibrant and influential theatrical productions that flourished during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of

England (1558-1603). This period is often considered the golden age of English drama, marked by the works of renowned playwrights like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Ben Jonson. Here is a detailed note on Elizabethan drama:

Theatres and Performance Spaces:

Theatres in Elizabethan England were outdoor structures designed to accommodate large audiences. The most famous of these theatres was the Globe Theatre, built in 1599, where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed. Other notable theatres included the Rose, the Swan, and the Fortune. These theatres were open to people from all social classes, making theatre a popular and accessible form of entertainment.

Structure and Genres:

Elizabethan drama encompassed a range of genres, including tragedies, comedies, histories, and romantic dramas. The structure of these plays typically followed a five-act format, influenced by classical models. Tragedies, such as Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus," explored themes of ambition, fate, and the human condition. Comedies, like Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and Jonson's "Volpone," employed humor, wordplay, and mistaken identities to entertain audiences. History plays, such as Shakespeare's "Richard III" and "Henry V," dramatized events from English history.

Language and Verse:

Elizabethan drama is characterized by its rich and poetic language. Playwrights like Shakespeare and Marlowe employed iambic pentameter, a rhythmic pattern of verse, in their plays. This blank verse allowed for heightened dramatic expression and memorable soliloquies. Prose was also used, particularly in the comic scenes, to provide a contrast in style and reflect different social classes.

Exploration of Themes:

Elizabethan drama delved into a wide range of themes and subjects. Love, honour, power, ambition, revenge, and morality were common themes

explored in tragedies and histories. Comedies often focused on social satire, romantic entanglements, and the complexities of human relationships. Many plays also dealt with political and social issues of the time, reflecting the tensions and anxieties of Elizabethan society.

Theatrical Conventions:

Elizabethan drama employed various theatrical conventions, including the use of a chorus, as seen in Marlowe's "Tamburlaine" and Shakespeare's "Henry V." The chorus provided commentary, set the stage, and guided the audience through the narrative. The plays also made use of elaborate costumes, props, and stage effects, though the sets were minimal. The performances relied heavily on the actors' skills and the power of language to engage the audience's imagination.

Influential Playwrights:

The Elizabethan Age produced some of the greatest playwrights in English literature. William Shakespeare, undoubtedly the most celebrated, wrote numerous plays that continue to be performed and studied worldwide. Christopher Marlowe, known for his dramatic intensity and tragic heroes, made significant contributions to Elizabethan drama. Ben Jonson, a contemporary of Shakespeare, excelled in comedy and satirical wit.

Elizabethan drama not only entertained the masses but also reflected the cultural, social, and political climate of the time. The works of the Elizabethan playwrights continue to be studied, performed, and celebrated for their timeless themes, linguistic richness, and enduring artistic value. They played a vital role in shaping the foundations of English theatre and left a profound impact on the development of drama as an art form.

2.6 ELIZABETHAN POETRY:

This period witnessed a remarkable flowering of poetic creativity, with poets like William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, and Sir Philip Sidney

making significant contributions to the English literary canon. Here is a detailed note on Elizabethan poetry:

Sonnet Sequences:

The Elizabethan era saw the popularity of sonnet sequences, a collection of sonnets unified by a common theme or narrative. The most famous of these is Shakespeare's collection of 154 sonnets, exploring themes of love, beauty, time, and mortality. Shakespeare's sonnets are known for their emotional depth, linguistic brilliance, and intricate exploration of human emotions. Other notable sonnet sequences of the time include Sir Philip Sidney's "Astrophel and Stella" and Edmund Spenser's "Amoretti."

Spenserian Poetry:

Edmund Spenser's epic poem, "The Faerie Queene," is one of the most significant works of Elizabethan poetry. Written in a complex and allegorical style, the poem celebrates virtues such as Holiness, Temperance, and Chastity within a chivalric romance framework. Spenser's poetic craftsmanship, rich imagery, and musical language showcase the grandeur and beauty of Elizabethan poetry.

Metaphysical Poetry:

The Elizabethan era also saw the emergence of metaphysical poetry, characterized by its intellectual and philosophical exploration of complex themes. Poets like John Donne, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell employed conceits, elaborate metaphors, and paradoxes to probe deep questions about love, spirituality, and the nature of existence. Metaphysical poetry reflected the intellectual climate of the time and marked a departure from the conventional poetic styles of the Renaissance.

Courtly and Petrarchan Poetry:

Elizabethan poets drew inspiration from the courtly and Petrarchan traditions of love poetry. They explored themes of unrequited love, desire, and idealized beauty. Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, were pioneers in introducing the sonnet form to English poetry, following the Petrarchan conventions. Their works influenced subsequent Elizabethan poets and helped shape the development of English sonnet tradition.

Pastoral Poetry:

Pastoral poetry, characterized by its idealized depiction of rural life and shepherds, was popular during the Elizabethan era. Poets like Sir Philip Sidney and Christopher Marlowe composed pastoral poems that celebrated the simplicity, beauty, and harmony of nature. These poems often explored themes of love, longing, and the contrast between the idyllic pastoral world and the realities of urban life.

Lyrics and Ballads:

Elizabethan poetry also encompassed lyrics and ballads, which were often set to music and sung. These shorter poetic forms provided a medium for expressing personal emotions, love, and melancholy. They were accessible to a broader audience and became popular in both courtly and popular culture. The works of anonymous balladeers and lyricists, as well as those of renowned poets like Thomas Campion and John Dowland, contributed to the rich tapestry of Elizabethan poetry.

Elizabethan poetry reflects the spirit of the age, with its exploration of love, beauty, spirituality, and the complexities of human emotions. The poets of the era exhibited remarkable linguistic prowess, experimentation with poetic forms, and an engagement with philosophical and metaphysical ideas. Their works continue to be celebrated for their poetic beauty, profound insights, and enduring influence on English literature.

2.7 ELIZABETHAN PROSE:

Elizabethan prose refers to the prose writings produced during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England (1558-1603). While the Elizabethan era is best known for its poetry and drama, prose works of the time also made significant contributions to English literature and intellectual thought. Here is a detailed note on Elizabethan prose:

Prose Styles:

Elizabethan prose exhibited a variety of styles, reflecting the diverse interests and concerns of the period. The prose writings of the time ranged from formal treatises and theological works to personal essays, travel accounts, and historical narratives. The language and style of prose varied depending on the intended audience and purpose of the text.

Religious and Philosophical Prose:

Religion played a prominent role in Elizabethan society, and religious prose works were abundant during the period. Religious treatises, sermons, and theological writings sought to explore and explain religious beliefs and practices. Notable religious prose writers of the time include Richard Hooker, whose "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity" defended the Anglican Church, and John Donne, whose sermons reflected his profound spiritual insights.

Travel Accounts and Exploration:

The Elizabethan era was a time of exploration and discovery, and prose writings emerged as a medium to document and recount the adventures of explorers and travellers. Accounts of voyages to new lands, such as Richard Hakluyt's "Principal Navigations," provided valuable information about the world beyond England's borders and contributed to the expansion of geographical knowledge.

Historical Prose:

The Elizabethan era witnessed a surge of interest in history and a desire to understand the past. Historical prose works aimed to chronicle and interpret significant events and figures. The most notable historian of the period was Raphael Holinshed, whose "Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland" provided a comprehensive account of British history. Sir Walter Raleigh's "The History of the World" also contributed to the historical discourse of the time.

Prose Fiction:

While poetry and drama dominated the literary scene, prose fiction also began to emerge during the Elizabethan era. Works of prose fiction included romances, pastoral tales, and moral allegories. Philip Sidney's "Arcadia" and Thomas Lodge's "Rosalynde" are examples of pastoral romances that enjoyed popularity during the period. These works often incorporated elements of courtly love, chivalry, and adventure.

Literary Criticism and Essays:

The Elizabethan era witnessed the development of literary criticism and the emergence of the essay form. Poets and scholars engaged in critical discussions about literature and the nature of poetry. Sir Philip Sidney's "The Defense of Poesy" is a notable work of literary criticism that defended the value and purpose of poetry. Francis Bacon, known as the father of the English essay, wrote influential essays on a wide range of topics, including philosophy, politics, and science.

Elizabethan prose demonstrated a growing interest in exploring and understanding the world, both in terms of intellectual thought and literary expression. It reflected the diverse interests of the period, from religious and philosophical inquiries to historical documentation and fictional narratives. The prose writings of the Elizabethan era contributed to the growth and development of English literature, shaping the literary landscape of subsequent generations.

2.8 **INTRODUCTION: THE CAROLINE AGE**

The Caroline Age refers to the literary and cultural period that followed the Elizabethan era in England, during the reign of King Charles I (1625-1649). This era is named after the Latinized form of Charles (Carolus) and is also known as the Jacobean Restoration period. The Caroline Age witnessed a transition from the Renaissance ideals of the Elizabethan era to the complex political and social landscape of the Stuart dynasty. Here is a detailed note on the Caroline Age:

Historical Context:

The Caroline Age was marked by significant political and religious conflicts. King Charles I's reign was characterized by tensions between the monarchy and Parliament, ultimately leading to the English Civil War (1642-1651). The era was also defined by religious controversies, particularly the conflict between Anglicans and Puritans. These historical events influenced the literary and intellectual climate of the period.

Metaphysical Poetry:

One of the notable features of the Caroline Age was the continuation and development of metaphysical poetry, a style that originated in the Elizabethan era. Metaphysical poets like John Donne, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell explored complex themes, employing intellectual wit, elaborate metaphors, and philosophical inquiries. They continued to grapple with religious, philosophical, and existential questions, infusing their poetry with metaphysical conceits and intricate wordplay.

Cavalier Poetry:

In contrast to the metaphysical poets, the Caroline Age also saw the rise of Cavalier poetry. The Cavalier poets, including Robert Herrick, Richard

Lovelace, and Thomas Carew, celebrated the courtly values of chivalry, love, and beauty. Their poetry reflected a more light-hearted and lyrical tone, often employing traditional poetic forms and focusing on themes of love, loyalty, and *carpe diem* (seize the day).

Prose and Drama:

The Caroline Age witnessed the development of prose and drama in various forms. The prose writings of the time encompassed a range of genres, including religious treatises, political tracts, and philosophical works. Thomas Hobbes's political treatise "Leviathan" and Sir Thomas Browne's philosophical work "Religio Medici" are notable examples of Caroline prose.

In terms of drama, the era saw the continuation of the Jacobean drama that had begun under King James I. Playwrights like John Ford, James Shirley, and Philip Massinger contributed to the development of tragicomedy and the evolution of Jacobean drama. Caroline drama reflected the shifting political and social climate of the time, often exploring themes of power, honour, and moral dilemmas.

Prose Fiction:

The Caroline Age also witnessed the emergence of prose fiction, with the publication of several influential novels and prose works. Margaret Cavendish's "The Blazing World" is considered one of the earliest works of science fiction. Additionally, the prose romances of Aphra Behn, such as "Oroonoko," contributed to the growth of the novel form.

Intellectual and Scientific Advancements:

The Caroline Age was a time of intellectual and scientific progress. The era saw advancements in fields like astronomy, mathematics, and natural philosophy. Figures like Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes made

significant contributions to the development of empirical science and philosophical thought.

The Caroline Age, while shorter in duration compared to the Elizabethan era, was a period of transition and intellectual exploration. It witnessed the continuation of poetic traditions, the emergence of new literary forms, and a shifting socio-political landscape. The works produced during this period reflected the complexities and uncertainties of the time, leaving a lasting impact on English literature and culture.

2.9 MAJOR WRITERS OF THE CAROLINE AGE:

The Caroline Age, which refers to the literary and cultural period during the reign of King Charles I of England (1625-1649), saw the emergence of several major writers who made significant contributions to English literature. Despite the political and social upheaval of the era, these writers produced works that reflected the complex intellectual climate and diverse literary traditions. Here is a detailed note on some of the major writers of the Caroline Age:

John Donne (1572-1631):

Although John Donne's literary career began during the Elizabethan era, his works had a lasting impact on the Caroline Age. Donne is renowned for his metaphysical poetry, characterized by its intellectual wit, complex metaphors, and exploration of profound philosophical and religious themes. His poems, such as "The Flea," "The Good-Morrow," and "Death, Be Not Proud," demonstrated his mastery of language and his ability to engage with matters of love, spirituality, and mortality.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679):

Thomas Hobbes, a philosopher and political theorist, played a significant role in shaping the intellectual landscape of the Caroline Age. His most notable work, "Leviathan" (1651), presented a comprehensive analysis of political philosophy and social contract theory. Hobbes' ideas on the nature of government, human nature, and the role of the sovereign had a profound influence on subsequent political and philosophical thought.

Robert Herrick (1591-1674):

Robert Herrick was one of the prominent Cavalier poets of the Caroline Age. His poetry celebrated themes of love, beauty, and carpe diem, reflecting the courtly values of the time. Herrick's collection, "Hesperides" (1648), showcased his skill in blending lyrical beauty with wit and humor. His poems, such as "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time" and "Upon Julia's Clothes," exemplified the carefree and amorous spirit of Cavalier poetry.

Richard Lovelace (1617-1657):

Richard Lovelace was another influential Cavalier poet of the Caroline Age. His poetry often expressed loyalty to the king, love, and a longing for a bygone era. Lovelace's most famous poem, "To Althea, from Prison," captured the spirit of his royalist beliefs and the power of the human spirit in the face of adversity. His poetry combined a graceful and lyrical style with themes of honour, valour, and devotion.

Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682):

Sir Thomas Browne was a physician and writer known for his profound and contemplative prose works. His most significant work, "Religio Medici" (1642), explored his religious beliefs, scepticism, and philosophical inquiries. Browne's prose was characterized by its intricate syntax, rich imagery, and wide-ranging intellectual curiosity. His works delved into topics such as medicine, religion, science, and human nature, reflecting the spirit of intellectual exploration in the Caroline Age.

Aphra Behn (1640-1689):

Although Aphra Behn's literary career extended beyond the Caroline Age, she emerged as one of the first professional female writers in English literature during this period. Behn's plays, poetry, and prose works challenged social norms and explored themes of love, gender, and power. Her novel "Oroonoko" (1688) is a significant early work of fiction that addressed issues of race, colonialism, and identity.

These writers of the Caroline Age contributed to the rich literary tapestry of the period, expressing diverse perspectives and engaging with profound intellectual and philosophical ideas. Their works reflect the complex social and political context of the time and continue to be celebrated for their linguistic beauty, thought-provoking themes, and lasting influence on English literature.

2. 10 THE METAPHYSICAL SCHOOL OF POETRY:

The metaphysical school of poetry refers to a specific poetic style and movement that emerged in the 17th century in England. It is primarily associated with a group of poets who are often referred to as the "metaphysical poets." The term "metaphysical" was first used by Samuel Johnson in the 18th century to describe these poets, emphasizing their intellectual and philosophical approach to poetry. Here is a detailed note on the metaphysical school of poetry:

Characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry:

Metaphysical poetry is characterized by its use of intellectual wit, elaborate metaphors, and intricate wordplay. It goes beyond conventional poetic expressions, employing complex and sometimes far-fetched metaphysical conceits to explore abstract ideas and deep philosophical questions. The poets of this school were known for their intellectual

curiosity, innovative use of language, and ability to combine disparate elements into a coherent whole.

Themes and Subjects:

Metaphysical poets engaged with a wide range of themes, including love, religion, human existence, the nature of reality, and the complexities of the human experience. They often sought to reconcile religious and secular ideas, exploring the tension between the spiritual and the physical realms. The poets drew inspiration from a variety of sources, including classical mythology, science, and contemporary intellectual thought.

Use of Conceits:

One of the defining features of metaphysical poetry is the use of conceits. Conceits are extended metaphors or comparisons that draw surprising or unconventional connections between seemingly unrelated objects or ideas. Metaphysical poets employed intricate and often elaborate conceits to create startling juxtapositions and to explore complex emotions and concepts. These conceits often involved unusual comparisons, such as likening the union of lovers to the meeting of compasses or the soul's journey to the movement of celestial bodies.

Intellectual and Philosophical Exploration:

Metaphysical poets were renowned for their intellectual prowess and philosophical inquiry. Their poetry delved into abstract and intellectual subjects, challenging readers to engage with complex ideas and concepts. The poets explored metaphysical questions related to the nature of reality, the existence of God, the transience of life, and the relationship between the physical and the spiritual.

Poets of the Metaphysical School:

Prominent poets associated with the metaphysical school include John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Richard Crashaw, and Henry

Vaughan. John Donne is often considered the leading figure of the movement, known for his inventive metaphors, passionate love poetry, and religious meditations. George Herbert's poetry combined religious devotion with clever wordplay and intricate structures, while Andrew Marvell's works displayed wit, political commentary, and exploration of time and mortality.

Influence and Legacy:

The metaphysical school of poetry had a profound influence on subsequent generations of poets. Its experimental use of language, complex imagery, and intellectual depth laid the foundation for the development of later poetic movements, such as the conceit-based poetry of the 17th-century poets like Alexander Pope and the modernist poetry of the early 20th century. The metaphysical poets' emphasis on the individual's relationship with the world and the exploration of abstract ideas left a lasting impact on English poetry.

The metaphysical school of poetry stands out for its intellectual rigor, inventive metaphors, and exploration of profound philosophical themes. The metaphysical poets challenged traditional poetic conventions and paved the way for a more complex and intellectually engaging form of poetry that continues to be celebrated and studied to this day.

2.11 THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS OF THE CAROLINE AGE:

The Caroline Age, named after King Charles I of England, was a period marked by significant political and social conflicts. These conflicts had a profound impact on the literary, cultural, and intellectual climate of the time. Here is a note on the political and social conflicts of the Caroline Age:

Religious Divisions:

One of the key conflicts of the Caroline Age was the religious division between Anglicans and Puritans. England was undergoing a religious transformation, and tensions between these two groups were escalating. The Anglicans, who supported the established Church of England, upheld traditional practices and hierarchy, while the Puritans sought to purify and reform the church, advocating for stricter adherence to Protestant principles. This religious conflict had far-reaching consequences, influencing political power struggles and shaping the literary and intellectual landscape of the era.

Struggles for Political Power:

The Caroline Age was characterized by struggles between the monarchy and Parliament, as well as conflicts within Parliament itself. King Charles I sought to assert his authority and strengthen the power of the monarchy, leading to clashes with Parliament over issues of taxation, religious policy, and the limits of royal power. The conflict between the monarchy and Parliament ultimately led to the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642, with the Parliamentarians, led by Oliver Cromwell, opposing the royalist forces. These political power struggles had a profound impact on society and influenced the themes and ideas explored in the literature of the time.

The English Civil War:

The English Civil War (1642-1651) was the most significant conflict of the Caroline Age. It was a war fought between the royalist forces loyal to King Charles I and the Parliamentarians who sought to limit his power. The war was fuelled by deep divisions over political, religious, and economic issues. The Parliamentarians, led by Oliver Cromwell, eventually emerged victorious, resulting in the execution of King Charles I and the establishment of the Commonwealth under Cromwell's rule. The civil war had a devastating impact on the nation, causing widespread destruction and loss of life.

Impact on Literature and Culture:

The political and social conflicts of the Caroline Age had a profound influence on the literature and culture of the time. Writers and intellectuals were deeply affected by the turmoil and uncertainty of the era. The literature of the time often reflected themes of political instability, moral dilemmas, and the fragility of power. Playwrights explored the complexities of loyalty, honour, and the consequences of political ambition. Writers like John Milton expressed their political views through their works, advocating for the freedom of expression and individual liberty.

Legacy and Aftermath:

The political and social conflicts of the Caroline Age had a lasting impact on English history. The execution of King Charles I and the establishment of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell's rule marked a significant shift in the political structure of England. The conflicts and ideas of this period laid the groundwork for the development of constitutional monarchy and the eventual restoration of the monarchy in 1660 with Charles II. The literary and cultural legacy of the Caroline Age also influenced subsequent periods, leaving a lasting impact on English literature and shaping the intellectual climate of the nation.

The political and social conflicts of the Caroline Age were characterized by religious divisions, power struggles, and ultimately the English Civil War. These conflicts shaped the literature, culture, and political landscape of the era, leaving a lasting impact on English history and influencing the works of writers and thinkers of the time.

Questions:

1. What were the major literary characteristics of the Elizabethan Age?
2. Who were some of the major writers of the Elizabethan Age and what were their notable works?
3. How did the Elizabethan Age contribute to the development of drama and theatre?
4. What were the major literary texts produced during the Elizabethan Age?

5. How did the religious and political climate of the Elizabethan era influence the literature of the time?
6. What were the key features of Elizabethan poetry, and who were some of the notable poets?
7. How did the Elizabethan prose writings differ from the poetry of the era?
8. What were the main factors that shaped the Caroline Age?
9. Who were the major writers of the Caroline Age and what were their significant contributions to literature?
10. How did the political and social conflicts of the Caroline Age influence the literary works of the time?
11. What were the characteristics of metaphysical poetry and who were some of the prominent metaphysical poets of the Caroline Age?
12. How did the Caroline Age contribute to the development of prose fiction and drama?
13. What were the major themes explored in the literary works of the Caroline Age?
14. How did the intellectual and philosophical climate of the Caroline Age influence the literature of the time?
15. What was the impact and legacy of the Elizabethan and Caroline Ages on English literature?

MCQs:

- 1. Who was the reigning monarch during the Elizabethan Age?**
 - a) King James I
 - b) Queen Victoria
 - c) Queen Elizabeth I
 - d) King Charles I

- 2. Which literary movement emerged during the Elizabethan Age?**
 - a) Romanticism
 - b) Metaphysical poetry

- c) Realism
- d) Modernism

3. Who is considered the leading figure of metaphysical poetry?

- a) John Donne
- b) William Shakespeare
- c) John Milton
- d) George Herbert

4. Which major playwright wrote famous tragedies like "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" during the Elizabethan Age?

- a) Christopher Marlowe
- b) Ben Jonson
- c) John Webster
- d) William Shakespeare

5. The Elizabethan Age is often referred to as the Golden Age of _____.

- a) Prose
- b) Drama
- c) Poetry
- d) Fiction

6. Which historical event had a significant impact on the Caroline Age?

- a) The English Civil War
- b) The Glorious Revolution
- c) The Industrial Revolution
- d) The Norman Conquest

7. Who was the reigning monarch during the Caroline Age?

- a) Queen Elizabeth I
- b) King Charles II
- c) King James I
- d) King Charles I

8. Which religious groups were in conflict during the Caroline Age?

- a) Anglicans and Puritans
- b) Catholics and Protestants
- c) Jews and Christians
- d) Quakers and Baptists

9. Who wrote the famous prose work "Religio Medici" during the Caroline Age?

- a) Robert Herrick
- b) Aphra Behn
- c) Sir Thomas Browne
- d) Richard Lovelace

10. Which major conflict erupted during the Caroline Age, resulting in the execution of King Charles I?

- a) The English Civil War
- b) The War of the Roses
- c) The Hundred Years' War
- d) The War of the Spanish Succession

***Note: Multiple-choice questions can be subjective and may depend on the specific interpretation of the text. These sample questions provide a general idea of the key concepts and themes discussed in the chapter.**

Structure:**3.0 Objectives****3.1 Introduction****3.2 Origin****3.3 The history of Sonnet****3.4 Types of Sonnets:****3.4.1 Petrarchan sonnet****3.4.2 Shakespearean sonnet/ English sonnet****3.4.3 Additional Sonnet forms****Spenserian sonnet****Miltonic Sonnet****Terza Rima Sonnet****Curtal Sonnet****Modern Sonnet****3.5 Sonnet Sequences:****3.5.1 Crown of Sonnets/ Sonnet Corona****3.5.2 Heroic Crown/Sonnet redoubles****3.5.3 Master Sonnet****3.6 Let's Sum up****3.7 Key Words****3.8 Check your progress****Suggested Books****3.0 OBJECTIVES:**

In this Unit, we shall discuss:

- How to grasp the formal structure of a sonnet, which typically consists of 14 lines, a specific rhyme scheme, and often a particular meter (such as iambic pentameter)
- To recognize and analyse different rhyme schemes commonly used in sonnets, such as Shakespearean or Petrarchan rhyme schemes.
- To identify the Volta or "turn" in a sonnet, which marks a shift in thought, theme, or argument, and to understand its significance.
- To place sonnets in their historical context, understanding their origins in Italian and English literature and their evolution over time.
- To explore how the sonnet form has been adapted and experimented with in contemporary poetry, including variations in rhyme, meter, and structure.
- For those interested in writing poetry, how to use the sonnet form as a vehicle for creative expression, practicing the crafting of sonnets with various themes and styles.

3.1 INTRODUCTION: Sonnets are 14-line poems with rhyme that follow a strict set of guidelines. According to Webster's Dictionary, a sonnet is "a fixed verse form of Italian origin consisting of 14 lines, typically 5 foot iambics rhyming according to a prescribed scheme." The sonnets have a history steeped in formality; they are recognized as one of the few literary genres that have kept a constant set of standards over time; and they are frequently used to express emotion rather than to amuse. Although sonnets have been used in many different cultures, times, and countries, it is believed that they were first written in Italy. Sonnets have become more common in North America and Europe. They are still utilized throughout Russia and the majority of Asia, nevertheless. The sonnet is one of the most well-known types of English poetry. Each type of poetry has its own "rules" and is associated with a particular topic, defining it as a distinct genre of poetry. Since poets have long used the sonnet's framework to explore the complex nature of romantic love, sonnets are associated with desire. When reading a sonnet, it's important to

take into account both what the poet is saying and how. A sonnet is a 14-line piece of short lyric poetry that frequently employs iambic pentameter (a 10-syllable rhythm with stressed and unstressed syllables) and follows a certain rhyme scheme. Sonnets also include a technique called a Volta (twist or turn), in which the rhyme scheme and the poem's theme abruptly alter. This literary method is frequently employed to represent an answer to a question, a solution to a problem, or the release of tension that was built up at the poem's beginning. Although the precise timing varies depending on the sonnet form, this turn often occurs near the end of the sonnet. Sometimes it's difficult to tell how to read a sonnet. Take a closer look even if the poem isn't about love, especially if it has fourteen lines. Poets have continued to employ this format to explore a wide range of subjects, including war, religion, and the value of poetry in general.

3.2 ORIGIN:

A sonnet is a form of formal rhymed lyric poetry with 14 lines that explores multiple elements of a single theme, mood, or feeling. The word "sonnet" comes from the Italian "Sonnetto," which is a little sound or strain. Original sonnets were short poetry that was frequently accompanied by lute or mandolin music. The phrase is translated as "a little sound or song." Typically, it is an iambic pentameter poem of fourteen lines. This demonstrates that multiple rhymes were used to form a single verse. According to tradition, the poem must go by a strict set of guidelines. Similar to other literary forms, sonnets have undergone a number of philosophical and linguistic developments. Composed in the native metre of the language in which they were written, such as the Alexandrine in French and iambic pentameter in English. This lyrical eruption in English literature was shared by nearly all of the poets of the time, including Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Christina Georgina Rossetti, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Technically, the sonnet is said to have been invented in Italy in the thirteenth century by a notary by the name of Giacomo da Lentini; however, Francesco Petrarca, who is better known by his pen name Petrarch, popularized the form in the fourteenth century. Sonnets were allegedly introduced to the English language in the 1520s and 1530s, in accordance with Sir Thomas Wyatt's recognized literary theory. The earliest frequently read English sonnets were disseminated by Tottel's Miscellany, which was printed in 1557. The sonnet is among the most recognizable old-fashioned literary genres. Although it has Italian origins, English poetry also adopted it as a vital component because to Shakespeare's usage of the poetic form. Based on the sonnet version in mind, the specific rhyme system may change.

3.3 THE HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF SONNET:

The English translation of the Italian word for the sonnet is "little song" or "little sound." The sonnet form was invented in the fourteenth century by an Italian poet named Francesco Petrarch. A Petrarchan or Italian sonnet is a sort of sonnet that is composed of an octave, which is eight lines of iambic pentameter poetry, and a sestet, which are six lines. The rhyme scheme of the sestet is typically cde cde or cdc dcd, but it can also infrequently be abba abba. However, William Shakespeare, a well-known English poet and playwright of the 16th century, is likely to take credit for creating the most popular and instantly recognized sonnet form. Shakespeare's or the English sonnet's 10 syllable lines are written in iambic pentameter. The format consists of three quatrains (four-line stanzas) and a final rhyming couplet (two-line stanza). Shakespeare's sonnets have an abab cdcd efef gg rhyme scheme. Many different authors have created a number of other sonnet structures. Even though subjects like death, time, and faith are not uncommon in modern sonnets, love and passion are the most commonly mentioned emotions.

3.4 TYPES OF SONNET:

- **3.4.1 Petrarchan sonnet**

There are several different kinds of sonnets, including the Petrarchan sonnet, which was invented by the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch. Again, these are the primary characteristics of this sonnet form:

- **Structure:** An octave followed by a sestet
- **Volta:** Happens between the 8th and 9th lines.
- **Rhyme Scheme:** abba abba followed by cde cde OR cdc dcd

Here is an example of a typical Petrarchan sonnet. The poem that follows was written by renowned English poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning in the 19th century. The **abba abba cdc dcd** rhyme scheme is used in the well-known sonnet "How Do I Love Thee?" (Sonnet 43)

“Sonnet 43” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. **(a)**
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height **(b)**
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight **(b)**
For the ends of being and ideal grace. **(a)**
I love thee to the level of every day’s **(a)**
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light. **(b)**
I love thee freely, as men strive for right; **(b)**
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise. **(a)**
I love thee with the passion put to use **(c)**
In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith. **(d)**
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose **(c)**
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath, **(d)**
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose, **(c)**
I shall but love thee better after death. **(d)**

In this highly emotional Petrarchan sonnet, the speaker enumerates all the various ways she loves someone. The speaker's current emotions are subtly contrasted with "old griefs," or prior difficulties in life, in the last sestet, which is also where the Volta appears. Her total affection for this individual is emphasised by the octave.

3.4.2 Shakespearean sonnet/ English Sonnet:

The Shakespearean sonnet, possibly the most well-known sonnet structure, was devised by William Shakespeare. He incorporated it into over 100 sonnets.

Here are some of the main qualities of a Shakespearean sonnet:

- **Structure:** Three quatrains followed by a rhyming couplet
- **Volta:** Happens between the 12th and 13th lines
- **Rhyme Scheme:** *abab cdcd efef gg*

English sonnets frequently have the form of a question and answer, just like Petrarchan sonnets. However, the way that English sonnets convey their subjects is impacted by the differing rhyme scheme and structure. The different rhyme pattern and structure, however, has an impact on how English sonnets transmit their contents. Instead of in the middle of an English sonnet, the Volta comes right before the couplet. This means that, in contrast to the single couplet at the end, which only gives the poet two lines to come up with an answer, the three quatrains provide the poet more leeway to ask their question and build tension.

“Sonnet 18” by William Shakespeare

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

In this beautifully crafted poem, the Shakespearean sonnet form may be best encapsulated. In this particular verse, Shakespeare likens the transient charm of a young man to a serene, balmy summer day. Shakespeare asserts strongly that the young man's youth will endure forever through these precise words, even after he has passed away, in the Volta, which is known to exist in the play's final rhymed couplet.

The Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnet forms are without a doubt the most well-known and admired of the several sonnet structure kinds.

3.4.3 Additional sonnet forms

Sonnets can also take the following additional forms, which we'll discuss in more detail below:

- Spenserian sonnet
- Miltonic sonnet
- Terza rima sonnet
- Curtal sonnet

- **Spenserian Sonnet:**

The Spenserian sonnet is named after English poet Edmund Spenser, who popularised it in his 1595 collection of sonnets titled *Amoretti*. Comparatively speaking, Spenserian sonnets are a little unusual and uncommon. The Spenserian sonnet is attributed with gaining popularity thanks to English poet Edmund Spenser. The rhyme scheme used in these sonnets is more complex: abab bcbc cdcd ee. They follow the same three-quatrain and couplet structure as English sonnets. The Spenserian sonnet's rhyme scheme is complicated by the repeated use of the same end rhyme. The poet may find it difficult to think of extra repeating rhymes that flow naturally into the sonnet.

Spenser also rationally develops a metaphor, question, concept, or conflict in each quatrain. He uses the couplet at the end of his sonnets to make a

strong assertion that concludes the subjects covered in the quatrains. The couplet at the end of Spenser's sonnets is when the true resolution is attained, making the opening Volta in those sonnets a red herring. Around line 9 of his sonnets, Spenser also commonly inserted an early Volta.

In each quatrain, Spenser logically develops a metaphor, query, thought, or conflict. He closes the themes discussed in the quatrains with a forceful statement in the couplet at the end of each of his sonnets. The genuine resolve in Spenser's sonnets is reached in the final couplet, rendering the opening Volta in those sonnets a red herring. Spenser also often added an early Volta around line 9 of his sonnets.

“A Spenserian sonnet: XXVI” from *Amoretti* by Edmund Spenser:

Sweet is the rose, but grows upon a briar ;(**a**)
Sweet in the Juniper, but sharp his bough ;(**b**)
Sweet is the Eglantine, but pricketh near ;(**a**)
Sweet is the firbloom, but his branches rough. (**b**)
Sweet is the Cypress, but his rind is tough, (**b**)
Sweet is the nut, but bitter is his pill ;(**c**)
Sweet is the broom-flower, but yet sour enough ;(**b**)
And sweet is Moly, but his root is ill. (**c**)
So every sweet with sour is tempered still (**c**)
That maketh it be coveted the more (**d**)
For easy things that may be got at will, (**c**)
Most sorts of men do set but little store. (**d**)
Why then should I account of little pain, (**e**)
That endless pleasure shall unto me gain. (**e**)

It is very easy to recognize this sonnet as a Spenserian sonnet because it was composed by the poet Edmund Spenser. Despite the fact that this Spenserian sonnet initially seems to be an English sonnet, it actually uses the more complex rhyme scheme for which Spenserian sonnets are renowned: abab bcbc cdc d ee. If you pay close attention to the rhyme

scheme, which explores the ideas of love and pleasure, you may see that this is a Spenserian sonnet.

In this sonnet's three quatrains, Spenser employs repetition to highlight a subject and a difficulty. Spenser makes it clear that "every sweet with sour is tempered still" by reusing the same word ("Sweet is the...") and sentence structure across each line. In other words, the good and bad usually coexist. The first two quatrains enumerate a number of lovely things, such roses and broom blossoms, before pointing out that each of these things grows on a harsh, thorny, or sour tree or bush to further highlight this point.

Here is an example of a Spenserian sonnet written by Edmund Spenser. Because of the false Volta in line 9, which is implied by Spenser's use of the word "so," it would seem as though the problem of sweet yet prickly things is resolved in the third quatrain. The full resolution to the problem is found in the couplet, which is still to come. Spenser concludes that since good things and unpleasant things frequently go hand in hand, we shouldn't be afraid about feeling a little discomfort when the sweet treat would reward us with joy. According to Spenser, the effort was worthwhile because of the payoff.

- **Miltonic Sonnet:**

Most sonnet forms, including the Miltonic Sonnet, are called after the authors who popularized them, as you're undoubtedly beginning to realize. The Petrarchan sonnet's octave and sestet structure and rhyme scheme (abba abba cde cde) are used in Miltonic sonnets, which are so called because they are named after the English poet John Milton. Unlike other sonnet types, Miltonic sonnets address different themes. Instead of focusing on issues of romantic love or nature, Miltonic sonnets typically deal with political and moral issues; to tighten the sonnet's structure, this technique is known as enjambment. The sonnet, "When I consider how my light is spent," is thought to have been composed before 1664, when author John Milton had fully lost his sight.

“Sonnet 19 – (On His Blindness) When I Consider How My Light Is Spent” written by John Milton:

When I consider how my light is spent, **(a)**
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide, **(b)**
And that one Talent which is death to hide **(b)**
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent **(a)**
To serve therewith my Maker, and present **(a)**
My true account, lest he returning chide ;**(b)**
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?” **(b)**
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent **(a)**
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need **(c)**
Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best **(d)**
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state **(e)**
Is Kingly Thousands at his bidding speed **(c)**
And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest: **(d)**
They also serve who only stand and wait.” **(e)**

- **Terza Rima Sonnet:**

Terza rima is a type of literary poem that uses the aba bcb cdc ded interlaced or chain rhyme pattern. Because each stanza of a terza rima comprises three lines of poetry, it is frequently referred to as a "tercet." The phrase "terza rima" means "third rhyme" in English. The earliest instance of terza rima is found in Dante's famous epic work, The Divine Comedy. The Italian poet Petrarch, after whom the Petrarchan sonnet took its name, later used the terza rima form as well.

Terza rimas differ from traditional sonnets in that they can be repeated indefinitely rather than having a set number of lines. On the other hand, a terza rima ends with a couplet or one line that repeats the rhyme of the final tercet's middle line. Here's an example: if the final tercet of a terza rima rhymes with DED, the final line or couplet will rhyme with E or EE.

English-language poets typically use iambic pentameter even though terza rima doesn't have a set beat. The terza rima form is more ideal for writing in English because there are less rhyme in this language than there are in Italian.

However, famous poets have used the English terza rima to great effect over the years, including Geoffrey Chaucer, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Robert Frost. In actuality, "Ode to the West Wind," a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley, serves as a useful example of the terza rima.

"Ode to the West Wind," a Terza Rima Sonnet by Percy Bysshe Shelley

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, **(a)**
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead **(b)**
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, **(a)**
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, **(b)**
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, **(c)**
Who chariotest to their dark wintery bed **(b)**
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, **(c)**
Each like a corpse within its grave, until **(d)**
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow **(c)**
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill **(d)**
Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air **(e)**
With living hues and odours plain and hill: **(d)**
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere; **(e)**
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear **(e)**

The lengthy poem "Ode to the West Wind" by Shelley, which is only the first section of this presentation, was just finished. However, Shelley's poem's first stanza provides a thorough example of a terza rima, thus it's acceptable. The terza rima rhyme scheme is utilized in this sonnet and is as follows: aba bcb cdc ded ee. You'll learn that the poem is made up of a group of five terza rima sonnets if you keep reading.

In the first and almost last lines of this section, Shelley uses the word "wild" to describe the west wind. Even in the concluding couplet, he calls the west wind a "Wild Spirit." He likens the west wind, which has the power to both destroy and preserve, to an extra-terrestrial being or perhaps a god. Shelley's ode's first terza rima introduces the rest of the poem, which describes how Shelley yearns for the might of the west wind to transform him. It has the same effect on nature.

- **Curtal Sonnet:**

A curtal sonnet is a compressed version of the sonnet that English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote in the nineteenth century. As opposed to other sonnets, the curtal sonnet maintains the general proportions of the Petrarchan sonnet by compressing the last sestet into a quintet (a five-line stanza), and the two quatrains in the octet into two tercets (a three-line stanza).

Gerard Manley Hopkins invented the curtal sonnet in the Victorian era. Simply put, a curtal sonnet is a fourteen-line sonnet that has been proportionally compressed in length. The mathematical ratios revealed in sonnets captivated Hopkins to an incredible degree. To get to the vital eleventh line, curtal sonnets feature a 'tail piece' at the end. The tail section of the sonnet only references to the eleventh and final line, which is usually significantly shorter than the lines that came before it in the poem.

The final line of the quintet, as well as the entire sonnet, is much shorter than the previous lines and is known as a "tail" or "half-line." As a result, the curtal sonnet is said to have 10.5 or 11 lines. A sonnet's final line rhymes as follows: abc abc, followed by dbcdc or debdc. Additionally, the sprung rhythm used in this sonnet form is different from iambic pentameter in that it frequently contains four stressed syllables and each line starts with a stressed sound rather than an unstressed one. Hopkins is the author of the well-known sonnet "Pied Beauty." This sonnet uses the rhyme system abc abc dbcdc.

“Pied Beauty” by Gerard Manley Hopkins:

Glory be to God for dappled things— (a)

For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow; **(b)**
 For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim; **(c)**
 Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings; **(a)**
 Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough; **(b)**
 And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim. **(c)**
 All things counter, original, spare, strange; **(d)**
 Whatever is fickle freckled (who knows how?) **(b)**
 With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim; **(c)**
 He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change: **(d)**
 Praise him. **(c)**

The first stanza of this English sonnet is a sestet, which has six lines, while the second stanza is a quatrain, which has four lines. It also has a tail piece that completes the eleventh line right before the conclusion! A brief sonnet can also be written using the rhyme scheme. The first sestet rhymes according to the ABCABC scheme, whereas the final quatrain and tail piece follow the DBCDC scheme. Now we shall talk about the themes of the English sonnet. It is immediately apparent that Hopkins is writing a religious poem as soon as he thanks God for producing the beautiful things in nature in the opening line. He lists a number of things that are beautiful in different ways, including the sky, a trout's scale pattern, and something that has been cultivated. Hopkins thanks God for making objects that exhibit beauty in a wide range of startlingly different ways in the first nine lines of this short sonnet. But the eleventh line is where the Volta, or turn, happens. The entire poem had been a celebration of the diversity and unpredictability of God's creations, but in the tenth line, he shifts to praising God's immutability: "He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change." However, this change in emphasis is meant to emphasize worship for God. Hopkins emphasizes the difference between God and nature by describing God as constant and unchanging.

- **Modern Sonnet:**

The sonnet is still a popular poetic form. Modern sonnets don't have a set structure or theme, despite the fact that they are still regularly produced by modern authors. In fact, it has been said that modern sonnets bear a "ghost imprint" of older sonnets. Modern sonnets occasionally, but not usually, follow the traditional fourteen-line format. They also experiment with rhyme schemes and are more receptive to the concepts they choose to incorporate into their interpretation of the sonnet.

But a modern sonnet will generally adhere to the suggestions we've made above, making it simple to spot. To give you a better understanding of what a modern sonnet is like, we'll analyse Adam Kirsch's "Professional Middle-class Couple, 1927," a contemporary poem that serves as an example of what to look for while reading modern sonnets.

“Professional Middle-Class Couple, 1927,” by Adam Kirsch

What justifies the inequality
That issues her a tastefully square-cut
Ruby for her finger, him a suit
Whose rumpled, unemphatic dignity
Declares a life of working sitting down,
While someone in a sweatshop has to squint
And palsy sewing, and a continent
Sheds blood to pry the gemstone from the ground,
Could not be justice. Nothing but the use
To which they put prosperity can speak
In their defense: the faces money makes,
They demonstrate, don't have to be obtuse,
Entitled, vapid, arrogantly strong;
Only among the burghers do you find
A glance so frank, engaging, and refined,
So tentative, so conscious of it's wrong.

The sonnet's title describes them as a "professional middle-class couple." Typically, a "couple" is thought to as two lovers. But the direction of this poetry is distinct. Kirsch critiques the attire worn by the husband and wife

in the first octave. Kirsch underlines the unjust working conditions that allowed each aspect of the couple's appearance that he mentions to be possible, such as a ring with a huge gemstone or a wrinkled suit. Kirsch begins, as in traditional sonnets, with the notion that the middle class couple's displays of prosperity are at the price of others.

There are two phrases in this sonnet, the first of which ends and the second of which starts in the middle of line 9. The Volta appears to be Kirsch's original version of the sonnet form, which is another small alteration. Kirsch outlines the one way that could save the middle-class couple after the Volta at the beginning of the second octave: acknowledging how their pursuit of prosperity has injured and degraded others and modifying how they would use their prosperity moving forward.

- **3.5 SONNET SEQUENCES:**

Sonnets with a similar theme or subject may occasionally be written by poets in groups of several. Sonnet series or sonnet sequences are the terms used to describe them. The three fundamental types are the sonnet series, crown of sonnets, and sonnet redouble. A sonnet sequence is a collection of sonnets that all focus on the same subject, which typically features a dramatic character or event. It can include sonnets from Milton, Shakespeare, Petrarch, or Spencer, among others. Therefore, together with "Sonnet 8," a poem like Shakespeare's "Sonnet 128" can serve as an example of both a Shakespearean sonnet and a poem in a sonnet series on music.

3.5.1 The "**crown of sonnets**," often called the "**sonnet corona**," consists of fifteen sonnets, each of which uses a different formal restriction to express the same subject. The final line of the final sonnet repeats the first line of the first stanza in the run, making a vast loop. The last line of the first sonnet serves as the starting line of the following sonnet in the sequence. A sonnet corona creates thematic consistency in this way.

3.5.2 Yet another sonnet arrangement style exists. This one is known as the "**heroic crown**" or "**sonnet redoubles**," which is a more advanced version of the sonnet corona.

Heroic crowns are made from the same fifteen sonnets that make up sonnet coronas, but the last sonnet in the sequence is fully made up of the beginning lines of the fourteen sonnets that came before it, in chronological order!

3.5.3 The fifteenth sonnet in a heroic crown is referred to be a "**master sonnet**". Wow, it sounds pretty challenging. A poem by Marilyn Hacker called "A Wreath for Emmett Till" that was found in a children's book serves as an example of a sonnet sequence.

"A Crown of Sonnets: A Wreath for Emmett Till" by Marilyn Hacker III

Pierced by the screams of a shortened childhood,
my heartwood has been scarred for fifty years
by what I heard, with hundreds of green ears.
That jackal laughter. Two hundred years I stood
Listening to small struggles to find food,
To the songs of creature life, which disappears
And comes again, to the music of the spheres.
Two hundred years of deaths I understood.
Then slaughter axed one quiet summer night,
shivering the deep silence of the stars.
A running boy, five men in close pursuit.
One dark, five pale faces in the moonlight.
Noise, silence, back-slaps. One match, five cigars.

Emmett Till's name still catches in my throat.

IV

Emmett Till's name still catches in my throat,
like syllables waylaid in a stutterer's mouth.
A fourteen-year-old stutterer, in the South
to visit relatives and to be taught

the family's ways. His mother had finally bought
that White Sox cap; she'd made him swear an oath
to be careful around white folks. She's told him the truth
of many a Mississippi anecdote:
Some white folks have blind souls. In his suitcase
she'd packed dungarees, T-shirts, underwear,
and comic books. She'd given him a note
for the conductor, waved to his chubby face,
wondered if he'd remember to brush his hair.
Her only child. A body left to bloat.

Since there are fifteen sonnets total, we didn't want to duplicate a full sonnet corona for you to read through here. However, we did want to provide a few subsequent sonnets from a single series so you could see how it functions. In these three sonnets from Marilyn Hacker's children's book *A Wreath for Emmett Till*, the Petrarchan end rhyme pattern—abba abba cde cde - is sporadically utilized. The opening lines of sonnets "IV" and "V" both make use of the corona by recycling the last line of the sonnet before them.

Here's an example:

Last line of sonnet "III": "Emmett Till's name still catches in my throat."

First line of sonnet "IV": "Emmett Till's name still catches in my throat."

Except for a very minor phrasing modification, the line is unchanged. By using this pattern of recurrence, the poet is able to build a common thread that connects each sonnet in the collection. As a result of the last and first lines returning, the poet is ultimately able to convey a lengthy story. Hacker's children's book tells a very important story that is told in this way.

3.6 LET US SUM UP:

Finally, I would like to say that the sonnet is a timeless and adaptable literary form that has developed over time. The sonnet continues to enthrall poets and readers alike despite having its roots in English and Italian traditions and modern variations. It's structured yet flexible character enables poets to precisely and in-depth delve into issues of love, nature, humanity, and the human predicament. The sonnet is a wonderful instrument for expressing complicated ideas and sentiments because, as a poetry form, it forces authors to condense their thoughts and feelings into a brief but potent utterance. The sonnet continues to be a vehicle for creativity, allowing poets to give fresh life to an old tradition, whether they adhere to classic rhyme systems or choose more contemporary versions. The sonnet, which acts as a blank canvas for the expression of the poet's feelings, ideas, and observations, is a monument to the sonnet's on-going power in the world of poetry. The sonnet will continue to motivate and resound with future generations of poets and readers because of its capacity to change with the times while maintaining its core.

3.7 KEY WORDS:

- **Core:** the part of something that is central to its existence or character.
- **Disseminate:** spread (something, especially information) widely.
- **Enumerates:** mention (a number of things) one by one
- **Extra-terrestrial:** of or from outside the earth or its atmosphere
- **Predicaments:** a difficult, unpleasant, or embarrassing situation.

3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

Q:1 Write answer in Descriptive way:

- I. What is the historical origin of the sonnet as a poetic form, and how has it evolved over time?
- II. How does the sonnet form differ between Italian and English sonnets, and what are the distinctive features of each?
- III. What is the significance of the Volta or "turn" in a sonnet, and how does it contribute to the overall impact of the poem?

- IV. How does the sonnet form continue to influence and inspire poets in the 21st century and what role does it play in contemporary poetry?

Q: 2 Choose an appropriate answer:

1. What is the traditional number of lines in a sonnet?

1. 12
- 2. 14**
3. 16
4. 20

2. Which poet is famous for popularizing the English sonnet form?

- a. Petrarch
- b. Dante Alighieri
- c. William Shakespeare**
- d. John Donne

3. Which of the following is a typical rhyme scheme for a Shakespearean sonnet?

- a. ABBAABBA
- b. ABABCDCDEFEFGG**
- c. ABABCCDDEEFFGG
- d. ABCDEFGH

4. What is the term used to describe the shift in thought or focus in a sonnet, often occurring around the eighth line in Petrarchan sonnets?

- a. Quatrain
- b. Volta**
- c. Couplet
- d. Octave

5. Which of the following meters is commonly used in sonnets?
- Trochaic pentameter
 - Iambic pentameter**
 - Anapaestic pentameter
 - Dactylic pentameter
6. In a Petrarchan sonnet, how many lines are typically found in the octave?
- 4
 - 6
 - 8**
 - 10
7. What is the primary theme that sonnets are famous for exploring?
- Nature
 - Politics
 - Love**
 - Comedy
8. Which famous English poet wrote a series of 154 sonnets that are considered one of the greatest achievements in English literature?
- John Keats
 - Samuel Taylor Coleridge
 - William Wordsworth
 - William Shakespeare**
9. Modern sonnets may deviate from traditional rules by experimenting with which aspects?
- Number of lines
 - Rhyme scheme
 - Meter

d. All of the above

10. What is the significance of the final couplet in a Shakespearean sonnet?

- a. It introduces a new theme.
- b. It summarizes the poem's message.
- c. It signals the end of the sonnet.
- d. It provides comic relief.

Suggested books:

Atherton, Cassandra. *Prosody*. Recent Work Press, 2018.

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Lennard, John. *The Poetry Handbook: A Guide to Reading Poetry for Pleasure and Practical Criticism*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

Parker, Robert B., and Patrick Reagh. *A Spenserian Sonnet*. Lord John Press, 1983.

Regan, Stephen. *The Sonnet*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Russell, Rinaldina. *Sonnet: The Very Rich and Varied World of the Italian Sonnet*. Archway Publishing, 2017.

Shakespeare, William, and Andrew McMillan. *Sonnets*. Vintage Classics, 2023.

Unit Overview

This unit delves into Francis Bacon's essays which are celebrated for their profound influence on English prose. Spanning moral, political philosophy, social issues, and personal reflections, these essays are renowned for their concise, lucid style and insightful analyses. They explore human nature, society, knowledge, and the pursuit of learning.

Structure:**4.0 Objectives****4.1 Introduction****4.2 Biography of Francis Bacon****4.3 Overview of Bacon’s Essay****4.4 The Themes in Bacon’s Essays****4.5 The Pursuit of Knowledge and Learning****4.5.1 Of Studies****4.5.2 Of Discourse****4.5.3 Of Truth****4.5.4 Of Simulation and Dissimulation****4.5.5 Of Ambition****4.5.6 Of Great Place****4.5.7 Of Discourse****4.6 The Style and Structure of Bacon’s Essay****4.7 Conciseness and Clarity of Language****4.8 Use of Aphorism and Maxims****4.9 Organization and Coherence of Ideas****4.10 The Relevance of Bacon’s Essays Today**

4.11 Conclusion

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the themes and styles of Bacon's essays.
- To analyze Bacon's influence on English literature and philosophy.
- To explore the relevance of Bacon's essays in contemporary society.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will critically analyze Bacon's essays, understanding their historical and literary contexts.
- They will articulate the essays' themes and styles.
- Students will evaluate the modern-day relevance of Bacon's ideas.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Francis Bacon's Essays, written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, are regarded as one of the greatest achievements in English prose. These essays cover a wide range of topics, including moral and political philosophy, social issues, and personal reflections. Bacon's essays are characterized by their concise and lucid style, as well as their insightful and penetrating analysis. In these essays, Bacon explores fundamental questions about human nature, society, and the pursuit of knowledge. He draws upon his vast knowledge of history, literature, and philosophy to offer thought-provoking perspectives and moral lessons. Bacon's essays also reflect his deep concern for the advancement of learning and the improvement of society. His emphasis on empirical observation and experimental reasoning foreshadows the rise of the scientific method in subsequent centuries. Additionally, Bacon's essays are marked by his unique blend of wit, wisdom, and practicality. He is able to communicate complex ideas in a clear and accessible manner, making his works

not only intellectually stimulating but also highly engaging for readers of all backgrounds. Overall, Francis Bacon's Essays are a testament to his intellectual prowess and enduring influence on the development of English literature and philosophy.

4.2 BIOGRAPHY OF FRANCIS BACON:

Born on 22 January 1561 in London Francis Bacon an English philosopher statesman and lawyer. He was the youngest of five sons born to Sir Nicholas Bacon a prominent lawyer and Lord Keeper of the Great Seal under Queen Elizabeth I Bacon's mother Lady Anne Bacon was a highly educated woman and played a major role in his up. Bacon's early education was carried out at home away from his mother and private tutors, demonstrating his privileged upbringing and access to the well-established education available in his illust. At the age of 12 he went to Trinity college, Cambridge where he studied a wide variety of subjects including rhetoric logic and language. Bacon's career took a significant turn when he left behind a few financial resources. As a result, he embarked on a legal career and quickly rose up the ranks becoming Lord Chancellor of England and Attorney General of England. Bacon's true passion was philosophy and writing Despite his demanding career in law and politics. He is widely regarded as the founder of the scientific method and is known for his deeply thought-out essays that offer a unique perspective on a wide variety of topics.

4.3 OVERVIEW OF BACON'S ESSAY:

Bacon's essays cover a wide range of topics covering various aspects of humanity, society and knowledge. One such example is his article about the Studies. Bacon encourages individuals to devote their time to scholarly pursuits and intellectual endeavors in this essay. He argues that knowledge is might and that accumulation of knowledge through study enables individuals to broaden their horizons and have informed decisions. In his essay on ambition Bacon additionally explores the theme Of Ambition. He looks at the different forms of ambition and the consequences derived from their pursuit. Bacon recognizes the potential danger of excessive ambition and warns against its negative effects on individual

relationships, integrity and moral values. Bacon's essay on the concept Of Truth also delves into the concept itself highlighting its significance in various aspects of human existence including religion philosophy and personal relationships. Bacon emphasizes the importance of seeking truth through rigorous inquiry and critical thinking as he believes that the pursuit of truth leads individuals towards a more fulfilling and meaningful existence. Bacon's essays provide deep insights into diverse themes as a valuable resource for individuals to contemplate and explore the complexities of human nature and society.

In "Of Truth," Francis Bacon vividly brings forth the concept of truth and the implications it has on society. He asserts that there is a deep connection between truth and knowledge, stating that "knowledge is power," highlighting the significance of truth as a foundation for acquiring knowledge. Bacon argues that people often avoid telling the truth due to fear of the consequences and the potential harm it may cause. He believes that this lack of truthfulness hampers the progress of society and hinders the development of knowledge. Bacon also acknowledges the complexity of truth, asserting that it is not an absolute concept but encompasses different perspectives and interpretations. He proposes that a balanced approach is necessary, urging individuals to embrace the truth while also understanding the limitations and subjectivity it entails. By adopting this honest and open-minded outlook, Bacon argues that society can unlock its true potential and strive towards progress and intellectual growth. Overall, Bacon's thought-provoking insights on truth emphasize the essential role it plays in human society and the inherent complexities that surround its pursuit.

4.4 THE THEMES IN BACON'S ESSAYS:

Bacon's essays offer a constant exploration of different themes that are aligned with his philosophical and intellectual beliefs. One of his main themes is the pursuit of knowledge. Bacon emphasizes the importance of learning through observation experiments and reasoning. He believes that knowledge is power and should be used to the good of society. This theme is evident in essays such as "Of studies" where Bacon advises readers to give and take their time. Another topic that runs throughout Bacon's essays is the importance of personal growth and self-

improvement. He believes that individuals can improve themselves through self-discipline and self-reflection. In essays such as "Of Goodness" and "Goodness of Nature " and "Of Wisdom for a man's self" Bacon encourages readers to strive for moral and intellectual virtues. Bacon further explores the theme of human nature and its complexities. He acknowledges the shortcomings and limitations of human beings and encourages readers to embrace reason and logic over irrationalities of emotions. This theme is evident in essays such as "Anger" and "Revenge". In this way, Bacon's essays reflect his profound understanding of human nature, his dedication to the pursuit of knowledge and his belief in self-improvement.

4.5 THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING:

The pursuit of knowledge and learning is an important aspect of human development and progress. The significance of this pursuit is highlighted by Francis Bacon throughout his essays. He stresses in 'Of Studies', the importance of reading and learning from several sources. He argues that acquiring knowledge from different disciplines provides a varied range of insights and perspectives, eventually enriching one's understanding. Bacon emphasizes the need for continuous learning and the exploration of new subjects. He emphasizes the importance of engaging in meaningful conversations and conversations as a means of vastly expanding one's knowledge. The participants in the discourse can share ideas, challenge existing beliefs and create new knowledge. Bacon encourages further to question established authorities and traditions. In "Of Truth", he argues that blind adherence to established beliefs stifles intellectual progress and individuals should be given more time to question and examine these beliefs. In this context human progress and development are closely connected according to Francis Bacon to the pursuit of knowledge and learning.

4.5.1 Of Studies

Francis Bacon offers several examples of the benefits of studying in the essay "Of studies ". He says reading broadens the mind and nourishes the intellect like a balanced diet nourishes the body. Bacon says some books must be tasted while others must be swallowed and digested. He means that for their respective

purposes one should come to different books with varying degrees of depth. Historical books may be skimmed lightly like a savour or appetizer to have a general understanding of events. Philosophical and scientific books on the other hand require a deeper engagement to be digested and assimilated into our knowledge bank. Bacon emphasizes the importance of different disciplines in intellectual pursuits.

He says studies should be balanced with equal emphasis on philosophy and history. While history helps in understanding the past and guiding human actions, philosophy provides a framework for logical and critical thinking. Bacon emphasizes through these examples the importance of studying some ways to develop knowledge, develop the mind and cultivate a well-rounded intellect.

4.5.2 Of Discourse

In the essay titled “Of Discourse”, Bacon provides examples to illustrate his points about the appropriate use of speech. He highlights that discourse should be substantiated with evidence and not just empty words. Bacon suggests that scholars, lawyers, and clergymen should present their arguments in a concise and well-structured manner. To support these arguments, he refers to renowned figures such as Pythagoras and Seneca, who were known for their clear and logical speech. Bacon emphasizes that it is necessary to use discourse wisely, as it has the power to influence others. He warns against the use of excessive verbiage, stating that it leads to confusion and diminishes the value of the discourse. Furthermore, by mentioning the importance of silence in the midst of conversation, Bacon stresses the need for individuals to not just speak for the sake of speaking but to contribute meaningfully to a discussion. Bacon's example-driven approach in this paragraph serves to illustrate his views on the significance of effective discourse.

4.5.3 Of Truth

In paragraph 10 of his essay "Of Truth," Francis Bacon provides an example to illustrate his point regarding the effects of lying and secrecy. He describes a situation where a person may feel compelled to lie in order to hide a wrongdoing or protect their reputation. Bacon argues that this initial act of deceit then spirals into a web of lies, as one lie necessitates the creation of more lies to maintain the façade. He maintains that the entanglement of lies not only erodes trust and credibility but also consumes a person's mental and moral energies. To support his claim, Bacon refers to the Greek fable of Hercules and the monster Hydra, in which Hercules was faced with a nine-headed serpent. Every time he cut off one of the serpent's heads, two more grew back in its place, highlighting the insidious nature of falsehood. Through this example, Bacon emphasizes the harmful consequences of lying and secrecy, encouraging his readers to embrace truthfulness as an essential virtue for personal and societal well-being.

4.5.4 Of Simulation and Dissimulation

In the essay "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," Bacon continues to explore the theme of deceit and dishonesty. He argues that there are times when it is necessary to simulate or pretend to be something one is not, and times when it is necessary to dissimulate or mask one's true intentions. Bacon provides several examples to illustrate his point. One example is the practice of spies and secret agents who employ the art of dissimulation to gather information and protect their identities. These agents often have to wear different masks and play different roles in order to deceive their enemies and extract valuable intelligence. Another example is the realm of politics, where politicians often find it necessary to simulate certain qualities or beliefs in order to gain support from their constituents. They may pretend to be virtuous and morally upright when in fact they are driven by self-interest and personal ambition. Bacon also discusses the field of education, where teachers sometimes employ simulation to effectively instruct their students. By pretending to be knowledgeable and authoritative, teachers are able to captivate their students' attention and inspire them to learn. These various examples demonstrate Bacon's belief that simulation and

dissimulation, when used judiciously and for noble purposes, can be valuable tools in navigating a complex world.

4.5.5 Of Ambition

In Francis Bacon's essay "Of Ambition," Bacon explores the nature of ambition and discusses its various manifestations. He argues that ambition is driven by a desire for power and success, and it is an inherent part of human nature. To support his argument, Bacon provides examples from different fields of life. First, he points out that ambitious people are often involved in political and social affairs, striving to attain high positions. Bacon mentions the examples of counselors, ministers, and even leaders who demonstrate ambition in their quest for power and influence. Moreover, he highlights how ambitious individuals are not just limited to the political sphere but can be found in various professions. For instance, Bacon cites the examples of leaders and founders of religious sects and orders, as well as conquerors and explorers who demonstrate ambition through their efforts to expand their influence and leave a lasting legacy. Through these examples, Bacon portrays ambition as a universal trait that drives individuals to achieve greatness and impact society in different ways. These examples serve to emphasize the widespread presence of ambition and its role in shaping the course of history.

Bacon's essay "Of Ambition" provides a powerful exploration of the human desire for success and recognition. He demonstrates that ambition is a universal trait which can be found in individuals across various fields and professions. Bacon says that ambition can be both harmful and beneficial depending on how it is channeled. He offers several examples to support his position. One such example is that a person that is driven only by ambition and seeks potential for whatever might be. Bacon says that such individuals are often prepared to give their integrity values and even others well-being for personal gain. On the other hand, he also presents the example of an ambitious person who uses their take to do great things for the betterment of society. Bacon argues that this kind of ambition rooted in noble intentions and focused on self-improvement can contribute to significant progress and benefits both for individuals and society.

Bacon encourages his readers to be aware of their ambitions and to aim for a balance between personal goals and ethical concerns Through these examples.

The writer cites several examples to support his argument, some of which demonstrate the importance of knowledge in shaping a person's part and actions. One example he gives is the example of classical philosopher Pythagoras who believed that mathematics and sciences were essential for a virtuous life. The writer argues that Pythagoras' commitment to knowledge enabled him to be wise and, but leader and his teachings continue to inspire others to this day. Another example mentioned in the essay is the story of the Greek philosopher Socrates, who used his knowledge to question and challenge societal norms, ultimately preferring to face death rather than compromise his principles. The writer suggests that Socrates ' commitment to knowledge and truth is a testament to the transformative power of intellectual pursuits. These examples serve to support the writer's thesis that knowledge not only enriches an individual's life but has also the potential to shape society and inspire future generations.

4.5.6 Of Great Place

In the essay "Of Great Place," Francis Bacon provides examples to emphasize the negative effects of power and position. He begins his argument by stating that men in high positions often become surrounded by sycophants and flatterers, who only seek personal gain rather than providing sincere and genuine advice. Bacon takes an example from ancient history, highlighting the case of Tiberius and Sejanus. Tiberius, the Roman Emperor, experienced the consequences of having placed absolute trust in Sejanus, a close advisor. Sejanus abused his power and attempted to overthrow Tiberius, leading to his ultimate downfall and death. Bacon uses this example to demonstrate that placing too much trust in others can lead to betrayal and loss of personal authority. Another example Bacon provides is that of King Henry VII of England, who obtained the crown through deceit and treachery. Bacon argues that this ill-gained wealth and power brought him constant fear and paranoia, as he could never fully trust those around him. By providing historical examples, Bacon effectively illustrates his point that

holding great power and position is often accompanied by treachery, duplicity, and a sense of constant fear and insecurity.

4.5.7 Of Discourse

In the essay "Of Discourse," Francis Bacon explores the intricacies of effective communication and emphasizes the importance of clear and concise speech. To exemplify his point, Bacon draws upon a historical narrative from the annals of ancient Rome. He recounts the story of how the orator Gavius Pasius, renowned for his eloquence, addressed the Roman Senate. However, despite his reputation, Gavius failed to leave a lasting impression due to his excessive use of grandiloquent language and convoluted arguments. Bacon argues that Gavius' failure can be attributed to his inability to adapt his discourse to the context and the audience. Through this example, Bacon highlights the significance of tailoring one's speech to suit the occasion and employing simplicity and clarity in order to make a lasting impact on the listeners. This anecdote serves as a cautionary tale, reminding readers that effective discourse should be accessible, concise, and tailored to the specific context in which it is presented. Bacon's exploration of the story of Gavius Pasius underscores his belief in the power of persuasive speech and the art of communication.

4.6 THE STYLE AND STRUCTURE OF BACON'S ESSAYS:

Regarding the style and structure of Bacon's essays, it is evident that his writing is concise, clear, and precise. He employs a straightforward and logical approach, presenting his ideas in a rational manner that allows the reader to easily comprehend his arguments. For instance, in the essay "Of Studies," Bacon begins by defining the purpose of studying and the benefits it brings. He then proceeds to outline the different types of books that one should read, emphasizing the importance of selecting only the most valuable and relevant ones. This systematic approach showcases Bacon's ability to organize his thoughts and present them in a coherent and structured manner. Additionally, Bacon's use of aphorisms adds depth and insight to his writing. In his essay "Of Truth," he encapsulates his argument by stating, "What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an

answer. " This concise and witty aphorism effectively conveys the essence of Bacon's message while adding a touch of humor. Thus, it can be concluded that Bacon's essays possess a unique style and structure, characterized by clarity, logical reasoning, and the use of incisive aphorisms.

4.7 CONCISENESS AND CLARITY OF LANGUAGE:

In Bacon's essay on 'Conciseness and Clarity of Language,' he emphasizes the importance of expressing oneself using clear and concise language. He argues that using verbose and convoluted language only serves to confuse and distract the reader from the intended message. To illustrate his point, he provides examples of sentences that are unnecessarily long and convoluted, and suggests alternative, shorter and more straightforward versions. He argues that by using clear and concise language, the writer enables the reader to understand their ideas more easily and is able to communicate more effectively. Bacon also advises writers to avoid the use of ambiguous or obscure words and to prefer simple and familiar ones. He believes that the purpose of language is to convey meaning, and thus clarity should be prioritized over any form of ostentation or complexity. By emphasizing the importance of conciseness and clarity in language, Bacon provides valuable advice that remains relevant in today's writing.

In paragraph 18 of the essay titled "Of Studies," Francis Bacon provides examples to support his claim that reading helps to cultivate wisdom and informed judgment. According to Bacon, the knowledge gained from reading can aid individuals in addressing various situations and challenges. He illustrates this point by highlighting the benefits of reading history and past literature. By studying history, individuals can acquire insights into the actions and behaviors of past leaders, helping them to make better decisions in the present. Additionally, reading literature allows one to explore a wide range of human experiences and emotions, enabling them to develop empathy and understanding. Bacon argues that reading provides a mental framework that widens one's perspective and enhances one's ability to effectively navigate life's complexities. Moreover, he asserts that reading empowers individuals to become better writers and speakers. Through exposure to well-crafted narratives and eloquent language, one

can acquire the skills needed to express oneself clearly and persuasively. Bacon's examples highlight the transformative power of reading and serve to reinforce his central argument that active engagement with books and knowledge is key to personal growth and intellectual development.

4.8 USE OF APHORISMS AND MAXIMS:

In his essays, Francis Bacon demonstrates a masterful use of aphorisms and maxims, which serve to condense his ideas into powerful and memorable statements. For instance, in his essay "Of Studies," Bacon states, "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. " This concise statement encapsulates the benefits of engaging in different intellectual pursuits, highlighting the importance of reading, discussing, and writing as essential elements of learning and personal development. Another example can be found in the essay "Of Marriage and Single Life," where Bacon asserts, "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune. " In this pithy adage, Bacon emphasizes the potential risks and responsibilities that come with the institution of marriage and family. By employing these aphoristic expressions, Bacon effectively communicates complex ideas succinctly, making his essays more accessible to readers and enabling them to easily remember and reflect upon his arguments. His use of aphorisms and maxims showcases his talent for distilling wisdom and philosophical insights into succinct, thought-provoking statements, further enhancing the persuasive power and enduring appeal of his writings.

In the essay titled "Of Studies," Francis Bacon articulates the benefits and purpose of engaging in scholarly pursuits. He argues that studying serves various purposes, such as providing entertainment, enhancing intellect, and equipping individuals for practical applications. Bacon emphasizes that a person who engages in excessive reading can become overly pedantic and, thus, lack practical knowledge. Conversely, someone who focuses solely on practical activities without engaging in intellectual pursuits remains ignorant and limited in their understanding. Therefore, Bacon suggests finding a balance between theoretical

knowledge and practical experience. To highlight the importance of studying, Bacon provides various examples. He mentions how reading history allows individuals to obtain wisdom from the past and avoid repeating past mistakes. He also refers to math and logic as subjects that sharpen the mind and expand reasoning abilities. Furthermore, Bacon emphasizes the importance of reading different types of books, including books of practical advice, to gain a well-rounded education. By relating these examples, Bacon makes a compelling argument for the value of studying, emphasizing the need to strike a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application to achieve intellectual and personal growth.

In the essay titled "Of Truth," Francis Bacon explores the concept of truth and its implications in human existence. He argues that truth, rather than being an inherent quality in human nature, is a virtue that needs to be cultivated through diligent pursuit and skepticism. Bacon provides various compelling examples to illustrate his point. For instance, he cites the example of Pilate, who was faced with the question of what is truth during the trial of Jesus Christ. Bacon argues that Pilate's response, "What is truth?," reflects the casual and indifferent attitude people often have towards the pursuit of truth, preferring to remain ignorant and unchallenged. Another example Bacon provides is the ancient fable of the Satyr challenging the gods to disprove the claim that "Men lived without faith and hatred of God." This example highlights the fallibility of human beliefs and the importance of questioning our own convictions. By presenting these examples, Bacon exposes the barriers to the pursuit of truth, which he believes include human indifference, complacency, and biased beliefs. Ultimately, his examples aim to demonstrate the necessity of actively seeking truth and fostering a mindset of inquiry and skepticism.

4.9 ORGANISATION AND COHERENCE OF IDEAS:

In his essay, Francis Bacon demonstrates remarkable organization and coherence of ideas. He begins by establishing a clear thesis statement, which helps the reader understand the purpose and direction of the essay. He then presents his arguments in a logical order, each point building upon the previous one. Bacon

supports his claims with solid evidence and examples, making his arguments more convincing and persuasive. Moreover, he presents his ideas in a clear and concise manner, making it easy for the reader to follow along. Bacon also uses transitions effectively, seamlessly connecting one idea to the next. This ensures that the essay flows smoothly and helps the reader stay engaged. Furthermore, Bacon uses repetition and parallelism throughout his essay to reinforce his main points and emphasize their significance. This demonstrates his attention to detail and reinforces the coherence of his ideas. Overall, Bacon's organization and coherence of ideas make his essay a compelling and effective piece of writing, showcasing his ability to communicate complex concepts in a clear and concise manner.

4.10 THE RELEVANCE OF BACON'S ESSAYS TODAY:

One of the most striking aspects of Bacon's essays is their continued relevance in today's society. Despite being written over four centuries ago, many of the themes and ideas explored in his works are still pertinent to the present day. For example, in his essay "Of Studies," Bacon emphasizes the importance of education and learning, asserting that knowledge is power. This notion holds true in contemporary society, where individuals who are well-informed and well-educated often have an advantage in their personal and professional lives. Additionally, Bacon's exploration of the human condition and the complexities of human nature in essays such as "Of Friendship" and "Of Revenge" remains relevant today. These essays provide valuable insights into the intricacies of human relationships and the consequences of our actions. Furthermore, Bacon's emphasis on the power of observation and empirical evidence in his essay "Of Truth" speaks to the importance of critical thinking and evidence-based reasoning in our increasingly complex and information-saturated world. In this way, Bacon's essays serve as a timeless reminder of the enduring significance of these fundamental aspects of human existence, making them just as relevant now as they were in his time.

4.11 CONCLUSION:

Francis Bacon's Essays provide valuable insight into various aspects of human life and society. Through his observations and reflections, Bacon explores a wide range of topics, such as friendship, ambition, truth, and knowledge. His essays offer a comprehensive exploration of these subjects, providing readers with food for thought and prompting deeper introspection. One of the key strengths of Bacon's essays is his ability to present complex ideas in a concise and accessible manner, making them relevant even centuries after their initial publication. Furthermore, Bacon's use of concise and clear language, coupled with his logical arguments, makes his essays highly persuasive and impactful. It is evident from his writings that Bacon possessed a deep understanding of human nature and the complexities of society. His approach to essay writing, which emphasizes both reason and experience, enables him to engage readers and stimulate their intellectual curiosity. Thus, Francis Bacon's essays remain a significant contribution to the world of literature and philosophy, encouraging individuals to question their beliefs, examine their actions, and strive for personal and societal improvement.

Revision:

- Bacon emphasizes the importance of continuous learning, observation, and experimentation.
- Discusses the benefits of studying, advising varied approaches to different books, balancing philosophy and history.
- Highlights the necessity of clear, structured discourse and warns against excessive verbosity.
- Explores the concept of truth, advocating for its pursuit through inquiry and skepticism, and examines its complex nature.
- Reflects on the intricacies of human nature, encouraging reason over emotion.
- Examines ambition's dual nature, warning against excessive ambition while recognizing its potential for greatness.

- Bacon's essays foreshadow the scientific method, emphasizing empirical evidence and critical thinking.
- Noted for conciseness, clarity, and use of aphorisms, making complex ideas accessible and engaging.
- Essays reflect Bacon's deep knowledge of history, literature, and philosophy, offering a window into late 16th and early 17th-century thought.
- The essays' exploration of education, human nature, and critical thinking remains pertinent in modern contexts.

Assessment

Short Answer Questions:

1. Describe Bacon's view on the importance of studies.

Ans. Bacon views studies as crucial for personal and societal development, offering depth, wisdom, and practicality in thought and action.

2. What does Bacon say about the pursuit of truth?

Ans. He emphasizes rigorous inquiry and critical thinking, considering truth-seeking as key to a fulfilling existence.

3. Discuss Bacon's perspective on ambition.

Ans. Bacon sees ambition as a potent but double-edged trait, capable of leading to greatness or ethical compromise.

4. Explain Bacon's thoughts on human nature.

Ans. He recognizes human limitations and advocates for reason and logic over emotion.

5. What is Bacon's approach to discourse?

Ans. Bacon advocates for clear, evidence-backed discourse, emphasizing its influence and power.

6. How does Bacon use aphorisms in his essays?

Ans. Aphorisms are used for conciseness and memorability, distilling complex ideas into impactful statements.

7. Analyze Bacon's style and structure in his essays.

Ans. His style is marked by clarity, conciseness, and logical organization, often using aphorisms.

8. Discuss the relevance of Bacon's essays today.

Ans. His insights on education, human nature, and critical thinking remain pertinent in modern contexts.

9. How does Bacon view the role of knowledge in human life?

Ans. He sees it as a source of power and a means to societal good.

10. What does Bacon say about the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application?

Ans. He advocates for a balance between the two for intellectual and personal growth.

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. Bacon's essays primarily focus on:

- a) Fictional narratives
- b) Moral and philosophical themes
- c) Scientific discoveries
- d) Political history

Ans.: (b) Moral and philosophical themes

2. The style of Bacon's essays is characterized by:

- a) Lengthy descriptive passages
- b) Poetic language
- c) Conciseness and clarity
- d) Complex syntax

Ans.: (c) Conciseness and clarity

3. In "Of Studies," Bacon compares different books to:

- a) Tools
- b) Foods
- c) Friends
- d) Journeys

Ans.: (b) Foods

4. Bacon's view on truth is that it:

- a) Is always absolute
- b) Varies from person to person
- c) Should be pursued through skepticism
- d) Is less important than belief

Ans.: (c) Should be pursued through skepticism

5. Bacon's essay "Of Ambition" discusses:

- a) The dangers of excessive ambition
- b) The irrelevance of ambition
- c) Ambition in scientific discovery
- d) Ambition in art and literature

Ans.: (a) The dangers of excessive ambition

6. Bacon's approach to knowledge emphasizes:

- a) Observation and empirical evidence

- b) Religious doctrine
- c) Acceptance of traditional beliefs
- d) Speculative reasoning

Ans.: (a) Observation and empirical evidence

7. Bacon's use of aphorisms in his essays serves to:

- a) Extend detailed explanations
- b) Provide humor
- c) Convey ideas succinctly
- d) Describe historical events

Ans.: (c) Convey ideas succinctly

8. In "Of Truth," Bacon uses the example of:

- a) Julius Caesar
- b) Pilate during the trial of Jesus Christ
- c) Alexander the Great
- d) King Henry VIII

Ans.: (b) Pilate during the trial of Jesus Christ

Try Yourself

Short Answer Questions:

1. What does Bacon say about the use of studies in practical life?
2. How does Bacon relate knowledge to power?
3. Discuss Bacon's views on the interplay between emotion and reason.
4. Analyze the historical context of Bacon's essays.
5. Explain Bacon's view on the role of philosophy in human life.

MCQs

1. In Bacon's essay "Of Marriage and Single Life," he suggests that married men are_____.

- a) More charitable

- b) Less ambitious
- c) Better politicians
- d) More prone to jealousy

2. Bacon's essay "Of Love" primarily views love as _____.

- a) A source of strength
- b) A distraction
- c) A necessary human emotion
- d) A theme in poetry

3. In "Of Great Place," Bacon discusses the responsibilities of _____.

- a) Scholars
- b) Politicians
- c) Judges
- d) Soldiers

4. Bacon's essay "Of Superstition" addresses _____.

- a) The dangers of excessive religious beliefs
- b) The role of religion in government
- c) Historical religious practices
- d) Comparisons between different religions

5. "Of Gardens" by Bacon reflects his views on _____.

- a) The art of gardening
- b) The symbolism of plants
- c) Gardens in literature
- d) The health benefits of gardening

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Unit Overview:

This unit aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Ben Jonson's essays, an often-overlooked aspect of the English Renaissance playwright and poet's composition. While Jonson is primarily known for his plays and poems, his essays offer valuable insights into his thoughts on literature, society, and human nature. The unit is designed to explore the thematic depth, stylistic nuances, and historical context of Jonson's essays.

Structure:**5.0 Objectives****5.1 Introduction****5.2 Background information on Ben Jonson as a writer****5.3 Overview of Jonson's essays and their significance****5.4 Structure and Content****5.5 Thematic Elements****5.6 Jonson's ideas on the importance of imitation in literature****5.7 Jonson's essays on morality and ethics****5.8 Exploration of Jonson's views on honesty and integrity****5.9 Discussion of Jonson's moralistic ideas in his essays****5.10 Jonson's essays on human nature and society****5.11 Examination of Jonson's observations on human behavior****5.12 Analysis of Jonson's commentary on societal norms and customs****5.13 Discussion of Jonson's insights into the psychology of individuals and groups****5.14 Jonson's essays as social commentaries****5.15 Analysis of Jonson's portrayal of social hierarchies and power dynamics****5.16 Discussion of Jonson's depiction of corruption and hypocrisy**

5.17 Jonson's influence on the development of the essay genre

5.18 Jonson's role in popularizing the essay form in English literature

5.19 Stylistic elements and techniques used by Jonson

5.20 Jonson's impact on later essayists and the development of the essay as a genre

5.21 Conclusion

5.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the historical and cultural context in which Ben Jonson wrote his essays.
- To analyze the thematic elements of Jonson's essays, including but not limited to morality, social commentary, and literary criticism.
- To study Jonson's unique style and its influence on essay-writing.
- To encourage critical thinking and interpretation of primary texts.
- To engage in academic discussions and debates about the relevance of Jonson's essays in contemporary literature and society.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural context of Renaissance England as it pertains to Ben Jonson's essays.
2. Identify and articulate the key themes, such as morality and social critique, present in Jonson's body of essays.
3. Understand and describe the stylistic elements, including rhetorical devices like satire and irony, that Jonson employs in his essays.
4. Apply critical thinking skills to analyze the structure, language, and thematic elements of Jonson's essays.
5. Effectively compare and contrast the themes and styles of Jonson's essays with those of his other works and those of his contemporaries.

5.1 INTRODUCTION:

Ben Jonson's essays are a collection of writings that cover a wide range of topics, exploring various aspects of human nature, society, and culture. Jonson, an English playwright and poet of the Renaissance period, is well-known for his plays and poetry, but his essays offer a unique glimpse into his thoughts and observations on the world around him. In the introduction to his essays, Jonson sets the stage for the reader, providing context and explaining his motivations for writing. He expresses a desire to share his knowledge and insights, stating that his purpose is not to impose his opinions on others, but rather to contribute to the intellectual discourse of his time. Jonson emphasizes the importance of understanding human nature and the complexities of society, highlighting the role of his essays in shedding light on these topics. He acknowledges the diversity of his readership, recognizing that people from various backgrounds and with different interests will be reading his work. In order to reach a wide audience, Jonson adopts a conversational and accessible writing style, using familiar language and examples that resonate with readers. He encourages his audience to critically engage with his ideas, challenging them to question their own beliefs and assumptions. Furthermore, Jonson establishes himself as a reliable and trustworthy narrator, drawing on his own experiences and observations to support his arguments.

5.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON BEN JOHNSON AS A WRITER:

Ben Jonson, a prominent figure among English Renaissance writers, was born in 1572 in London, England. He grew up in a working-class family, and his father died when he was just a child, leaving Jonson to be raised by his mother. Even though he received only a basic education, Jonson's passion for literature and writing was evident from a young age. As a teenager, he briefly served as an apprentice bricklayer, but his artistic ambitions urged him to pursue a different path. He began working as an actor and playwright, and his natural talent quickly gained him recognition in the theatrical world. Jonson's widespread acclaim can be attributed to his unique contributions as a writer, specifically in the genres of

drama and poetry. His plays, such as "Volpone" and "The Alchemist," are characterized by their satirical style and exploration of moral and social issues of the time. In addition to his theatrical works, Jonson is also known for his reflective essays, which showcase his profound intellect and sharp wit. These essays, which were published posthumously in a collection titled "Discoveries," cover a wide range of topics, from human nature and learning to literature and art. Throughout his career, Jonson engaged with the social, political, and cultural debates of his time, making him a critical commentator on the society in which he lived. While he faced numerous challenges and setbacks throughout his life, including imprisonment for killing a fellow actor in a duel, Jonson's legacy as a writer remains undeniably influential, garnering him the title of one of the most significant literary figures of the English Renaissance.

5.3 OVERVIEW OF JOHNSON'S ESAYS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE:

Timber or Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter is a collection of essays, observations, and reflections by Ben Jonson, one of the leading literary figures of the English Renaissance. Published posthumously in 1640, the work offers a fascinating glimpse into Jonson's intellectual world and reveals his thoughts on a wide array of topics. The collection is often considered a seminal work in the genre of the essay, although it doesn't fit neatly into the form as we understand it today.

5.4 STRUCTURE NAD CONTENT:

The collection is less structured than many modern essay compilations; it is more akin to a commonplace book where Jonson recorded various "discoveries" or insights that he had come upon. These range from concise aphorisms and brief reflections to more extended meditations. The subjects covered are equally varied, encompassing literature, morality, philosophy, and even practical advice.

5.5 THEMATIC ELEMENTS:

Literary Criticism: Jonson offers insights into the nature of poetry, drama, and other forms of literature. He discusses the role of the artist and the standards by which art should be judged.

Morality and

Human Nature: Many of Jonson's observations delve into the complexities of human behavior, morality, and ethics. He often reflects on virtues and vices, exploring the moral obligations of individuals within society.

Social

Commentary: The essays in "Timber" also serve as a commentary on the social and cultural issues of Jonson's time, including critiques of political figures and social norms.

Philosophical

Inquiries: Jonson's work is infused with philosophical questioning, often touching on matters of personal and societal significance. He explores questions about the nature of truth, beauty, and the human condition.

Jonson's essays, often categorized as a form of literary criticism, offer a penetrating and insightful examination of various aspects of seventeenth-century society and culture. Written between 1597 and 1619, these essays encompass a wide range of topics, including friendship, education, ambition, and self-improvement. Jonson's essays are significant for their unique combination of wit, erudition, and moral seriousness. Unlike his contemporaries, who mainly focused on the art of poetry and drama, Jonson diverged from the traditional genres to present a more personal and introspective view of his society. In his essay "Of Friendship," for instance, Jonson explores the nature of true friendship and argues that it can only be achieved through mutual trust, loyalty, and shared values. This

essay, like many others in the collection, reflects Jonson's deep understanding of human psychology and his belief in the power of genuine human connections. Moreover, Jonson's essays provide valuable insights into the social and cultural dynamics of early modern England. Through his meticulous observations and astute analysis, he sheds light on the moral and intellectual climate of his time, revealing the customs, prejudices, and aspirations of the various social classes. For instance, in his essay "Of Ambition," Jonson examines the often destructive effects of excessive ambition, warning against the pitfalls of vanity, greed, and ruthless competition. His essays thus serve as a critique of the corrupting influence of ambition on both individual lives and society as a whole, presenting a cautionary tale that remains relevant to this day. Jonson's essays offer a profound reflection on the human condition, providing timeless wisdom and intellectual stimulation to readers across the centuries.

This renewed emphasis on the moral and didactic purposes of literature is also evident in Jonson's own writings, particularly in his essays. In these essays, Jonson offers a wealth of advice and observations on various subjects, ranging from the role of a writer in society to the importance of education and self-improvement. One of Jonson's central concerns is the need for writers to exercise their craft responsibly and to use their influence for the betterment of society. He argues that literature, when properly employed, can have a profound impact on its readers, shaping their thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. Thus, Jonson offers a vision of literature as a powerful tool for moral instruction and social reform. In order to achieve this lofty goal, Jonson argues that writers must possess not only talent and skill but also a strong moral character. He believes that a writer who lacks virtue and integrity will produce works that are not only aesthetically inferior but also morally corrupt. Therefore, Jonson calls upon writers to cultivate their minds and their characters, urging them to engage in constant self-reflection and to actively seek out knowledge and wisdom. In this way, Jonson sees the writer as a type of philosopher, someone who possesses the ability to discern and articulate the truths of the human condition. Like the Stoic philosophers whom he admired, Jonson believes that true knowledge comes not only from the study of

traditional academic disciplines but also from an intentional engagement with the world.

5.6 JONSON'S IDEA ON THE IMPORTANCE OF IMITATION IN LITERATURE:

In examining Jonson's ideas on the importance of imitation in literature, it becomes clear that he strongly believed in the efficacy and value of imitating the works of great writers. According to Jonson, imitation was not seen as a means of copying or plagiarizing another writer's work, but rather as a way to emulate and learn from the masters of literature. He believed that by studying and imitating the works of renowned poets and playwrights, aspiring writers could acquire the necessary skills and techniques to refine their own craft. Jonson argued that imitation was an essential part of the creative process, asserting that it was only through imitation that one could truly understand and appreciate the art of writing. Moreover, he contended that imitating the works of others would help writers develop their own unique voice and style. This emphasis on imitation in literature is reflected in Jonson's own writings, particularly in his plays and poetry. His works often draw inspiration from ancient Roman and Greek authors, adapting their themes and forms to suit the contemporary English stage. By doing so, Jonson hoped to enhance the quality and sophistication of English literature by infusing it with the enduring wisdom and elegance of classical literature. Thus, Jonson's championing of imitation as a crucial component of artistic creation underscores his belief in the transformative power of literature and its ability to connect past and present, tradition and innovation.

In his essay titled 'On Travel', Ben Jonson explores the educational and cultural benefits of travel. He argues that traveling expands one's knowledge and understanding of the world, particularly by exposing individuals to different cultures and ways of life. Jonson believes that traveling allows people to experience firsthand the diversity and richness of the human experience, and he encourages his readers to embark on their own journeys. According to Jonson, traveling not only broadens one's horizons, but it also facilitates personal growth

and self-discovery. He asserts that by stepping out of their comfort zones and immersing themselves in new environments, travelers can learn valuable lessons about resilience, adaptability, and independence. Moreover, Jonson argues that travel provides individuals with the unique opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds, fostering a sense of empathy and understanding. He contends that these encounters with different cultures and perspectives can challenge one's preconceived notions and encourage intellectual curiosity. Additionally, Jonson emphasizes the importance of traveling in developing essential life skills, such as problem-solving and effective communication. He believes that navigating through unfamiliar territory and facing unforeseen challenges help individuals to become more resourceful and fast thinking. Jonson's essay serves as a testament to the transformative power of travel and its ability to shape individuals into more well-rounded and enlightened beings. Overall, by espousing the benefits of travel, Jonson encourages his readers to embrace new experiences and seek out opportunities for personal and intellectual growth.

5.7 JONSON'S ESSAYS ON MORALITY AND ETHICS:

Jonson's essays on morality and ethics are characterized by their penetrating insights and moral admonitions. In his essay "Of Discourse," Jonson emphasizes the importance of measured and thoughtful speech. He argues that meaningful conversation is the cornerstone of civil society and posits that the ability to engage in discourse separates humans from other animals. Jonson warns against indulging in frivolous talk and idle chatter, as he believes it leads to a decline in moral values and intellectual stagnation. In "Of Envy," Jonson examines the destructive nature of envy and its detrimental effects on individuals and society. He explains that envy stems from a sense of inequality and manifests as malicious resentment towards others' success. Jonson cautions that envy not only inflicts harm on its targets but also corrodes the envious individual's character and sense of self-worth. Further, he argues that envy impedes progress and fosters a toxic environment, hindering collaboration and undermining collective growth. In his essay "Of Religion," Jonson delves into the complex interplay between faith,

reason, and superstition. He critiques blind adherence to religious dogma and advocates for a balanced approach that combines intellectual inquiry with spiritual devotion. Jonson cautions against fanaticism and religious intolerance, emphasizing the importance of tolerance and compassion in matters of faith. Overall, Jonson's essays on morality and ethics offer timeless advice on subjects that remain relevant to this day. Through his keen observations and moral guidance, Jonson encourages readers to reflect on their own values and behaviors, inspiring them to strive for a more virtuous and harmonious society.

5.8 EXPLORATION OF JOHNSON'S VIEWS ON HONESTY AND INTEGRITY:

Jonson's exploration of honesty and integrity in his essays reveals his deep understanding of human nature and moral principles. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining one's honesty and integrity in order to lead a virtuous and fulfilling life. Through his examination of various facets of honesty, such as self-awareness, sincerity, and truthfulness, Jonson highlights the impact of honesty not only on individuals but also on society as a whole. He argues that dishonesty and deceit can lead to the erosion of trust and the disruption of social order. Jonson's essays also demonstrate his belief that true integrity requires a constant commitment to acting in accordance with one's values, regardless of external pressures or temptations. He rejects the notion that one can be partly honest or partly virtuous, emphasizing the need for consistency and steadfastness in one's moral character. Moreover, Jonson's exploration of honesty and integrity extends beyond mere ethical considerations. He recognizes the connection between honesty and intellectual pursuits, emphasizing the importance of intellectual honesty in the pursuit of knowledge. In this sense, Jonson's views align with the humanist ideals of his time, which prioritized the development of one's moral and intellectual virtues. Overall, Jonson's essays offer a thought-provoking and insightful examination of honesty and integrity, emphasizing their essential role in shaping individual behavior and societal relations. His exploration serves as a valuable moral compass, inspiring readers to strive for honesty and integrity in their own lives.

5.9 DISCUSSION OF JONSON'S MORALISTIC IDEAS IN HIS ESSAYS:

In addition to his critical observations on the social and political conditions of his time, Ben Jonson's essays also reflect his moralistic ideas. Jonson's moral outlook is deeply rooted in his belief in the inherent goodness of human nature and his conviction that the pursuit of virtue leads to personal happiness and societal harmony. In his essay "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature," Jonson argues that goodness is not merely an act, but a quality that is innate in certain individuals. He posits that those who possess a good nature are naturally inclined to do good deeds and lead virtuous lives. According to Jonson, goodness is to be cherished and admired as it is a rarity in a world plagued by vice and corruption. Moreover, in his essay "Of Beauty," Jonson explores the relationship between physical appearance and moral virtue. He contends that true beauty is not solely determined by outward appearance, but by the inner qualities of a person. Jonson argues that a beautiful soul will radiate a beauty that is more lasting and profound than any physical attributes. Furthermore, Jonson's essay "Of Religion" reveals his moralistic beliefs regarding the importance of religious devotion. He emphasizes that a true follower of religion should not only possess religious knowledge, but also put that knowledge into practice by leading a life of righteousness and piety. In all of his essays, Jonson consistently promotes the values of goodness, virtue, and piety as essential for the betterment of individuals and society as a whole. These moralistic ideas reflect Jonson's desire to inspire his readers towards a life of ethical conduct and spiritual growth.

In examining the practical advice that Jonson provides in his essays for leading a morally upright life, one can discern a strong emphasis on self-discipline and conscious decision-making. Jonson emphasizes the importance of exercising control over one's desires and impulses, recognizing that it is these internal conflicts that often lead individuals astray. He advises his readers to resist the temptation of immediate gratification and instead strive towards long-term goals. This is evident in his essay "On Discourse," where Jonson argues for the significance of self-restraint and the importance of thoughtful communication. He

cautions against indulging in vain and frivolous conversations, urging individuals to engage in meaningful dialogue that contributes to personal growth and the betterment of society. Furthermore, Jonson's essays provide insight into the role of reason and critical thinking in leading a morally upright life. He highlights the need for individuals to question societal norms and challenge conventional wisdom. In his essay "On Reason," Jonson encourages readers to think independently and rely on their own rational judgment rather than blindly following the opinions of others. He suggests that by cultivating a strong sense of reason, individuals are better equipped to navigate ethical dilemmas and make virtuous choices. In essence, Jonson's practical advice underscores the importance of self-awareness and conscious decision-making in leading a morally upright life. By exercising self-discipline, engaging in meaningful discourse, and relying on their own reason, individuals can navigate the complexities of morality and strive towards an upright and virtuous existence.

In his essay titled "Of Travel," Ben Jonson explores the benefits and drawbacks of traveling. According to Jonson, travel broadens one's perspective and deepens their understanding of both themselves and the world around them. By exposing oneself to different cultures, languages, and customs, one becomes more knowledgeable and tolerant. Jonson argues that through travel, individuals can break free from their narrow-mindedness and ethnocentrism, and develop a more inclusive worldview. Moreover, Jonson asserts that travel allows individuals to witness the wonders of nature and discover new scientific knowledge. Through firsthand experience, one can truly appreciate the beauty and diversity of the world. However, Jonson also acknowledges that there are negative aspects of travel. He warns that traveling without proper purpose or preparation can be detrimental and even dangerous. Without a focused itinerary or a clear objective, travelers may find themselves lost, both literally and metaphorically. Additionally, Jonson highlights the financial burden that travel can impose, as well as the potential for physical and emotional hardships. Despite these drawbacks, Jonson believes that the benefits of travel far outweigh the risks. He encourages his readers to embrace the opportunity to explore and learn, as he

passionately argues that travel is not only an educational pursuit but also a means for personal growth and self-discovery.

Jonson's essay "Of Travel" emphasizes the transformative power of exploration, urging readers to leave their comfort zones and embark on journeys that will enrich their lives.

5.10 JONSON'S ESSAYS ON HUMAN NATURE AND SOCIETY:

In his collection of essays, Ben Jonson offers a profound insight into human nature and society. Throughout his writings, Jonson engages with various aspects of human behavior and its influence on society as a whole. One of the key themes resonating throughout Jonson's essays is the notion of hypocrisy.

He criticizes the prevalent hypocrisy in society and exposes the dual nature of individuals, who often present themselves as virtuous and moral but are driven by selfish intentions. Through his essays, Jonson encourages readers to critically examine the authenticity of their actions and challenge the societal norms that perpetuate this duplicity. Moreover, Jonson also explores the concept of honor and reputation in society. He argues that these societal constructs hold great sway over individuals, often dictating their behavior and actions. Jonson posits that the desire for honor often leads people to compromise their integrity, creating a moral conflict within themselves. By dissecting these themes of hypocrisy and honor, Jonson sheds light on the complexities of human nature and the impact of societal expectations. Furthermore, Jonson's essays also delve into the nature of human relationships, providing commentary on friendship and marriage. He examines the motivations behind these relationships and highlights the importance of sincere connections that are built on trust and mutual understanding. By exploring these various facets of human nature and society, Jonson's essays provoke readers to reflect on their own lives and engage in a deeper analysis of their actions and interactions within the broader social context.

5.11 EXAMINATION OF JONSON'S OBSERVATIONS ON HUMAN BEHAVIOUR:

In examining Jonson's observations on human behavior in his essays, it becomes clear that he possessed a keen and astute understanding of the complexities and idiosyncrasies that define human nature. He delves deep into the various facets of human behavior, ranging from love and friendship to deceit and ambition, providing thought-provoking insights into each subject. For instance, in his essay "Of Love," Jonson explores the multifaceted nature of love, highlighting how it encompasses both genuine affection and selfish desires. He argues that love, at its core, is rooted in the desire to possess and control, making it a complex emotion that intertwines both sincerity and manipulation. Similarly, in his essay "Of Friendship," Jonson presents a nuanced perspective on this commonly cherished relationship. He asserts that friendship should be based on shared values and interests, rather than self-interest, highlighting the need for honesty and loyalty in such connections. Through his observations, Jonson challenges the conventional notions surrounding love and friendship, providing a more realistic and nuanced understanding of these often idealized facets of human life. Furthermore, in his essay "Of Ambition," Jonson delves into the dark underbelly of this driving force, cautioning against the destructive nature of unchecked ambition. He warns that excessive ambition can lead individuals astray, as they become blinded by their desires for power and success, ultimately sacrificing their morals and integrity. Jonson's astute observations on human behavior in his essays serve as a testament to his remarkable insight into the complexities of human nature, providing readers with profound reflections on various aspects of human behavior that still resonate today.

5.12 ANALYSIS OF JONSON'S COMMENTARY ON SOCIETAL NORMS AND CUSTOMS:

In Jonson's commentary on societal norms and customs, he exhibits a critical and satirical approach. Throughout his essays, Jonson effectively dissects various aspects of society, shedding light on the hypocrisy and absurdity that often underlie societal practices. One recurring theme in his commentary is the role of

wealth and social status in determining one's worth and position in society. Jonson challenges the conventional belief that material wealth equates to personal merit or virtuous character, as he exposes the shallow and often deceitful nature of those who possess wealth and status. He emphasizes the importance of true virtue and moral integrity, arguing that these qualities should be the primary factors in assessing an individual's worth.

Furthermore, Jonson's commentary on gender norms and expectations is both enlightening and provocative. He challenges the traditional view of women as passive and submissive beings, instead celebrating their intelligence, wit, and capacity for rational thinking. Jonson presents women as equals to men, deserving of respect and recognition. Through his essays, he criticizes the double standards imposed on women and encourages society to abandon these oppressive norms.

Interestingly, Jonson also addresses the role of education and its effect on society. He emphasizes the importance of intellectual growth and the pursuit of knowledge, asserting that education is the key to personal and societal improvement. According to Jonson, the intellectual and emotional development fostered through education is essential for individuals to become productive, compassionate, and moral contributors to society.

In conclusion, Jonson's commentary on societal norms and customs in his essays offers a critical and satirical perspective on various aspects of society. Through his analysis, he challenges conventional beliefs and expectations, denounces the superficiality of wealth and status, redefines gender roles, and advocates for the transformative power of education. Jonson's insights provide valuable criticisms of societal practices, urging individuals to question and confront the prevailing norms of their time.

5.13 DISCUSSION OF JONSON'S INSIGHTS INTO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS:

In analyzing Ben Jonson's insights into the psychology of individuals and groups, several key themes emerge. One of these themes is the notion of self-perception

and its impact on the behavior of individuals. Jonson argues that individuals often construct an idealized version of themselves in their minds and strive to uphold this ideal in their interactions with others. This self-perception can shape individuals' actions, as they seek to present themselves in a favorable light and maintain a certain social status. Moreover, Jonson delves into the concept of social interactions and their influence on individuals' psychology. He suggests that individuals are deeply affected by the opinions and judgments of others, often seeking validation and recognition from their peers. This longing for social approval can drive individuals to conform to societal norms and expectations, even if it goes against their own personal desires or values. Jonson also explores the dynamics of group psychology, highlighting how individuals' behavior can change when they are in a collective setting. He emphasizes the power of social conformity and peer pressure, arguing that individuals are more likely to act in line with the group's opinions and beliefs to avoid isolation or criticism. Additionally, Jonson examines the role of hierarchy and power dynamics within groups, underscoring how these factors can shape individuals' behavior and create tensions and conflicts between group members. Overall, Jonson's insights into the psychology of individuals and groups shed light on the intricate interplay between self-perception, social interactions, and power dynamics, offering valuable insights into human psychology and behavior.

Religion is a fundamental aspect of society, providing individuals with a sense of purpose, moral guidance, and a framework for understanding the world around them. In his essay, Ben Jonson explores the significance of religion in shaping one's experiences and beliefs. He argues that religion, as an essential component of human identity, plays a crucial role in bringing people together and fostering a sense of community. Jonson posits that religion is not merely a set of beliefs to be followed passively, but rather an active force that should be embraced and practiced in everyday life. He emphasizes the importance of individuals maintaining a personal relationship with their faith, rather than solely relying on external rituals and traditions. Jonson contends that religion should provide a

source of comfort and solace, enabling individuals to navigate the complexities of life and find meaning in the face of adversity.

Moreover, he highlights the transformative power of religion, arguing that it has the potential to uplift individuals and inspire them to lead virtuous lives. Jonson asserts that religion should not be reduced to a mere tool for social control, but rather should be embraced as a personal journey of self-discovery and growth. Overall, Jonson's essay highlights the profound impact of religion on individuals and society as a whole, urging readers to engage with their faith on a deeper level and recognize its potential to shape their lives in a meaningful way.

5.14 JONSON'S ESSAYS AS SOCIAL COMMENTARIES:

Jonson's essays serve as insightful social commentaries, shedding light on the various aspects of his contemporary society. In his essay titled 'Of Expense,' Jonson dissects the extravagant spending habits of the upper classes, emphasizing the detrimental consequences of such frivolity on society as a whole. He condemns the excessive and ostentatious display of wealth, criticizing individuals who prioritize material possessions over moral values. This critique of materialism and consumerism aligns with the broader socio-cultural context of early seventeenth-century England, where shifts in economic structures and the rise of a moneyed elite began to reshape societal norms. In 'Of Envy,' Jonson explores the pervasive nature of envy and its corrosive effects on human relationships. By pinpointing envy as a universal human flaw, Jonson unveils the innate human tendency to compare oneself to others and to feel discontent in the face of others' achievements. Moreover, his assessment of envy in both a personal and societal context exposes the toxic nature of this emotion, which can erode not only individuals but also communities and societies as a whole. These essays can be seen as social commentaries that prompt readers to reflect on the values and behaviors prevalent in their own society. Jonson's essays function as a mirror, holding up a stark reflection of early modern English society and challenging his audience to examine their own role within it.

In Jonson's essays, he exhibits a keen awareness and criticism of the contemporary society he lived in. One of the primary concerns addressed by Jonson is the corruptive influence of money and materialistic pursuits on individuals and society as a whole. Through his sharp wit and incisive observations, Jonson exposes and ridicules the vanity and greed prevalent in his society. He denounces the rampant pursuit of wealth and the idolization of material possessions, which he sees as detrimental to true character and moral values. Jonson argues that such a culture of materialism leads to the deterioration of genuine relationships and the loss of meaningful connections between people. Moreover, Jonson confronts the issue of hypocrisy in society, particularly within the realm of social hierarchies and class divisions. He unmasks the pretentiousness and false pretenses adopted by individuals to gain social standing and uphold their reputations. By critiquing the hypocrisy and artifice in his society, Jonson highlights the need for authenticity and honesty in human interactions. Finally, Jonson's essays also delve into the realm of human folly and follies. He exposes the absurdities and irrational behaviors of individuals, shedding light on the inherent weaknesses and flaws of human nature. Through his satire and wit, Jonson emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and self-awareness, encouraging individuals to recognize their weaknesses and strive for personal growth. Overall, Jonson's essays serve as a mirror to his society, revealing the vices, follies, and hypocrisies that hinder human progress and undermine societal harmony.

5.15 ANALYSIS OF JONSON'S PORTRAYAL OF SOCIAL HIERARCHIES AND POWER DYNAMICS:

In his essays, Ben Jonson intricately examines the complex social hierarchies and power dynamics prevalent during the Elizabethan era. Jonson's portrayal of these social structures reveals the deeply embedded nature of power and its implications for individuals of different social statuses. One example of Jonson's exploration of social hierarchies can be seen in his essay "Of Great Place," where he critiques the corrupting influence of power on individuals in high positions. He argues that those in positions of authority are often susceptible to the temptations of bribery

and corruption, as they have the ability to manipulate the system for personal gain. Jonson's analysis exposes the inherent flaws within the social order, highlighting the potential downfall that awaits those who are not cognizant of the burdens that come with power. Furthermore, Jonson also sheds light on the power dynamics between the higher and lower classes. In his essay "Of Riches," he illustrates the inherent divide that exists between the wealthy and the impoverished. Jonson conveys a sense of moral responsibility for those who are privileged, emphasizing the importance of using wealth to benefit society rather than exploiting it for personal gain. Through his exploration of social hierarchies and power dynamics, Jonson offers a critical examination of Elizabethan society, urging individuals to reflect on their roles within the social order and to question the implications of power. His insights serve as a reminder for future generations that power must be wielded with caution and that the social injustices inherent in hierarchies must be actively addressed and challenged.

5.16 DISCUSSION OF JONSON'S DEPICTION OF CORRUPTION AND HYPOCRISY:

In his essays, Ben Jonson provides a penetrating portrayal of corruption and hypocrisy in society. Jonson employs a keen sense of observation and a sharp wit to shed light on these vices that plague human nature. One of his most notable essays, "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," delves into the deceitful practices of individuals who publicly pretend to be virtuous while privately engaging in immoral behavior. Jonson criticizes those who engage in the art of simulation, which involves putting on a false image or facade to deceive others. He highlights the dangers of such behavior, asserting that it not only undermines trust and integrity but also perpetuates a culture of duplicity. Furthermore, Jonson explores the concept of dissimulation, wherein individuals hide their true intentions and feelings behind a mask of sincerity and honesty. He condemns this practice, arguing that it is a form of hypocrisy that corrodes social bonds and leads to the erosion of genuine connections between individuals. Jonson's essays are replete with vivid examples and incisive anecdotes that showcase the ubiquity of corruption and hypocrisy in various walks of life. Through his sharp and astute

analysis, he exposes the underbelly of human nature, challenging readers to reflect on their own actions and assess whether they too have succumbed to these vices. Jonson's depiction of corruption and hypocrisy is a thought-provoking and timeless critique of society, one that continues to resonate with contemporary readers and serves as a reminder of the pitfalls of deceit and duplicity.

In his essay titled "Of Gardens," Ben Jonson explores the significance of gardens in human life, specifically focusing on the role they play in cultivating the virtues of temperance and contentment. Jonson contends that gardens are not merely physical spaces adorned with various plants and flowers, but rather, they embody a sense of tranquility and harmony that can positively influence an individual's state of mind. He emphasizes the importance of moderation and self-control, suggesting that gardens provide a sanctuary where individuals can find respite from the busyness of daily life and restore their inner balance. Jonson suggests that this restoration of balance is vital for personal growth and self-reflection. Furthermore, he argues that gardens foster contentment and a deep appreciation for nature, as they allow individuals to witness the wonders of the natural world and find solace in its beauty. According to Jonson, gardens make one more conscious of the fleeting nature of life and encourage a greater sense of gratitude and mindfulness. Through their ability to stimulate the senses and evoke a sense of awe, gardens provide a space for contemplation and introspection. Jonson's essay highlights the transformative power of gardens, presenting them as spaces that can nurture virtues such as temperance and contentment, helping individuals connect with their inner selves and the natural world around them. Ultimately, Jonson's exploration of gardens as a metaphorical and literal haven underscores the significance of creating spaces that promote personal growth and well-being.

5.17 JONSON'S INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESSAY GENRE:

Ben Jonson's essays have had a significant impact on the development of the essay genre. With his collection of works known as "The Discoveries," Jonson not only demonstrates his mastery of various literary forms but also contributes to the establishment and maturation of the essay as a legitimate literary genre. He brings

a unique blend of wit, humor, and keen observation to his essays, which captivates readers and sets a precedent for subsequent essayists. Jonson's essays encompass a wide range of subjects, from morality and education to literature and theater, reflecting his versatility as a writer and his wide-ranging interests. His focus on human nature, society, and the human experience brings a depth and richness to his essays that resonates with readers.

Moreover, Jonson's essays have also served as a model for future essayists, inspiring and influencing generations of writers. His distinctive style, characterized by its clarity, concise language, and logical structure, became a benchmark for essay writing. Jonson's essays are characterized by their careful balance between personal reflection and universal themes, allowing readers to connect with his ideas on a deeply personal level. His ability to seamlessly weave together personal observations with broader societal commentary showcases his skill as a storyteller and a chronicler of the human condition.

In addition, Jonson's essays display a unique blend of optimism and realism. While he does not shy away from criticizing society, he also offers insightful solutions and suggestions for improvement. This balanced approach to writing has had a lasting impact on the essay genre, influencing subsequent essayists who seek to emulate Jonson's ability to engage readers while imparting wisdom and understanding.

Jonson's essays have played a pivotal role in shaping the essay genre and have left a lasting legacy that continues to resonate with readers to this day.

5.18 JONSON'S ROLE IN POPULARISING THE ESSAY FORM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE:

In examining Jonson's role in popularizing the essay form in English literature, it becomes evident that his contributions were substantial and influential. Jonson's essays, collectively known as *The Underwood*, were published posthumously, providing readers with a valuable glimpse into his thoughts and insights on various topics. One of the most notable aspects of Jonson's essays is his ability to blend insightful observations with wit and humor, creating an engaging and enjoyable reading experience. This fusion of intellectual depth and entertainment

was a significant departure from the more didactic and moralistic essays of his contemporaries, such as Francis Bacon. Jonson's essays also showcased his versatility as a writer, as he effortlessly traversed a wide range of subjects, including literature, philosophy, and social commentary. His essays were not limited to one particular style or form but rather embraced various forms such as character sketches, meditative discourses, and critical evaluations.

Additionally, Jonson was a master of aphorism, skillfully distilling complex ideas into concise and memorable phrases. This stylistic innovation greatly contributed to the popular appeal of his essays, making them accessible to a wider audience. Moreover, Jonson's essays were groundbreaking in their emphasis on personal experience and individual subjectivity. He explored his own thoughts and emotions in a uniquely introspective manner that was unprecedented in English literature at the time. This personal touch not only gave his essays a relatable quality but also expanded the possibilities of the essay form as a means of self-expression. Through his innovative approach to subject matter, style, and form, Jonson played a pivotal role in popularizing the essay form in English literature and establishing it as a significant and enduring genre.

5.19 STYLISTIC ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES USED BY JONSON:

Moving on to the analysis of the stylistic elements and techniques employed by Jonson in his essays, it becomes evident that he exhibits remarkable mastery over the language and various writing techniques. One of the most notable stylistic features in his essays is his use of wit and humor. Jonson's wit is sharp and incisive, allowing him to cleverly dissect human follies and vices with great effectiveness. His skillful employment of irony and satire serves as a powerful tool in exposing societal absurdities and criticizing prevalent flaws. Furthermore, Jonson's use of vivid and evocative imagery adds depth and richness to his essays, capturing the reader's attention and facilitating a vivid portrayal of his ideas. This imagery is enhanced by his use of similes and metaphors, which not only embellish his prose but also provide a deeper understanding of his concepts. Additionally, Jonson's essays display a strong command of rhetoric, particularly

evident in his use of persuasive language and rhetorical devices. His mastery over rhetorical techniques such as repetition, parallelism, and antithesis contribute to the overall logical and cohesive structure of his essays. Finally, Jonson's essays exhibit a rich and extensive vocabulary, reflecting his erudition and literary prowess. His precise word choice conveys his thoughts with precision and clarity, enhancing the impact of his arguments. Overall, Jonson's essays are a testament to his unparalleled skill as a writer, showcasing a range of stylistic elements and techniques that contribute to the enduring literary value of his works.

5.20 JONSON'S IMPACT ON LATER ESSAYISTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESSAY AS A GENRE:

Jonson's impact on later essayists and the development of the essay as a genre cannot be overstated. As one of the first writers to explore the potential of the essay form, Jonson laid the foundation for future essayists to follow. His essays were characterized by their wit, erudition, and ability to handle a wide range of subjects, from politics to literature to social commentary. This versatility and intellectual depth would prove to be influential in the development of the essay as a genre. Jonson's essays served as models for countless writers who came after him, including the likes of Samuel Johnson, Charles Lamb, and Virginia Woolf. They admired his ability to combine rigorous argumentation with a lively and engaging writing style. Furthermore, Jonson's emphasis on the importance of the individual voice and perspective in the essay would shape the genre for centuries to come. His essays demonstrated that an essay was not simply a vehicle for conveying information but also a platform for the essayist to express their unique thoughts and experiences. This focus on subjectivity and personal reflection would become a defining characteristic of the essay, distinguishing it from other forms of non-fiction writing. In addition, Jonson's essays helped solidify the essay as a distinct literary genre, separate from other forms such as the treatise or the diatribe. His contributions to the development of the essay as a genre, both in terms of style and content, cannot be underestimated and continue to resonate to this day.

In the final paragraph of the essay titled "Ben Jonson's essays," the author reflects on the lasting influence of Jonson's works on literary criticism and the development of the essay form. The author acknowledges Jonson's role in shaping the essay as a distinct genre, noting his ability to combine intellectual rigor with personal reflection. The author further praises Jonson's keen observation and use of wit, which brings to life the characters and situations presented in his essays. The author suggests that Jonson's contribution to the essay is marked by a combination of erudition and self-awareness, making his works both insightful and entertaining. Moreover, the author asserts that Jonson's essays also demonstrate a moral dimension, as they often seek to instruct and edify readers. The author concludes by emphasizing the continued relevance of Jonson's essays, arguing that their exploration of human nature and society remains valuable and thought-provoking. Overall, this final paragraph underscores the importance of Ben Jonson's essays in the development of the essay genre, praising their intellectual depth, wit, and moral inquiry, and affirming their relevance in contemporary literary criticism.

5.21 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ben Jonson's essays stand as a testament to his wit, intelligence, and artistic prowess. Through his insightful observations and skillful use of language, Jonson opens up a window into the complexities of human nature and society. His essays not only provide a vivid depiction of the Renaissance period, but also offer timeless wisdom and commentary that still resonate today. Jonson's ability to combine humor and intellectual depth allows his essays to engage and entertain readers while provoking thought and reflection. Furthermore, his essays showcase a wide range of topics and interests, covering everything from literature and philosophy to politics and social customs. This diversity of subjects demonstrates Jonson's versatility as a writer and his keen interest in exploring different facets of human existence. Moreover, Jonson's essays exemplify the power of literature to transcend time and place, as they continue to captivate and resonate with readers centuries after their initial publication. In a world where the pace of life is often hectic and the pressures of modernity can be overwhelming,

Jonson's essays offer a moment of respite, encouraging us to pause, reflect, and engage with the world around us. They remind us of the importance of critical thinking, self-reflection, and the pursuit of knowledge. Whether it is through his witty insights, sharp critiques, or profound observations, Jonson's essays remain a valuable and enduring contribution to the literary canon.

Assessment:

Short Questions:

1. What is the significance of Ben Jonson's *Timber; or, Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter*?

Ans.: *Timber; or, Discoveries* is a seminal collection of essays, observations, and reflections by Ben Jonson that offers a comprehensive view of his thoughts on a wide range of topics including morality, art, and society. Published posthumously in 1640, the work has been influential both as a piece of literature and as a document of intellectual history.

2. What are some major themes discussed in Jonson's essays?

Ans.: Major themes in Jonson's essays include morality, the role of the artist, social critique, and philosophical inquiries into the nature of truth, beauty, and the human condition.

3. How does Jonson's style in his essays differ from his other works like plays and poems?

Ans.: While Jonson's plays and poems often focus on narrative and character, his essays are more concerned with intellectual exploration and thematic depth. Stylistically, the essays employ rhetorical devices such as irony and satire, and they often serve as philosophical or moral reflections.

4. What historical and cultural context is reflected in Jonson's essays?

Ans.: Jonson's essays reflect the intellectual, social, and cultural milieu of Renaissance England. They engage with the philosophical and literary traditions of the time and often serve as a commentary on the social and cultural issues of his era.

5. Why are Jonson's essays considered relevant for contemporary discussions on art, morality, and society?

Ans.: Jonson's essays delve into timeless questions about the role of the artist, the nature of morality, and the complexities of social structures, making them relevant for ongoing contemporary debates on these topics.

Multiple-Choice Questions:

1. When was "Timber; or, Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter" published?

- A) 1600 B) 1640 C) 1700 D) 1750

2. Which of the following is NOT a major theme in Jonson's essays?

- A) Morality B) Role of the artist C) Cooking recipes D) Social critique

3. Which rhetorical device is commonly found in Jonson's essays?

- A) Irony B) Hyperbole C) Metaphor D) Alliteration

4. What historical period do Jonson's essays reflect?

- A) Medieval England B) Renaissance England C) Victorian England
D) Modern England

5. Which genre is Jonson most famous for?

- A) Novels B) Plays C) Essays D) Short Stories

- 6. What is the primary focus of Jonson's essays?**
- A) Narrative storytelling B) Intellectual exploration C) Character development
D) Plot twists
- 7. Which of the following elements is less prevalent in Jonson's essays compared to his plays and poems?**
- A) Thematic depth B) Character development C) Intellectual exploration
D) Moral reflections
- 8. Jonson's essays often serve as a commentary on _____.**
- A) Personal experiences B) Social and cultural issues C) Scientific discoveries
D) None of the above
- 9. Which of the following professions was Jonson NOT involved in?**
- A) Playwright B) Poet C) Essayist D) Scientist
- 10. Why are Jonson's essays considered relevant today?**
- A) They offer cooking tips B) They discuss outdated social norms
C) They engage with timeless questions about art and society
D) They focus on historical events only

Answer Key:

1. (B) 1640
2. (C) Cooking recipes
3. (A) Irony
4. (B) Renaissance England
5. (B) Plays
6. (B) Intellectual exploration

7. (B) Character development
8. (B) Social and cultural issues
9. (D) Scientist
- 10.(C) They engage with timeless questions about art and society

Try Yourself

1. How do Jonson's essays engage with philosophical questions?
2. What role does irony play in Jonson's essays?
3. Can you identify any recurring motifs or symbols in Jonson's essay collection?
4. How do Jonson's essays compare with the essays of his contemporary, Francis Bacon?
5. What is the structure of *Timber; or, Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter*, and how does it differ from more traditional essay collections?

Answer in one sentence:

- Which philosopher is most frequently cited in Jonson's essays?
- What aspect of human nature does Jonson least discuss in his essays?
- Which of the following best describes the tone of Jonson's essays?
- In what language were Jonson's essays originally written?
- What societal institution does Jonson criticize the most in his essays?
- How do Jonson's essays primarily differ from the moral treatises of the period?
- Which literary form closely resembles the structure of *Timber; or, Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter*?
- What is the focus of Jonson's essays on art and artists?

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Structure:**6.0 Introduction to Milton**

- 6.0.1. Milton's personal life**
- 6.0.2 Milton's University life**
- 6.0.3 Milton's Literary career in Poetry**
- 6.0.4 Milton's Literary career in Prose**
- 6.0.5 Milton and Parliament**
- 6.0.6 Milton and Political Controversy**
- 6.0.7 Milton's Later years**

6.1 Historical Background of the text

- 6.1.1 The Protestant Reformation and Its Impact**
- 6.1.2 Key Figures in the Reformation**
- 6.1.3 Important texts Related to Areopagitica**
- 6.1.4 Polemical Writings and Their Legacy**
- 6.1.5 Key Facts About Areopagitica**

6.2 Overview of the text

- 6.2.1 Milton's Argument**
- 6.2.2 *Historical Context of the Licensing Order***
- 6.2.3 *The Incompatibility of Censorship with Divine Authority***
- 6.2.4 The Ineffectiveness of Censorship in Preventing Evil**
- 6.2.5 The Relationship Between Books and Knowledge**
- 6.2.6 The Nature of Truth and the Dangers of Suppression**
- 6.2.7 The Religious and Political Limits of Toleration**
- 6.2.8 The Future of English Liberty and the Call for Action**

6.3 Analysis of the text

- 6.3.1 Milton's Opening and Invocation of Liberty**

- 6.3.2 Milton's Direct Appeal to Parliament**
- 6.3.3 The Ethics of Praise and Critique**
- 6.3.4 Historical Critique of Licensing and Censorship**
- 6.3.5 The Power and Sanctity of Books**
- 6.3.6 Religious and Theological Foundations**
- 6.3.7 The Practical and Philosophical Failings of Licensing**
- 6.3.8 Milton's Vision of England as a Leader in Liberty**
- 6.4 Key Themes of the text**
- 6.4.1 Religion, Censorship, and Reason**
- 6.4.2 Knowledge, Learning, and Truth**
- 6.4.3 Writing and Authorship**
- 6.5 Conclusion**
- 6.6 Answers**
- Suggested Readings**

In this unit, First we shall discuss Milton's life, career, and his contributions to both poetry and prose, while also focusing on his engagement with political and personal issues during his time.

6.0 INTRODUCTION TO MILTON:

John Milton was born in Cheapside in London, in 1608. He is considered as one of the most influential 17th century poets and thinkers in English literature. He is known for his staunch religious and philosophical views. Milton's life and works span significant cultural and political shifts in 17th-century England. His most famous works include *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* in poetry and his pamphlets on freedom of speech and divorce and *Areopagitica* while discussing about freedom of speech and writing. Now let us first discuss his personal life.

6.0.1 Milton's Personal Life

John Milton's personal life was marked by both intellectual pursuits and personal tragedies. He was born to his father Senior John Milton who was a respected musical composer and scrivener, and his mother Sarah Jeffrey.

He was born in a wealthy elite family which enabled him to receive private tutoring and later attend prestigious schools and universities. Milton had three marriages. His first marriage, In 1642, with Mary Powell, a young woman 17 years his junior, failed and was marked by tension and separation. Milton and Marry had three children, though only two survived infancy. His first wife Mary died in 1652 after giving birth to their third daughter. He got married a second time to Katherine Woodcock in 1656. She also died shortly after childbirth. He married a third time in 1663 to Elizabeth Mynshull, who survived him. Milton's personal life was often overshadowed by the loss of loved ones and the strain of his marital relationships.

6.0.2 Milton's University Life

Milton went to St. Paul's School, where he studied classical languages, including Latin and Greek which laid the foundation for his later scholarly and poetic work. In 1625, he attended Christ's College, Cambridge, where he excelled in his studies, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1629. He continued his studies at Cambridge, graduating with a Master of Arts degree in 1632. Throughout his time at the university, Milton was deeply immersed in the classics, religious thought, and literature, which shaped much of his future writing.

6.0.3 Milton's Literary Career in Poetry

Milton's literary career began during his years of private study at his father's home after he left Cambridge. His first major work was *Comus* (1634). It is a masque that reflected his interest in classical themes and literature. Milton's poetry reached new heights with the composition of *Lycidas* (1638) which was a pastoral elegy that immediately gained critical acclaim and is considered as one of the greatest poems in the English language. His journey as a poet continued with his epic works *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671), which established his reputation as one of the greatest poets in English literature. These works

are famed for their profound theological, philosophical, and literary exploration of the human condition, free will, and divine justice.

6.0.4 Milton's Literary Career in Prose

In addition to his poetry, Milton made significant contributions to prose. His work in prose includes political writings, pamphlets, and essays, reflecting his active engagement with the intellectual and political debates of his time. *Areopagitica* (1644), his defense of the freedom of the press, is one of his most important prose works and remains a key text in the history of political thought. Milton's *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643) is another notable prose work, where he advocated for divorce on the grounds of incompatibility, a controversial stance at the time. His prose writings often addressed issues of religion, politics, and personal freedom, demonstrating his commitment to rational thought and individual liberty.

6.0.5 Milton and Parliament

Milton had a complex relationship with Parliament, particularly during the English Civil War. His views on marriage and divorce, which challenged traditional norms, led to censorship of his works by Parliament which resulted into writing *Areopagitica*, a powerful argument against the pre-publication licensing of books and in defense of free speech. Though Parliament did not immediately respond favorably to his arguments, Milton's work was later appreciated for its defense of the freedom of expression. His engagement with political issues was not limited to censorship; he also took an active role in the political turmoil of the time, supporting the Puritan cause and even serving as Latin Secretary for the Commonwealth government. Milton's involvement with Parliament was instrumental in shaping his ideas about liberty and governance, which are deeply reflected in his writings.

6.0.6 Milton and Political Controversy in his time

Milton was a republican and a staunch supporter of the Puritan cause and aligned himself with the Parliamentarians. He advocated abolition of the

absolute monarchy and demanded for the establishment of a republic government. His political views were often radical and liberal which led to frequent clashes with both the monarchy and Parliament. *Areopagitica*, a pamphlet published in 1644 is considered to be one of the controversial works of his time in which he passionately argued against censorship and for the freedom of the press. He openly criticized Parliament's attempt to impose a licensing system on books and publications, believing it to be an infringement on intellectual freedom.

He is also popular for his another controversial views on marriage and divorce. His *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* published in 1643 proposed the radical idea that divorce should be permissible in cases of incompatibility, challenging the established religious and social norms. These views led to the censorship of many of his works, but Milton continued to advocate for individual liberty and the rights of the people, even as his works were suppressed.

He worked as a Latin Secretary for the Commonwealth government during Oliver Cromwell's rule which intertwined him with the politics of the era. During this time, he wrote diplomatic correspondence and defended the republican government, often using his writing as a weapon in the ideological battle between monarchy and republicanism.

6.0.7 Milton's Later Years

Milton's later years were marked by personal hardship and physical decline, but his intellectual productivity remained impressive. By the late 1650s, he had become almost completely blind, likely due to glaucoma. Even though he was completely blind, he was active and had a significant contribution during his later years. His daughter, Mary Milton, helped transcribe his epic masterpiece *Paradise Lost* (1667), as well as its sequel, *Paradise Regained* (1671).

As discussed earlier, Despite of his blindness, Milton continued to be active in his intellectual pursuits and produced some of his most

significant works during this time. Paradise Lost, the epic tale of humanity's fall from grace, became his crowning achievement and is considered one of the greatest works in English literature. Though Paradise Lost was initially controversial for its depiction of Satan as a heroic figure, it later earned widespread recognition for its profound exploration of free will, human suffering, and divine justice.

Milton died in 1674 at the age of 65, likely from kidney failure and complications of gout. Despite the difficulties he faced in his later years, his legacy as a poet, political thinker, and advocate for freedom of expression remains intact, with his works continuing to inspire generations of readers and thinkers.

Check Your Progress - 1

A. Answer the following question in detail.

1. Discuss Milton's involvement with the political issues of his time and its impact on his literary works.

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2. Discuss Milton's personal life emphasizing on his marriage, university and early days of career.

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B. Write an answer of the following questions in 3-4 lines.

1. When was John Milton born and where?

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2. What is the main theme of Milton's *Paradise Lost*?

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3. Who helped Milton transcribe his works after he became blind?

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4. What was Milton's first major poetic work?

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5. What role did Milton play in the Commonwealth government?

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6. Which of Milton's works is considered a defense of free speech and against censorship?

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7. What was the name of Milton's first wife?

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8. How did Milton lose his sight?

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C. Read the following questions and select the appropriate option.

1. Where was John Milton born?

- a) Westminster b) Cheapside
- c) Cambridge d) Oxford

2. What was the main focus of Milton's *Areopagitica*?

- a) Defense of the monarchy b) Defense of divorce
- c) Defense of free speech and the press d) Defense of Puritanism

3. Who was Milton's second wife?

- a) Mary Powell b) Katherine Woodcock

D. Fill in the blanks with the most suitable word or phrase.

1. John Milton was born in _____ in 1608.
2. Milton's first wife, Mary Powell, was _____ years younger than him.
3. Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* was published in the year _____.
4. Milton's work *Areopagitica* was written in _____ (year).
5. The title of Milton's work that defended the right to divorce on grounds of incompatibility is _____.
6. Milton became completely blind by the late _____ (decade).
7. Milton was a supporter of the _____ cause during the English Civil War.
8. Milton's epic *Paradise Regained* was published in _____ (year).
9. Milton wrote a masque titled _____ in 1634.
10. John Milton died in the year _____.

6.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TEXT:

6.1.1 The Protestant Reformation and Its Impact**

The Protestant Reformation was a pivotal period of religious, political, and social upheaval in Europe that fundamentally reshaped Christianity. Beginning in 1517 with Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses, the Reformation led to the fragmentation of the Roman Catholic Church and the rise of Protestant denominations. Luther's objections to church practices, such as the sale of indulgences, were instrumental in challenging the Catholic Church's authority. The Reformation not only introduced new religious doctrines but also influenced the broader political and social structures of Europe, eventually leading to the establishment of Protestantism. In **Areopagitica**, Milton references the Reformation and calls for a "reformation of the reformation," reflecting his critique of both religious and political institutions of his time.

6.1.2 Key Figures in the Reformation**

Several key figures played critical roles in the Protestant Reformation, influencing its course and impact on Western Christianity. Martin Luther, whose Ninety-five Theses sparked the movement, is one of the most notable. His rejection of papal authority and his emphasis on **sola scriptura** (scripture alone) became foundational principles for Protestantism. Another significant figure mentioned by Milton in **Areopagitica** is John Wycliffe, a 14th-century English theologian who criticized church practices such as transubstantiation and papal authority, and whose writings set the stage for the Reformation. Though Wycliffe was declared a heretic and excommunicated posthumously, his ideas were influential in the development of Protestant thought, especially in England, which Milton identifies with in his arguments for religious and intellectual freedom.

6.1.3 Important Texts Related to **Areopagitica**

Milton's **Areopagitica** is a polemic that argues for the liberty of unlicensed printing and against censorship, reflecting both his personal convictions and the broader intellectual climate of the Reformation. The work is inspired by earlier debates about freedom of expression, and Milton draws upon the Reformation's challenges to religious authority as a foundation for his arguments. Other important texts related to **Areopagitica** include works by other polemicists of the era. Thomas Paine's **Common Sense** (1776), advocating for American independence, and Mary Wollstonecraft's **A Vindication of the Rights of Women** (1792), arguing for women's rights and equality, follow the polemical tradition established in part by Milton. These texts, like **Areopagitica**, used the power of writing to challenge established authorities and push for social and political change.

6.1.4 Polemical Writings and Their Legacy

Polemical writings, like **Areopagitica**, are aggressive written arguments that seek to persuade readers on controversial issues. Derived from Greek, "polemic" refers to a written attack or argument, often in the context of religious or political conflict. Polemics were especially influential during the Renaissance, as many writers began to challenge established norms in various fields. Milton's work represents a significant moment in this tradition, as he argued passionately for freedom of speech and the press.

6.1.5 Key Facts About *Areopagitica*

Areopagitica is one of Milton's most significant prose works, written and published in 1644. The full title of the work is **Areopagitica: A Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, To the Parliament of England**. The work is written in the form of a speech. It advocates for the freedom of the press and stands against censorship, which Milton sees as an affront to intellectual and religious liberty. The work is written in the first person narrative form, offering the author's personal perspective on the freedom of speech and writing in press. The speech was composed during a time when the English Parliament was considering laws to license books. Milton strongly opposed such license and authority over freedom of speech and writing. The primary antagonists in **Areopagitica** are censorship, the English Parliament, and the Roman Catholic Church, reflecting Milton's broader critique of authority and control over knowledge. Despite Milton's strong opposition to Catholicism, it is interesting to note that Milton himself came from a Catholic background, with his father being disowned for converting to Protestantism.

Check Your Progress: 02

A. Answer the following question in detail.

1. How does John Milton's **Areopagitica** engage with the political and religious challenges of his time, particularly in relation to the Protestant Reformation and the authority of the church and state?
2. In what ways does Milton's critique of censorship in *Areopagitica* reflect broader themes of intellectual and religious freedom, and how does this connect to his personal experiences and historical context?

B. Write an answer of the following questions in 3-4 lines.

- 1) What year was **Areopagitica** published?
- 2) How does Milton describe the relationship between censorship and intellectual liberty in **Areopagitica**?
- 3) What are some key aspects of Martin Luther's contribution to the Protestant Reformation?
- 4) Who was John Wycliffe, and how did his ideas influence the Reformation?
- 5) In **Areopagitica**, who are the primary figures or institutions Milton critiques?
- 6) How does Milton's argument for the freedom of the press in **Areopagitica** connect to the broader intellectual climate of the time?
- 7) How did polemical writings, like **Areopagitica**, influence later social and political movements?

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT:

This section discusses the major arguments raised by Milton in his written speech **Areopagitica**.

6.2.1 Milton's Argument

Milton begins his argument with a quote from Euripides' **The Suppliants**, stressing the importance of free speech and the ability for free-born men to advise the public. In his written speech, he directly addresses the "High Court of Parliament" regarding the Licensing Order of 1643 that mandated pre-publication censorship. Milton argues for freedom

of expression and opposes censorship, particularly the pre-publication licensing aspect.

6.2.2 Historical Context of the Licensing Order

Milton contextualizes the Licensing Order of 1643 within a broader historical and political framework. He begins discussion with the origins of censorship and points out that the concept of pre-publication licensing didn't emerge until after the year 800. He traces the practice back to the Roman Catholic Church and the Spanish Inquisition, both of which are seen as oppressive forces. He criticizes British Parliament's adoption of such a policy, comparing it to the "antichristian" and "tyrannous" practices of these institutions.

6.2.3 The Incompatibility of Censorship with Divine Authority

Milton argues that pre-publication censorship is not only historically flawed but also religiously unjust. He contends that God does not intend for humanity to be perpetually restricted from evil; rather, He granted mankind the gift of reason to freely choose between good and evil. According to him, virtue is only meaningful when it involves the rejection of evil. Removing evil from human life would lead to a hollow, untested virtue.

6.2.4 The Ineffectiveness of Censorship in Preventing Evil

According to Milton, censorship is ineffective in eliminating evil. He questions whether other aspects of life, such as music, dance, and gossip, should also be regulated, drawing attention to the absurdity of such extensive control over human behavior. Milton insists that censorship only stifles the flow of ideas without truly addressing the root of evil in society.

6.2.5 The Relationship Between Books and Knowledge

Milton argues that books are essential for the development of knowledge and faith. He contends that the suppression of books stifles learning, which he sees as critical for the flourishing of truth. By restricting access

to ideas, Parliament's order impedes the free exchange of knowledge, which Milton compares to a stream of water that becomes stagnant when blocked. Milton maintains that truth thrives only when it is allowed to flow freely, without restrictions.

3.2.6 The Nature of Truth and the Dangers of Suppression

In this section, Milton reflects on the nature of truth. He asserts that truth is not a singular and static entity. Rather, according to him, truth is dynamic and fragmented. He uses the metaphor of truth being scattered like pieces of a broken statue and contends that truth is often distorted when attempts are made to constrain it. Milton stresses that all forms of truth should be given equal weight and that attempts to enforce a single, conformist truth are damaging to both society and the church.

3.2.7 The Religious and Political Limits of Toleration

Milton clarifies that while he supports religious tolerance and freedom of belief, there are limits. He is opposed to tolerating Catholicism and superstition, which he believes undermine true religion and civil authority. However, he argues that a more open approach to diverse Christian beliefs, rather than suppressing them, would be beneficial. Milton's position advocates for greater liberty but with certain boundaries to prevent what he sees as the destructive influence of Catholicism.

3.2.8 The Future of English Liberty and the Call for Action

Milton concludes by asserting that England has already made significant strides toward liberty, but this progress is threatened by the imposition of the Licensing Order. He appeals to Parliament to swiftly rectify the error and restore the freedom of speech and printing that England had previously enjoyed. Milton praises Parliament for its leadership but urges it to reject censorship and embrace true liberty.

Check Your Progress: 03

Determine whether the statement is true or false.

- 1. Milton begins Areopagitica by quoting a passage from The Iliad by Homer.**
 - True
 - False
- 2. The Licensing Order of 1643 mandated pre-publication censorship of books.**
 - True
 - False
- 3. Milton traces the origins of censorship to the Roman Catholic Church and the Spanish Inquisition.**
 - True
 - False
- 4. Milton argues that virtue is meaningful only when it involves the rejection of evil.**
 - True
 - False
- 5. Milton supports the suppression of books to prevent the spread of evil ideas.**
 - True
 - False
- 6. According to Milton, censorship effectively eliminates evil from society.**
 - True
 - False
- 7. Milton compares the suppression of books to blocking the flow of water in a stream.**
 - True
 - False

8. Milton believes that all forms of truth should be given equal weight and not constrained.

- True
- False

9. Milton supports tolerating Catholicism and superstition.

- True
- False

10. Milton concludes by urging Parliament to restore the freedom of speech and printing.

- True
- False

Check Your Progress - 5

Write an answer of the following questions in 3-4 lines.

1. How does Milton's invocation of Euripides' quote set the stage for his argument against censorship?

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2. In what ways does Milton link freedom of speech to national prosperity in his appeal to Parliament?

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3. What are Milton’s three criteria for genuine praise, and how do they relate to his broader argument about censorship?

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4. How does Milton use historical examples, particularly from ancient Greece and Rome, to critique censorship and pre-publication licensing?

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5. What metaphor does Milton use to describe books, and how does it elevate their significance in intellectual and spiritual growth?

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6. How does Milton integrate religious and theological principles to argue against censorship and advocate for intellectual freedom?

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7. Why does Milton criticize the qualifications and roles of licensers, and what practical failures does he identify in the Licensing Order?

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8. **What vision does Milton present for England as a leader in liberty, and how does this tie into his broader argument for diversity of thought?**

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6.3 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT:

The following section discusses Milton's arguments discussed in his written pamphlet against censorship, drawing from historical, ethical, theological, and practical perspectives. Throughout his discussion, Milton, emphasises his unwavering commitment to liberty as essential for both individual and collective flourishing.

6.3.1 Milton's Opening and Invocation of Liberty

Milton begins *Areopagitica* with a quote from Euripides' *The Suppliants*. He quotes: "This is true liberty when free-born men / Having to advise the public may speak free. What can be juster in a state than this?" This quote from the classical text opens the stage for his argument against censorship, grounding his views in the Neoclassical fashion of writing (Remember Milton is Neoclassical?). The invocation of ancient Greek ideals reflects Milton's admiration for their democratic values and intellectual freedoms. By positioning freedom of speech as the cornerstone of justice, he frames censorship as a deviation from these ideals.

The purpose of Milton's use of this classical allusion is not just merely for rhetorical flourish but he also attempts to align his argument with a

broader, time-tested principle: that societies thrive when intellectual and expressive liberties are preserved.

6.3.2 Milton's Direct Appeal to Parliament

Milton addresses the Parliament directly, emphasizing the link between liberty and national prosperity. He writes, "*Only with free speech is the utmost bound of civil liberty attained.*" Here, he casts his argument as a patriotic duty, aimed at ensuring that England remains a beacon of liberty. He likens his speech to a "testimony" or "trophy" of freedom, arguing that censorship undermines the very foundations of a just state. His use of respectful but firm language underscores his belief in the moral responsibility of Parliament to uphold liberty. He reminds Parliament that the right to dissent and criticize is essential for reform and progress.

6.3.3 The Ethics of Praise and Critique

Milton explores the nature of praise and its implications for freedom of expression. He identifies three criteria for genuine praise:

1. The subject must be *worthy* of praise.
2. The claims made must reflect reality.
3. The act of praise must be free from flattery.

Milton critiques hollow flattery and insists that true progress emerges from honest critique. In his pamphlet, he writes "*He who freely magnifies what hath been nobly done, and fears not to declare as freely what might be done better, gives ye the best covenant of his fidelity.*" This emphasis on sincerity ties directly to his broader argument that censorship fosters superficiality, suppressing the robust debate necessary for intellectual and societal advancement.

6.3.4 Historical Critique of Licensing and Censorship

Milton traces the origins of censorship to authoritarian regimes, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, labeling it antithetical to liberty. He describes pre-publication licensing as a relic of oppression: “*The inventors of [censorship] are those whom [Parliament] will be loath to own.*” By contrasting ancient Greek and Roman practices with contemporary censorship, Milton demonstrates that societies with greater freedoms have historically fostered progress. He condemns the Licensing Order for its stifling effects on innovation and learning, arguing that it serves no practical purpose but to silence dissent.

6.3.5 The Power and Sanctity of Books

Milton regards books as living entities, imbued with the spirit of their creators. He writes, “*Books are not absolutely dead things. They contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that was whose progeny they are.*” This metaphor elevates books to the status of human life, making their destruction morally akin to murder. Milton asserts that even flawed or controversial books serve a purpose by challenging readers to discern truth from falsehood. He claims: “*It is as good almost kill a man as kill a good book.*” Through this argument, Milton underscores the essential role of books in intellectual and spiritual growth.

6.3.6 Religious and Theological Foundations

Milton employs religious arguments to counter censorship, invoking scriptural principles to defend intellectual freedom. He cites the apostle Paul’s admonition to “prove all things” as evidence that individuals must engage critically with all forms of knowledge. He writes, “*To the pure all things are pure, not only meats and drinks, but all kinds of knowledge.*” Milton frames censorship as a failure of faith, arguing that true virtue arises not from avoiding temptation but from confronting and overcoming it: “*I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue that never sallies out and sees her adversary.*”

6.3.7 The Practical and Philosophical Failings of Licensing and Censorship

Milton critiques the Licensing Order as both impractical and philosophically flawed. He questions the qualifications of licensers, highlighting the absurdity of entrusting intellectual gatekeeping to potentially less capable individuals. He writes, “*Who shall warrant me [the licenser’s] judgment? The state shall be my governors, but not my critics.*” He warns that such systems discourage creativity and intellectual effort, reducing authors to mere supplicants subject to arbitrary rejections. Milton asserts that this stifling environment devalues knowledge and inhibits progress.

6.3.8 Milton’s Vision of England as a Leader in Liberty

Milton envisions England as a nation poised to lead the world in liberty and intellectual achievement. He calls for a system that embraces diversity of thought: “*Out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilarities arises the goodly and graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure.*” This vision reflects Milton’s belief in the transformative power of free expression, emphasizing that unity does not require uniformity.

6.3.9 Final Plea for Intellectual Freedom

Milton concludes with a powerful appeal to Parliament to reject censorship and embrace liberty: “*Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.*” This plea encapsulates Milton’s central thesis: that freedom of expression is the foundation of all other liberties and the driving force behind societal and spiritual progress. By restricting this freedom, Milton warns, Parliament risks undermining the very ideals it seeks to protect.

6.4. KEY THEMES OF THE TEXT:

The following section deals with the key themes of the text.

6.4.1 Religion, Censorship, and Reason

In *Areopagitica*, Milton presents his views against censorship, grounding his critique in both religious and rational principles. He wrote this pamphlet shortly after the Star Chamber Decree—which imposed strict censorship—was abolished. During this brief period of relative freedom, publications flourished, reflecting diverse ideas and opinions. However, Parliament's Licensing Order of 1643 sought to control this newfound liberty by reintroducing censorship, ostensibly to suppress royalist propaganda and radical ideas. In his pamphlet, he contended that such censorship undermines faith, reason, and virtue. Here, He argued that true virtue arises from engaging with challenges, not avoiding them. By citing scripture, Milton emphasizes that individuals must exercise reason to discern truth from falsehood. For him, censorship is not only a failure of governance but also a failure of faith, as it denies people the opportunity to grow spiritually and intellectually through trial and choice.

6.4.2 Knowledge, Learning, and Truth

Milton, as a scholar and intellectual, deeply valued the pursuit of knowledge and the power of learning. In *Areopagitica*, he passionately argues that censorship, like that imposed by Parliament's Licensing Order, stifles access to books and ideas, thereby limiting intellectual growth. Milton believed that knowledge was essential to uncovering truth and advancing society. He critiques the Licensing Order for its focus on suppressing controversial works, asserting that even offensive or challenging books have value—they provoke thought, encourage debate, and lead to greater understanding. For Milton, the ability to read freely and engage with diverse viewpoints is a fundamental right. He warns that limiting access to books curtails the intellectual development of individuals and society, preventing them from attaining higher truths and meaningful progress.

6.4.3 Writing and Authorship

While Milton fiercely opposed censorship in *Areopagitica*, he acknowledged some aspects of Parliament's Licensing Order. One such provision required that every published work include the name of its author, printer, and publisher. This regulation aimed to ensure accountability and traceability for written material. However, Milton critiqued the broader implications of these rules, particularly the pre-publication licensing requirement, which he saw as an attack on authorship itself. For Milton, writing was an act of personal and intellectual expression, and submitting one's work to a licenser undermined the freedom and integrity of the creative process. He viewed the Licensing Order as a burden on authors, reducing them to mere petitioners seeking approval from potentially unqualified or biased officials. This system, he argued, devalued authorship and discouraged innovation, ultimately harming the progress of literature and thought.

Check Your Progress - 5

1. **Discuss the Key themes of *Areopagitica* in detail.**
2. **Why do you think that Milton was a true radical author of the Renaissance. Demonstrate your arguments aligned with the keys themes of *Areopagitica*.**

6.5 CONCLUSION:

In this unit, we have discussed John Milton's life and the historical background that shaped his ideas, focusing on his personal experiences, literary career, and political engagements. After that, we also examined the historical context of *Areopagitica*, particularly with reference to the Protestant Reformation and the emergence of polemical writings, which provided the foundation for Milton's arguments against censorship.

We further analyzed the text's structure, key arguments, and major themes, including Milton's critique of censorship, the sanctity of knowledge, and the role of writing in promoting truth. Themes such as religion, reason, and learning were central to his argument, emphasizing

the dangers of suppression and the importance of free expression. Through this, we saw Milton's vision for England as a leader in liberty and his enduring advocacy for freedom of thought and expression.

6.6 ANSWERS:

Check Your Progress – 1

B. Multiple Choice Questions:

1. b) Cheapside
2. c) Defense of free speech and the press
3. b) Katherine Woodcock
4. b) Paradise Lost
5. c) Master of Arts
6. a) The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce
7. c) Lycidas
8. b) The Parliamentarians
9. b) His wife died
10. c) Glaucoma

C. Fill in the blanks:

1. Cheapside
2. 17
3. 1667
4. 1644
5. The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce
6. 1650s
7. Parliamentarian
8. 1671
9. Comus
10. 1674

Check Your Progress: 03False

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. False
9. True

Suggested Readings

Milton, John. *Areopagitica*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

Wittreich Jr, Joseph Anthony. "Milton's 'Areopagitica': Its Isocratic and Ironic Contexts." *Milton Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1972.

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Blasi, Vincent. "Milton's *Areopagitica* and the Modern First Amendment." 1995.

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Structure:**7.0 Objectives****7.1 Introduction****7.2 Christopher Marlowe as a writer****7.3 Character List:****7.3.1 Doctor Faustus****7.3.2 Mephistopheles****7.3.3 The Good Angel and the Bad Angel****7.3.4 Lucifer****7.4 Summary and analysis: Scene-1 to 14****7.5 Themes of the Play:****1) Iniquity and atonement****2) Renaissance criteria differ from those of the middle ages****3) How can power be corrosive?****7.0 OBJECTIVES**

In this Unit we will,

- Analyse Christopher Marlowe as a writer
- Define different characters like Dr. Faustus, Mephistopheles, The Good Angel, Bad Angel and Lucifer
- Summarize and provide analysis of scene 1 to scene 14
- Understand various themes of the play

After completing the unit, the students should be able to:

- Describe how Christopher Marlowe has used mighty lines to explain the idea/ themes.
- Discuss the characters

- Interpret how *Doctor Faustus* as a Christian play, deals with the themes which are at the heart of Christianity's understanding of the world
- Define the play's attitude toward the clash between medieval and Renaissance values

7.1 INTRODUCTION:

English playwright Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) wrote *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, often known as *Doctor Faustus*. It is based on the older Faust myth, which was well-known at the period in Europe. One of Marlowe's most important plays, *Doctor Faustus* was originally produced in 1592. Only Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's two-part drama *Faust* from 1790 comes close to matching Marlowe's portrayal of Doctor Faustus as one of the most iconic and recognisable characters in history.

7.2 CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE AS A WRITER:

The playwright Christopher Marlowe is best remembered for creating *Doctor Faustus*. He also wrote the plays for Tamburlaine the Great, The Massacre at Paris, The Jew of Malta, and the epic poem *Hero and Leander*. He may have also been an atheist, a heretic, a counterfeiter, a homosexual, and a spy for Her Majesty's administration, according to the evidence. He was an Elizabethan-era playwright, poet, and translator from England. The most famous Elizabethan dramatist of his time was Marlowe. He had a significant impact on William Shakespeare, who was born the same year as Marlowe and emerged as the foremost playwright of the Elizabethan era in the wake of Marlowe's enigmatic early demise. The use of blank verse and the overly ambitious heroes of Marlowe's plays have made them famous.

On May 18, 1593, a warrant for Marlowe's arrest was issued. There was no explanation offered, although it was assumed that it had something to do with blasphemy charges after it was claimed that a manuscript said to be by Marlowe included "vile heretical conceipts." He was taken before the court on May 20 so that the Privy Council may interview him. Despite

the fact that there is no record of them meeting that day, he was ordered to keep an eye on them every day going forward unless "licenced to the contrary." Ten days later, Ingram Frizer fatally stabbed him. It has never been established whether his arrest and the stabbing were related.

Other works by Marlowe were all released after his death. His other four plays, which all deal with contentious issues, are written in an unidentified order. A man resembling Niccol Machiavelli reads the prologue of the novel **The Jew of Malta** (originally titled *The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta*), which is about a Maltese Jew's brutal retaliation against the local authorities. It was most likely created in 1589 or 1590, and the first performance took place in 1592. For the following 50 years, it was still well-liked since it was a success.

In the English historical play **Edward the Second**, the Queen and the king's barons who object to the king's favourites' excessive power in court and state matters call for the resignation of King Edward II.

The only surviving text of the brief and gory play **The Massacre at Paris**, which depicts the events of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, which English Protestants invoked as the worst instance of Catholic treachery, was likely a reconstruction from memory of the original performance text. The quiet "English Agent" is a character who has come to be associated with Marlowe and his ties to the secret service through subsequent legend. The Massacre at Paris is regarded as his most hazardous play because, in its final scene, Elizabeth I is forewarned that this would happen by agitators in London who used its topic to support the murder of refugees from the low lands.

7.3 CHARACTER LIST:

7.3.1 Doctor Faustus:

The playwright Marlowe's tragic hero and protagonist is named Faustus. He has a contradictory personality, being capable of amazing eloquence, having awesome ambition, but also being prone to a peculiar, almost

willful blindness and being willing to discard abilities that he has acquired at great expense. When we first meet Faustus, he is just getting ready to start his career as a magician. Although we already know that things will go wrong (if nothing else, the Chorus's introduction foreshadows this), there is still grandeur to Faustus as he thinks about all the wonders that his magical abilities will create. He envisions amassing riches from every part of the world, altering the political and physical landscape of Europe, and obtaining access to all known facts about the cosmos. Although he is a haughty, conceited man, we cannot help but be fascinated by his lofty goals and feel empathetic for him despite his inflated ego. His rejection of the mediaeval, God-centred universe and his acceptance of human potential serve as a symbol of the Renaissance attitude. The personification of potential is Faustus, at least in the early stages of his learning magic.

7.3.2 Mephistopheles:

Mephistopheles is one of several friendly literary devils who have appeared throughout literature, including John Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost* and Johann von Goethe's Mephistopheles in the nineteenth-century poem "*Faust*." Due to his conflicting motivations, Marlowe's Mephistopheles is particularly intriguing. On the one hand, it is obvious from the start that he intends to serve as a vessel for Faustus's damnation. In fact, he outright acknowledges it when he tells Faustus that,

"When we hear one rack the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his saviour Christ,
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul".

Mephistopheles is the one who sees Faustus make his agreement with Lucifer, and he is also the one who intervenes during the play every time Faustus considers turning to hell in order to persuade or frighten him into remaining true to hell.

7.3.3 The Good Angel and the Bad Angel:

Together, the two angels make their appearance and present Faustus with two moral options to consider. Both the Good Angel and the Bad Angel argue their cases to Faustus, presenting counterarguments and refutations, but neither adds any new complexity to the situation because they will always advocate repentance and the contract with Lucifer, respectively. Instead, they stand in for Faustus's conflicted conscience. The conflict between mediaeval and Renaissance viewpoints is another theme that the Good and Bad Angels address throughout the play in addition to the duality of man. The Good Angel supports the more pious aspects of the former, while the Bad Angel supports the more creative and secular approaches embraced by the latter. The play's conclusion might imply that Faustus ultimately agreed with the Bad Angel's viewpoints, but it's also possible that the Bad Angel was aware that Faustus would eventually give in to the temptation of Lucifer's offer. Ultimately, both angels come to the same conclusion when they inquire about how Faustus' wealth, notoriety, and power will benefit him in the present, playing the same role for the character that the Chorus does for the audience—a manner of communicating the play's lesson.

7.3.4 Lucifer: Lucifer in *Doctor Faustus* represents evil in a way that is originally less visible, and this is essential to the play's plot. Lucifer cannot appear as a foe at all, much less as someone with a clearly duplicative nature, in order to thoroughly entice and capture Faustus. The fact that he maintains his distance and makes use of an emissary in the guise of Mephistopheles is signs of his cunning. This separation reduces Lucifer to a hazy transactional figure, allowing Faustus to concentrate on his better traits—like his supreme store of knowledge—and disregard the rest. Additionally, because of this distance, Faustus is unable to observe or comprehend the actual horror and scope of what such a powerful individual is capable of, which may have made him think twice before readily giving his soul for a meagre quarter-century of assistance.

7.4 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS : Scene-1 to 14:

Scene 1:

Faustus is alone in his study and is taking stock of his accomplishments. He comes to the conclusion that he has achieved intellectual pre-eminence in all subjects. He engages in excellent debate and is an expert in all logical treatises. He is such a talented doctor that he has prevented the plague from spreading to entire cities. He is aware of all the minor legal quibbles, but he finds them tedious. He rejects two texts from the Bible that say all men must eventually pass away in terms of religion. He decides after looking over his accomplishments that necromancy is the only realm of gain, pleasure, power, glory, and omnipotence. Then he commands Wagner to summon Valdes and Cornelius so they can assist him in conjuring spirits. The Good Angel and the Evil Angel approach as Faustus waits for the two German scholars. He is advised to put down the "damned book" of sorcery and read the Bible by the Good Angel. The ambitions of Faustus are piqued by the Evil Angel. Faustus loses himself in a vision of what magic will allow him to accomplish. Faustus greets Valdes and Cornelius and informs them that he has chosen to practise magic because he has found philosophy, law, medicine, and theology to be unsatisfactory. Faustus is given the assurance by Valdes that if they band together, soon the entire world will be at their feet. In agreement, Faustus informs the two men that he will perform a conjuration that very evening.

Analysis:

There are many ironies in this opening scene. Fundamentally, Faustus is so sure that his new abilities would lead to his salvation that he never realises that, on the contrary, they will lead to his damnation. Even worse, he calls the necromancy texts "heavenly," when in fact they are diabolical. He begs Cornelius and Valdes to "bless" him with their wisdom. In order to apply to issues that will ultimately result in his own damnation, Faustus employs religious images and rhetoric throughout the scene.

Scene 2:

Two academics visit Wagner to ask about Faustus. Wagner demonstrates to the two researchers that they shouldn't have asked the question by using

flimsy academic logic in place of a direct response. He eventually admits that Faustus is inside with Valdes and Cornelius after showcasing a ridiculous understanding of disputation. The two academics then worry that Faustus has gotten involved with magic. They have an appointment with the Rector scheduled to "see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim" Faustus.

Analysis:

Elizabethan dramatists are known for having the dramatic persona speak in dialects relevant to their characters. The more eminent or noble characters use an elegant, formal vocabulary. Usually, the lower-level characters talk in prose. Faustus speaks in "Marlowe's Mighty Line," whereas Wagner uses straightforward language. This identical strategy is employed by Shakespeare in a number of his comedies. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for instance, the noble characters speak in a dignified manner, while the rustic people converse in a more casual manner.

Scene 3:

As a new experiment, Faustus plans to use incantation. He murmurs in Latin for a considerable amount of time, rejecting the trinity and calling for the powers of the underworld. Faustus then declares that Mephistopheles is too ugly since he manifests in a horrible form. Mephistopheles must vanish and come back as a Franciscan friar, he demands. The fact that Faustus can summon this devil fills him with joy. Upon seeing Mephistopheles once more, Faustus realises that a devil will always manifest whenever the name of the trinity is cursed, regardless of the conjurer's efforts to summon one.

When Faustus queries Mephistopheles about Lucifer, he discovers that he is a fallen angel who rebelled against God out of pride and insolence and was banished into hell. Mephistopheles responds to Faustus' questions regarding the nature of hell by saying that it exists wherever God is not. Mephistopheles receives a reprimand from Faustus for feeling so passionately about missing out on heaven's pleasures, and he is then sent

back to Lucifer with a proposal that he trade his soul for twenty-four years of unrestricted power. Faustus dreams of the wonderful exploits he will carry out with his newfound authority after Mephistopheles departs.

Analysis:

According to the Renaissance worldview, there was an orderly universe regulated by laws. Even Mephistopheles is aware that there are laws governing the universe, but Faustus is operating under the delusion that he has been able to abrogate divine law through his conjuration.

Scene 4:

Wagner approaches the clown and informs him that he is conscious of the clown's lack of employment. He charges him with having such extreme desperation that he would exchange his soul for a raw mutton shoulder with the devil. The clown maintains that if he were to strike such a risky deal, he would demand that his mutton be cooked at the very least in a delectable sauce. For a period of seven years, Wagner requests the clown's service. Wagner threatens to send lice after the clown if he doesn't comply.

The poor clown is frightened by Baliol and Belcher; two devils who are summoned by

Wagner after he gives him some French money and threatens to have a devil fetch him in an hour if he refuses to become his servant. Wagner assures the clown that he will give him instructions on how to call forth these demons. The clown accepts the deal but requests instruction on how to transform into a flea on an attractive wench.

Analyse:

Several elements of the previous scene between Faustus and Mephistophilis are repeated in a comical manner in this scene. Both scenes, when taken together, depict a promise of slavery in return for particular advantages. Wagner charges the clown with being ready to sell his soul to the devil for a leg of mutton, in contrast to Faustus who is

prepared to do it for total power. Another example of the contrasted servant-master relationships is how the humorous scene unfolds.

Scene 5:

In his study, Faustus makes an effort to strengthen his own resolve to reject God and devote himself exclusively to Lucifer. Both the Good and Evil Angels are seen. While the Evil Angel emphasises the significance of wealth and power, the Good Angel cautions Faustus to consider heavenly things. Dr decides to consider money and summons Mephistopheles, who then informs him that Lucifer will accept the deal if it is signed with Faustus' blood. Faustus stabs his arm, but as he starts to write, the blood thickens. To get the blood flowing, Mephistopheles scrambles to get some fire. "Homo, fuge!" is written on Faustus' arm as he starts to write once more. Faustus instructs Mephistopheles to give the bond to Lucifer after he has completed signing it.

After the deal is done, Faustus starts to inquire once again about the nature of hell, but as Mephistopheles explains it, Faustus grows doubtful and rejects the idea. Faustus abruptly changes the subject by telling Mephistopheles that he is feeling lustful and wanton and that he wants a wife. He is persuaded by Mephistopheles that he does not want a wife, and he offers to bring him any paramour or courtesan he chooses. Faustus demands three volumes before Mephistopheles departs: one for knowledge of the planets and the heavens, one for knowing flora and animals, and one for incantations and spells.

Analysis:

Faustus claims he wants to rule the world like a god, but all of his time is spent feeding his senses. Instead of devout debates about the nature of heaven and hell, Faustus suddenly starts to feel lustful and yearns for a bride. Now he prefers to give in to base sexual urges over the pursuit of ultimate truth.

Faustus is being defrauded of all he was promised, but he is unaware of this. He is unable to have a wife because of his insistence that marriage be subject to God's sanctification. He is also denied the information that he was promised later in the scene.

Scene 6:

Faustus starts to regret his agreement with the devil. Mephistopheles makes an effort to comfort Faustus by insinuating that heaven is not a particularly magnificent place and that people are superior to everything in heaven. Both the Good and Evil Angels intervene and attempt to sway Faustus' choice. The notion that he is damned plagues Faustus. If he hadn't been able to summon Homer to sing and comfort him, he believes he would have committed suicide by now. He now asks Mephistopheles to debate theoretical issues. Mephistopheles can only tell him so much, and Faustus claims that even Wagner is capable of knowing the solutions to these problems. Now he is interested in the universe's power and the person(s) responsible for creating it. Instead of these larger philosophical topics, Mephistopheles tries to encourage him to ponder about hell and other things.

Lucifer himself emerges as Faustus calls out for Christ to save him. He is informed by Lucifer that by thinking about Christ, he is going against his word. In order to distract Faustus, he claims to have brought some amusement.

The seven deadly sins—pride, covetousness, wrath, envy, gluttony, sloth, and lechery—appear before Faustus in the form of each sin or nature that each represents. As Lucifer offers Faustus a book and makes a midnight promises, he is overjoyed with the performance.

Analysis:

The seven deadly sins indeed serve a philosophical purpose and further the intellectual value of the story, but they also serve to delight the common public by highlighting the ugly appearance of these terrifying beasts.

These seven deadly sins arrive, and Faustus immediately exclaims, "O, this feeds my soul!" Faustus had previously used the metaphor of feeding to convey his intense desire for knowledge and power. In this scene, the metaphor is utilised to highlight just how far down Faustus has sunk to the point where only the horrible spectacle of the misdeeds can satiate his soul.

Wagner comes and assumes the role of the chorus at the conclusion of the action by providing expository remarks, completing the background information, and informing the audience that Faustus has now gone to Rome, where he will meet with the pope.

Scene 7:

Faustus talks about travelling through the Alps and the several cities he passes through on the way to Rome. Mephistopheles recounts Rome to Faustus after informing him that he has made arrangements to access the pope's apartment. Mephistopheles turns Faustus invisible as they get ready to enter the pope's apartments. Faustus plays pranks on the pope and a group of friars by stealing their plates and drinks as they enter. He then punches the pope in the ear. Mephistopheles and Faustus start beating the accompanying friars and throwing pyrotechnics among them while they sing a dirge to drive away the evil spirit that appears to be there.

The chorus arrives and gives an overview of Faustus' life. When Faustus has visited all the royal courts, he returns home, where many of his friends seek him out and pose challenging astrological and cosmic inquiries to him. Faustus is well known throughout the country thanks to his knowledge. Carolus the Fifth, the emperor, finally invites him to his court.

Analysis:

At the scene's conclusion, we learn that Faustus has achieved some level of notoriety in the astrology community. He has also had some degree of satisfaction. He no longer cares about learning how to live a happy life; instead, he is more focused on getting his immediate gratification. The chorus also bridges the gap between scenes and gets us ready for the scene that will take place in Germany by depicting Faustus' return there.

Scene 8:

Robin the ostler enters holding a book and admits that he has taken a book from the library of Faustus. He wants to master conjuring so he may summon every village woman and make them dance naked for him. Rafe (Ralph) walks in and informs him that a man is waiting to get his horse taken care of. Robin brushes him off and tells him that he has more important things to accomplish, like summon a devil with the book he just took. After making a commitment to get Ralph a kitchen maid, they both depart to clean their boots and get on with the conjuring.

Analysis:

Robin promises Rafe powers as a condition of service, just like Mephistopheles did with Faustus, establishing a servant-master relationship once more.

Scene 9:

Robin and Ralph arrive with a silver cup that Robin appears to have stolen from a vintner. When the winemaker suddenly comes and requests the goblet be returned to him, Robin is ecstatic with his new find. Robin consents to a search while maintaining his lack of possession of the goblet. The goblet is nowhere to be found by the winemaker. While this is going on, Robin starts reciting incantations from Faustus' book. Mephistopheles is called by these incantations, which then materializes, places some firecrackers behind them, and briefly vanishes. Robin returns the vintner's goblet in fear. Mephistopheles reappears and laments that he had to travel all the way from Constantinople because these careless slaves employed incantations without understanding them. Before leaving, he makes a threat to turn them into an ape and a dog. Robin and Ralph are left to ponder the fun and food they may have if they were converted into these animals.

Analysis:

There is some disagreement over whether Marlowe wrote any of the humorous sequences; some experts think that these scenes were afterwards

added by another playwright. In general, given the text's current state, it is safest to conclude that these sequences served to pass the time and provided a low level of humour that appealed to the audience's less educated members.

Scene 10:

The Emperor Carolus asks Faustus for evidence of his magical prowess because he has heard rumours about them. Faustus replies modestly that he is not as skilled as the rumours claim, but he will make an effort to win the emperor's favour. The emperor wants Faustus to resurrect Alexander and Alexander's lover because he doubts nobody would ever reach Alexander the Great's greatness. A knight in the court makes several scathing and sceptic comments about Faustus' abilities when the emperor makes this request. Mephistopheles departs at Faustus' command and returns with two ghosts in the form of Alexander and his lover. The emperor confirms the existence of the two spirits after looking at a mole on the paramour's neck. Faustus requests that the cynical knight be asked to come back. The knight has horns on his head when he first emerges. The knight scolds Faustus in a fit of rage about his predicament. The knight is then freed from the spell and the horns are taken off at the emperor's request. The emperor expresses gratitude to Faustus for the spell and offers to lavishly compensate him.

Analysis:

Faustus's developing pride in his occult abilities is evident from the encounter with the knight. The unbeliever is initially depicted as the knight. He acts as a kind of foil for Faustus because he is rude and caustic towards him. Faustus causes horns to grow on his head as a result. For the audience of Marlowe, a man whose wife had been unfaithful to him was referred to as a cuckold and was shown as having a pair of horns sprouting out of his head. So, in addition to the knight's absurd physical appearance, there was also the added humour of him being the fool or cuckold.

Scene 11:

Faustus becomes apprehensive that his limited time is about to expire. A horse-courser suddenly walks in and asks if Faustus will buy his horse for \$40. Although Faustus is eager to sell his horse, he cautions the buyer against ever riding it into the sea.

After the horse-courser leaves, Faustus starts thinking about his death sentence before dozing out. Returning in a huff, the horse-courser accuses Faustus of defrauding him. He rode the horse into a pond because he believed it to possess some sort of mystical attribute. He was sitting on a bundle of hay when the horse vanished from under him, and he nearly drowned.

For the first time in eight days, Faustus has just fallen asleep, and Mephistopheles warns the horse-courser to keep quiet. As soon as Faustus is awake, the horse-courser tugs on his legs and demands payment for his services. Faustus' entire leg falling off astounds him. He makes the commitment to give Faustus an additional \$40 out of fear.

Faustus agrees to meet the Duke of Vanholt when Wagner enters to inform him of his desire for his company.

Analysis:

He is now fully cognizant of the impending truth of his own death. Faustus also acknowledges that he is still a man at this point. He had bemoaned the fact that he was merely a man and not a god in earlier sequences. He had wanted to become a god through his interactions with Lucifer. However, during this time of introspection, he realises that he is nothing more than "a man condemned to die."

Scene 12:

Faustus asks the pregnant duchess at the court of the duke of Vanholt whether she has a craving for any specific delicacies. She wants some ripe grapes even though it is January. The duke is perplexed as to how this was possible when Faustus sends Mephistopheles to find them. According to Faustus, he dispatched his spirit to India to seek them out. The duchess

declares the grapes to be the nicest she's ever had. The duke assures Faustus that he will give him a huge reward for doing him this favour.

Analysis:

This scene once again demonstrates the meagre achievements Faustus makes possible with his abilities. The nobility asks Faustus to use magic to get fresh grapes, which he does. The knowledgeable doctor gives the duke and duchess "merriment" and "delight" in some of his final, fleeting moments. Faustus is successful in temporarily distracting himself and others from pressing life issues.

Scene 13:

Wagner arrives and announces that Faustus is about to pass away since he has donated all of his possessions to his servants. If Faustus is so close to passing away, he doesn't understand why he still indulges in food and revelry.

Scholars are debating who the most attractive woman in the world is when Faustus enters. It is believed by scholars to be Helen of Troy. Faustus pledges to revive her from the grave and allow the students to witness her in all of her grandeur and glory in exchange for their friendship for him. Helen moves across the stage as the music begins to play. The academics praise her beauty and give Faustus thanks for letting them view her "paragon of excellence."

The students go as an elderly man enters. The elderly man persuades Faustus to turn from "thy most vile and loathsome filthiness" so that he may receive God's favour and mercy and be rescued. Faustus requests the elderly man to leave him alone as he thinks about his misdeeds despite his concern that he is being held captive in hell.

Faustus consents to renew his bloody pact with the devil after Mephistopheles threatens him for disobeying Lucifer. He informs Mephistopheles that he wants Helen to be his personal paramour after

completing the second deed. When Helen appears, Faustus concludes that her beauty will make him immortal, making him independent of salvation:

“Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
and burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul; see where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven be in these lips,
and all is dross that is not Helen.”

The elderly man returns to the room after Faustus and Helen leave and expresses his displeasure in Faustus. He also sympathizes with him because he too has experienced temptation but has overcome it by turning to God.

Scene 14:

Faustus tells the three scholars with him that he is feeling despondent about what is going to happen to him. He acknowledges that his sins are so severe that he cannot be pardoned. The scholars beg him to pray, but Faustus feels he cannot because he has rejected and blasphemed God. Ah, my God, I would be in tears, but the devil keeps me from crying! . . . I would lift up my hands but, see, they hold them, and they hold them!" Faustus claims to the scholars that he has engaged in the same actions that God forbids man to engage in the most: "For vain pleasure of twenty-four years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity."

One of the scholars offers to stick by him until the very end, but Faustus and the others acknowledge that no one will be able to assist him. He is left alone to handle the closing seconds.

When the scholars have left and the timer chimes eleven, Faustus realises that he has only one hour remaining before being damned for all eternity. He suffers because he understands that he will not experience eternal

happiness but rather eternal torment. He begs for his fate not to be permanent when the time reaches half past eleven. If at last he might be saved, he would suffer for a hundred thousand years.

Analysis:

The chorus offers the very last and concluding statement of Faustus's downfall. They say that since he attempted to transcend human boundaries, he fell into eternal torment. The chorus warns the listener not to go too far from what is permissible and to learn from Faustus' example. The chorus conveys the mediaeval perspective that Faustus' fall was caused by his arrogance and ambition.

7.5 THEMES:

Iniquity and atonement:

If *Doctor Faustus* is a Christian drama in the sense that it is a play about Christianity, then it deals with the ideas that form the basis of Christianity's worldview. First, there is the concept of sin, which is defined as deeds that go against God's will in Christian doctrine. In a way, Faustus's agreement with Lucifer amounts to the ultimate sin because, in addition to disobeying God, he also intentionally and willingly swears allegiance to the devil. However, in a Christian perspective, even the worst act is pardonable because of Jesus Christ, who is considered to be God's son and who is said to have died on the cross in order to atone for humankind's sins.

Thus, no matter how awful Faustus's agreement with Lucifer may be, he will always have the chance to be saved. Theoretically, all he needs to do is beg God's pardon. With encouragement from the good angel on his shoulder or the elderly man in scene 12, both of whom can be seen as representatives of God, personifications of Faustus's conscience, or both, there are numerous instances in the play where Faustus considers doing just that.

Faustus always chooses to stay loyal to hell rather than seek out heaven. According to the Christian worldview, this rejection of God will result in his eternal punishment in hell. Only near the end of his life does Faustus yearn to turn from his sin, and in the epilogue, he begs Christ to save him. But it's too late for him to change his ways. In order to maximize the dramatic impact of the final scene, Marlowe departs from the Christian worldview by presenting this scenario in which Faustus is still alive but incapable of being redeemed. Having spent the entire play in a Christian environment, Faustus spends his last hours in a slightly different reality, one in which atonement is no longer possible and where some sins are unforgivable.

Renaissance criteria differ from those of the middle Ages:

As noted by scholar R.M. Dawkins, Doctor Faustus portrays "the story of a Renaissance man who had to pay the mediaeval price for being one." This remark captures the conflict between the mediaeval world and the world of the burgeoning Renaissance, although being a little oversimplified. The mediaeval era prioritized God over man and the natural world, placing God at the centre of reality. The Renaissance was a cultural movement that emerged in Italy in the fifteenth century and quickly expanded throughout Europe. It brought with it a renewed focus on the individual, classical education and scientific investigation into the nature of the universe. A new emphasis on the individual, on classical education, and on scientific investigation into the nature of the world were all part of the Renaissance movement, which had its start in Italy in the fifteenth century and quickly expanded throughout Europe. Theology reigned supreme in the mediaeval academic world. However, the focus of the Renaissance was on the secular.

Despite the fact that Faustus is a magician rather than a scientist—a difference that was hazy in the sixteenth century—he expressly rejects the

mediaeval model. Aristotle, Galen, the Byzantine emperor Justinian, and the Bible are all cited in his opening statement in scene 1, which covers all academic disciplines. He starts with logic and moves on to discuss medicine, law, and theology before returning to religion and citing the Bible. Tradition and authority played a major role in the mediaeval approach, not solitary investigation. Faustus, however, takes this mediaeval style of thinking into account and rejects it in this soliloquy. In the true spirit of the Renaissance, he decides that in his pursuit of knowledge, money, and power, he will tolerate no restraints, customs, or authorities.

The conflict between Renaissance and mediaeval values is handled in an uncertain manner in the play. As Dawkins points out, Marlowe places his tragic hero firmly in the mediaeval world, where prideful people pay an eternal price for their arrogance, and appears hostile towards Faustus' desires. Although Marlowe himself was not a devout traditionalist, it is tempting to view Faustus as a hero of the new modern age, one without God, religion, and the restrictions these imposed on humanity, as many readers have done. This interpretation contends that while Faustus may pay a mediaeval price, his successors will surpass him and endure less suffering, just as we have in modern times.

How can power be corrosive?

Early on in the play, before he accepts the deal with Lucifer, Faustus is brimming with plans for how he will make use of the power he craves. In addition to dreaming of amassing enormous money, he also aims to unravel the secrets of the cosmos and redraw the boundaries of Europe. These intentions are bold and awe-inspiring, if not sympathetic, despite the fact that they may not be totally admirable. They give Faustus's plans an air of grandeur and make his pursuit for personal power seem almost heroic, a perception that is bolstered by the brilliance of his early soliloquies.

However, Faustus's perspectives appear to narrow once he really acquires the virtually endless power he so seeks. To him, anything is conceivable, yet his ambition is somewhat diminished. Instead of the lofty plans he initially considers, he settles for performing conjuring feats for monarchs and noblemen and finds a peculiar joy in utilising his magic to play practical pranks on common people. It's not that Faustus has become bad due to being corrupted by power; in fact, his actions following the sale of his soul hardly qualify as truly wicked. Instead, obtaining total dominance debases Faustus by making him average and turning his unbridled ambition into a pointless joy in petty celebrity.

One may make the case that true greatness can only be attained with God's blessing within the play's Christian context. Faustus is relegated to mediocrity as a result of shutting himself off from the universe's creator. Even though he has gained the entire globe, he is unsure of what to do with it.

Check your progress:

Q: 1 Fill in the gaps using appropriate options given below:

1. The character of Mephistopheles is one of the first in a long tradition of sympathetic _____ which includes figures like John Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost* and Johann von Goethe's Mephistopheles in the nineteenth-century poem "Faust."

- a) literary devils b) literary angels
- c) literary morals d) literary God

2. The German emperor, _____, has heard of Faustus and invited him to his palace, where we next encounter him.

- a) Charles III b) Charles IV
- c) Charles V d) Charles VI

3. Who is the protagonist of *Doctor Faustus*?

- a) Mephistopheles b) Lucifer

- c) **Faustus** d) Wagner
4. **Who does Faustus summon in the beginning of the play?**
- a) **Mephistopheles** b) Lucifer
- c) God d) Helen of Troy
5. **Which character speaks the famous line, “Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?”**
- a) **Faustus** b) Mephistopheles
- c) Helen of Troy d) The chorus
6. **What does Faustus demand from Mephistopheles in exchange for his soul?**
- a) Wealth and Power b) Love and Happiness
- c) **Knowledge and Pleasure** d) Immortality
7. **Who writes the letter that Faustus receives, warning him about the danger of his pact with the devil?**
- a) The Pope b) Valdes and Cornelius
- c) An anonymous friend d) **The Old man**

Q: 2 Answer the following questions:

1. How does the play comment on the Renaissance period's fascination with humanism and the pursuit of worldly pleasures?
2. What is the dramatic significance of good angel and evil angel in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*?
3. How does Dr. Faustus's character evolve throughout the play, and what drives his transformation?
4. Describe the conflict between good and evil in the play. How is this conflict portrayed through the characters and their choices?
5. Explore the theme of knowledge and its consequences in "Dr. Faustus." How does Faustus's quest for knowledge ultimately affect him?

6. Discuss the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by Dr. Faustus. What choices does he make, and how do these choices reflect his character?

Q: 3 Write a short note:

1. Analyse the role of the seven deadly sins in "Dr. Faustus."
2. Give a character sketch of Mephistopheles

Let's sum up:

In Doctor Faustus, a brilliant and ambitious German professor decides he wants more from life than what he can currently obtain. He believes that he has learnt everything there is to know about logic, law, and medicine, and that learning magic is his last remaining option. This proves to be a mistake. With the aid of his companions Valdes and Cornelius, Faustus masters magic. He calls forth the demon Mephistopheles and commands the demon to give Lucifer Faustus's soul in exchange for twenty-four years of magical power. Faustus maintains on his plan despite Mephistopheles' attempts to warn him about the perils of Hell, and soon

Mephistopheles returns bearing a contract for him to sign.

The Latin phrase *homo fuge*—a warning to run away—appear on Faustus' arm as he signs the contract with his own blood. Mephistopheles sends personified manifestations of the Seven Deadly Sins to divert his attention as he grows worried. While invisible, Faustus snatches the pope's meals and boxes his ears. Mephistopheles joins Faustus in Rome to annoy Pope Adrian. After Charles V, the German emperor, learns of Faustus's mischief, he invites him to visit. For Charles' enjoyment, Faustus conjures the appearance of Alexander the Great while also making a knight's mocking antlers sprout from his head.

As Faustus's twenty-four years come to an end, he starts to worry about his past actions once more. To impress some academics, he asks Mephistopheles to summon Helen of Troy. One of them begs Faustus to repent, but Faustus ignores him. On his last night, just before the clock strikes midnight, Faustus pleads for compassion, but demons rend his body apart and drag his soul to Hell. The play concludes with a brief funeral for Faustus and a slightly preachy coda delivered by the chorus that forewarns viewers to avoid Faustus's fate.

Key Words:

- **Abrogate:** Repeal or do away with (a law, right, or formal agreement).
- **Conjuration:** The performance of something supernatural by means of a magic incantation or spell, “the conjuration of spirits”
- **“Homo Fuge”:** “Homo fuge” is simply a Latin word which means “Fly, man”. These words are from Doctor Faustus, which is a message to him to run away from the Devil.
- **Loathsome:** Causing hatred or disgust; repulsive.
- **Personification:** The attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human or the representation of an abstract quality in human form.
- **Renaissance:** The revival of European art and literature under the influence of classical models in the 14th–16th centuries.

Suggested books:

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Structure:

- 8.0 Objectives**
- 8.1 Brief information about William Shakespeare**
- 8.2 Some facts about *The Merchant of Venice***
- 8.3 Brief plot summary of *The Merchant of Venice***
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8.0 OBJECTIVES

- In this unit, students will acquire some information about William Shakespeare.
- This unit will also shed light on the plot summary of *The Merchant of Venice*.
- The unit will analyse the critical themes of the play.
- Students will get acquainted with the major characters of the play.
- Lastly, the unit will explain some of the crucial quotations of the play.

8.1 BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare is frequently recognised as the finest author ever written in English. He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, in 1564. His plays are still performed and studied today worldwide, and his works have had a significant impact on literature and theatre. Shakespeare wrote 39 plays, including historical dramas like *Richard III* and *Henry V*, comedies like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and tragedies like *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*. In addition, he is well known for his sonnets, a collection of 154 poetry. The themes of love, beauty, time, and the fleeting essence of life are explored throughout the sonnets. They are well known for their poetic language and nuanced emotional expression. Shakespeare also wrote two narrative poems: "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece".

Shakespeare co-owned the Globe Theatre, a theatre in London where his plays were performed. His plays enjoyed enormous success during his lifetime and are still produced and studied in great detail today. His ability to craft colourful and complicated characters and clever use of language, poetic imagery, and wit define his writing style. Shakespeare made significant contributions to the English language. Many words and expressions he created and made famous are still used today. Examples include "eyeball," "bedazzled," "fashionable," "wild-goose chase," and "all's well that ends well," among numerous others. Shakespeare passed away in Stratford-upon-Avon on April 23, 1616. His writings continue to impact world literature, theatre, and culture. Shakespeare's works, including his plays and poetry, are still studied, performed, and praised for their ageless themes and allure.

8.2 SOME FACTS ABOUT *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

The Comical History of the Merchant of Venice, Otherwise Called The Jew of Venice, is the play's full title. It was published in 1600 and is thought to have been written between 1596 and 1598. The story of numerous people, including a merchant named Antonio, a Jewish

moneylender named Shylock, and a young Venetian named Bassanio, is linked to the drama set in the 16th century in Venice, Italy. Love, friendship, justice, mercy, and the intricacies of human nature are some themes covered in *The Merchant of Venice*. It explores prejudice, discrimination, and how outsiders are treated, especially in light of Shylock's status as a Jew in a predominately Christian culture. Five acts make up the play.

8.3 BRIEF PLOT SUMMARY OF *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

Wealthy Venetian businessman Antonio offers to lend Bassanio the money he needs to pursue the beautiful, well-off Portia. However, Antonio's wealth-producing ships are at sea, so he borrows the cash from a Jewish moneylender named Shylock. Shylock, who has a bitter grudge towards Antonio, agrees to lend him the money, understanding that if Antonio does not pay it back on time, Shylock will be entitled to a pound of Antonio's flesh.

In Belmont, Portia is constrained by her late father's will, which stipulates that she must wed the man who selects the right casket from three options: lead, silver, or gold. Although many potential suitors have failed the exam, Bassanio thinks he stands a chance. The couple becomes joyfully engaged once he decides on the lead coffin with Portia's portrait. However, Antonio cannot repay Shylock's debt after learning that his ships have been lost at sea. Shylock decides to file a lawsuit to get his just desserts. In order to defend Antonio, Portia shows up dressed as a male attorney. Portia persuasively argues in court that Shylock is entitled to his bail but cannot spill a drop of blood while doing so.

She discovers a gap in the agreement that permits Shylock to take Antonio's flesh, but only if he does so without spilling blood or takes more than a pound. Shylock is defeated and unable to collect his bond; as a result, he must become a Christian and renounce his money. The play also

features several subplots that develop over time. One is the romance between Nerissa, Portia's lady-in-waiting, and Bassanio's companion Gratiano. The elopement of Jessica, Shylock's daughter, and Lorenzo, a Christian companion of Bassanio, is the subject of another subplot. The many plots are resolved at the play's conclusion. The miraculous saving of Antonio's ships brings back his money. In masquerading as men, Portia and Nerissa question their husbands about the rings they had given them while feigning infidelity. The play's admissions, acts of forgiveness, and reconciliation at its conclusion underline its themes of mercy and the costs of prejudice.

8.4 THEMES

a) **Anti-Semitism:**

Prejudice, exclusion, or animosity aimed at Jews because of their religious, racial, or cultural origin is anti-Semitism. It is a type of bigotry that has been around for a long time and has evolved. Different forms of anti-Semitism, such as verbal or physical abuse, stereotypes, exclusion, scapegoating, and structural discrimination, can take this form. It frequently involves the cultivation of unfavourable stereotypes and conspiracy theories about Jewish people or the Jewish community as a whole, and it may have roots in religious, social, economic, or political factors.

Jewish moneylender Shylock is portrayed in the play in a way that reflects the anti-Semitic prejudice that was prevalent at the time. The play's Christian characters mistreat Shylock with hostility. His religious identification is used as an excuse for insults, ridicule, and marginalization. He is frequently referred to negatively by Christian characters, who also perpetuate negative Jewish stereotypes. Shakespeare depicts Shylock as a nuanced figure rather than a flat antagonist. Shylock is motivated by a desire for justice and retribution in addition to his desire for vengeance on Antonio for his mistreatment. Shylock's famous "Has not a Jew

eyes?" speech highlights their shared humanity by humanising him and challenging the audience's preconceptions of Jews.

The drama poses concerns regarding discrimination, intolerance, and how outsiders are treated. It examines the effects of prejudice and the destructiveness of retaliation and hatred. As the play's dramatic finale, the courtroom scene in which Shylock seeks to exact his revenge forces the audience to consider the effects of prejudice and the necessity of kindness and compassion. Anti-Semitism is an issue addressed throughout the play, and it can be used as a springboard for conversations about prejudice, religious intolerance, and the intricacies of human nature.

b) Love:

Bassanio and Portia have the play's primary romantic relationship. Bassanio asks his friend Antonio for financial help because of his love for Portia. Portia agrees to the casket test because she loves Bassanio and later marries him. Themes of fidelity, commitment, and the ability of love to overcome adversities are highlighted in their love tale. Antonio's character exhibits unselfish devotion to his friend Bassanio. In order to assist Bassanio in pursuing his romantic interests, Antonio is willing to jeopardise his own life and general well-being by borrowing money from Shylock. By sacrificing for his friend, Antonio showed a strong link between love and commitment.

The romance between Bassanio's Christian friend Lorenzo and Jessica, Shylock's daughter, is developed in a side story. To elope with Lorenzo, Jessica leaves her father and her Jewish beliefs behind. Her choice emphasises that love may transcend social and religious barriers but involves sacrifice and repercussions. The subject of love and forgiveness is reflected in Portia's famous speech about the virtue of mercy. In the courtroom scenario, Portia appeals for mercy, highlighting the superiority of love and

compassion above vengeance and rigid devotion to the law. The lecture emphasises the value of empathy and comprehension in interpersonal relationships.

Characters like Bassanio, Antonio, and Gratiano are among those whose love and friendship are also explored in the drama. Throughout the novel, their close friendship relationships are tested, and they care for one another because of their devotion, support, and readiness to give up things. Overall, *The Merchant of Venice* presents love as a solid and transformational force. It alters the characters' behaviour, affects their choices, and acts as a catalyst for development on a personal level, forgiving others and mending fences. The drama examines the complexities, pleasures, and difficulties that result from interpersonal interactions via the portrayal of several varieties of love.

c) Revenge:

The most blatant example of revenge is represented by the Jewish moneylender Shylock. For his abuse and anti-Semitic actions, Antonio, the Venetian trader, is the target of his vengeance. Shylock wants revenge on the Christians who mistreated him and demanded a pound of Antonio's flesh as collateral for a loan. Bassanio, a close friend of Antonio's who obtains a loan from Shylock on his behalf, becomes involved in the revenge scheme even though Antonio does not actively seek retribution. Out of loyalty to his friend, Antonio readily accepts the bond, risking his life. Thus, Antonio's acts indirectly serve as a spark for the cycle of retaliation.

Wealthy and wise, Portia seeks retribution from Shylock by posing as a male attorney and ultimately using the law against him. She contends that Shylock is trying to commit a crime against Venetian law by pursuing bloodshed in his desire for retribution. Shylock is ultimately punished for his vindictive motives due to Portia's

manipulation of the legal system to ensure his retaliation scheme fails. When he defeats Shylock in court, Gratiano, a friend of Bassanio and Antonio, demonstrates a desire for vengeance. Along with aiding Portia in revealing Shylock's true motivations, he also brutally mocks and teases Shylock while taking pleasure in his demise. Gratiano's determination to get revenge for the wrongs done to Antonio and his comrades motivates his actions. Shakespeare examines the terrible aspect of retaliation through these various characters' acts. The drama presents the cycle of vengeance that causes misery and loss for everyone involved.

d) Friendship:

The drama examines friendships' subtleties and power relationships, showing their advantages and disadvantages. The play's central theme is the friendship between the merchant Antonio and his best friend, Bassanio. Antonio is willing to jeopardize his life and financial stability to assist Bassanio in pursuing his romantic interests. He shows commitment and selflessness in their friendship by lending money and offering his credit on Bassanio's behalf.

The relationship between Antonio and Bassanio is a beautiful example of the assistance and company that friendship can offer. Bassanio confides in Antonio, who listens to his worries and supports him when needed. Throughout the play, their interactions and talks reveal their close bond. Shakespeare also examines the boundaries and weaknesses of friendships. Bassanio's desire for money from Antonio puts their relationship to the test. Bassanio and Antonio's friendship is so strong that Antonio is willing to risk his life for him. Their relationship becomes more complicated and tense due to this test of loyalty.

The play introduces situations in which dishonesty and friendship intertwine. For instance, during the trial scene, Bassanio and

Antonio's pal Gratiano pose as legal assistants to show the lengths friends will go to defend one another and uphold the law. This fraud shows the lengths friends will go to support one another. The importance of genuine friendship is emphasized in the drama through the characters of Antonio and Bassanio. Their friendship is characterised by mutual respect, trust, and selflessness. It contrasts with the play's lesser partnerships, like that between Jessica and Lorenzo or Portia and Nerissa, which need more depth and sincerity of Antonio and Bassanio's love. The overall message of *The Merchant of Venice* is that friendship may motivate fidelity, selflessness, and support. It digs into the issues of trust, duplicity, and the true worth of true friendship as it investigates the nuances of these relationships.

8.5 ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR CHARACTERS OF *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

a) Antonio :

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio, the play's central merchant, is consistently presented as depressed and melancholy. Without a clear explanation, Antonio is depressed when the show begins. He calls his melancholy "sadness in [him]...too full for the sportful court, / Too full for the contempt of many foes." The tone of Antonio's personality is set by this unexplained melancholy, which implies an underlying sorrow that permeates his life. Antonio's financial issues make him feel even more depressed. His ships are at sea since he is a merchant with a sizable investment in trade projects. His money and reputation, though, could be in jeopardy if his ships get lost or delayed. His depression is exacerbated by the ambiguity

surrounding his financial status and the potential repercussions.

Another reason for Antonio's unhappiness is his ardent love for his close friend Bassanio. When Bassanio asks Antonio for money to woo Portia, Antonio generously extends his credit and takes out a loan in Bassanio's name. Sadness is heightened by Antonio's desire to suffer for his buddy and his intense emotional bond with Bassanio, which may result from unrequited love. When Antonio forms a relationship with Jewish moneylender Shylock, his melancholy becomes more intense. Antonio agrees to a risky condition to secure the loan for Bassanio. Shylock will have the right to take a pound of Antonio's flesh if he does not pay back the debt within the allotted period. He is saddened by the imminent possibility of losing his life due to this link.

Antonio might be perceived as passive in some parts of *The Merchant of Venice*. Although he plays a vital role in the plot, he frequently acts and is motivated by events outside his control instead of making conscious choices. When Bassanio asks Antonio for financial aid, his apathy is immediately apparent. Antonio lets Bassanio make the request and relies on other people to direct his behaviour rather than aggressively seeking possibilities or taking control of his future. Antonio's choice to bond with Shylock exemplifies his submissive personality. He readily consents to the bond, accepting the conditions despite the potentially catastrophic outcomes. He is willing to risk his life for his friendship with Bassanio, as seen by his passive acceptance of the link.

Antonio is also a noble friend. Loyalty, selflessness, and strong commitment to his friends define his character. The drama clarifies Antonio's devotion to and allegiance to his close buddy Bassanio. When Bassanio asks Antonio for money to court Portia, Antonio is happy to extend his credit and make a loan on Bassanio's behalf. In order to help Bassanio, he risks his reputation and financial security, demonstrating a selfless willingness to make sacrifices for a friend. Even when doing so puts him in grave danger, Antonio never wavers in his support for Bassanio. Knowing that he might forfeit his life if he does not pay back the money, he consents to the risky relationship with Shylock. It is clear from his unwavering dedication to Bassanio's happiness and well-being that Antonio is a noble friend.

b) Bassanio :

Bassanio is a passionate lover. The play's plot is influenced by his acts, which are motivated by a strong love and desire for Portia. Bassanio is adamant about getting Portia, a beautiful and affluent heiress, to marry him. His determination to pursue her in the face of challenges like financial limitations shows how much he cares for her. He is fervent in his quest for Portia's affection and will do anything to win her heart. Bassanio uses beautiful and passionate language to declare his love for Portia. He calls her "fair Portia's counterfeit" by him, " and he expresses his wish to "live upon the rack, upon her sweetest words."

His word choice conveys the depth of his enthusiasm and the force of his feelings. Bassanio's willingness to sacrifice for Portia shows his intense love for her. He asks Antonio for financial support to pay for his wooing with the promise

to pay him back after he marries Portia. This willingness to give up things for the sake of his love emphasises how devoted he is. When Bassanio declares his love for Portia, his emotional vulnerability reveals another side of his passionate personality. He confesses to Portia that he genuinely loves her and is not only attracted to her money. He displays his vulnerabilities and bares his emotions, demonstrating the intensity of his passion.

In his search for Portia, Bassanio uses creativity. After realising his financial restrictions, he plans to borrow money from Antonio and presents himself to Portia as a deserving suitor. His capacity for planning and maximizing resources demonstrates a certain amount of intelligence. Bassanio completes Portia's father-set coffin lottery. He carefully considers the writing on the coffins before making a well-informed decision that earns him Portia's hand in marriage. This demonstrates a certain level of perception and intellect in interpreting the cues and coming to a fitting conclusion.

c) Portia :

The character of Portia is presented as being witty and intellectual in *The Merchant of Venice*." The play contains numerous actions, choices, and witticisms, demonstrating her intelligence. Through her intelligent remarks and use of the English language, Portia proves her brilliance. She employs witty wordplay and uses her wit to outwit opponents. Her portrayal as a colourful character is aided by her fast thinking and skill with words. She demonstrates cunning when Portia poses as a male lawyer during the trial scene. She manipulates the process with her legal expertise, obtaining Antonio's eventual freedom. Her knowledge of

legal issues and her ability to think strategically demonstrate her intelligence and ingenuity.

Portia shows off her brain throughout the performance by finding solutions to challenging issues. She creates the casket lottery, for instance, in which she challenges potential suitors with riddles and symbolism before choosing the one she will adore. Her aptitude for developing and resolving challenging problems is evidence of her brilliance and keen mind. Particularly during the trial scene, Portia demonstrates her solid observational abilities. She decides to intervene and help Antonio since she sees how unselfish and devoted he is to his friends. She can make wise decisions and choose the right course of action thanks to her perception of and understanding of people's true natures.

In her dealings with other people, Portia demonstrates emotional intelligence. She demonstrates empathy by being aware of the needs and feelings of those around her. Her connection with Bassanio, in which she supports him despite his financial limitations and has a profound grasp of his character, exemplifies her emotional intelligence. Portia's wit, language ability, legal knowledge, problem-solving skills, observational skills, and emotional intelligence highlight her intelligence. Her cleverness, which enables her to manoeuvre through challenging circumstances, outwit opponents, and greatly aid in resolving the play's conflicts, is a crucial component of her persona.

In "The Merchant of Venice," Portia is portrayed as a loving and passionate lover. She commits to and genuinely loves her chosen suitor, Bassanio, as seen by her acts and

displays of devotion. Portia is steadfastly devoted to Bassanio. To find a suitable partner, she voluntarily enters her father's casket lottery; when Bassanio selects the winning casket, she joyously accepts him as her husband. She shows she is willing to set aside her interests to follow her heart, demonstrating how much she adores Bassanio. Bassanio and Portia have a close emotional connection. She divulges her weaknesses and her devotion to him as she opens up. He is called her "soul's joy", and she promises to be devoted to him.

d) Shylock :

The character of Shylock is portrayed as angry and hopeless in "The Merchant of Venice." Throughout the play, his character displays a pervasive bitterness and a burning need for vengeance. As a Jewish character in the play, Shylock encounters prejudice and discrimination because of his religion. He hears insulting comments and is mistreated by Antonio and other Christian characters. This prejudice fuels his animosity and thirst for vengeance. During the trial scene, when Shylock's defence of Antonio fails, he is publicly humiliated. His appeal for justice is rejected, and he is shorn of his dignity. This humiliation makes him more resentful and increases his need for vengeance.

Shylock suffers from treachery and personal loss, which makes him even more resentful. His daughter Jessica marries a Christian, inherits a sizable amount of his fortune, and accepts Christianity. This betrayal exacerbates his sense of loss, and his animosity towards Christians grows. Shylock's financial situation aggravates his plight. In order to ensure his financial security, he depends on the outcome

of the alliance with Antonio. His desperation grows when the bond is questioned, and he loses his claim, seeing it as his only chance to recover his losses. Shylock's resentment feeds his fervent desire for vengeance. He aims to take a pound of Antonio's flesh following the terms of their bond, not only to get his money back but also to assert his authority and get revenge for the treatment he has received unfairly.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock is also represented as clever and retaliatory. Throughout the play, his character demonstrates a cunning and spiteful temperament. Shylock creates a relationship with Antonio that is intended to lead to retaliation. In the event that the loan is not paid back on time, he insists on forfeiting a pound of Antonio's flesh. This reveals his cleverness in developing a contract that guarantees serious repercussions for Antonio's failure, enabling him to exact his retaliation. Shylock uses Antonio's need for the loan and his desire to support his friend Bassanio to his advantage by manipulating the circumstances. He employs this leverage to secure the bond and guarantee Antonio's cooperation. His clever use of other people's weaknesses displays his shrewd nature as he manipulates them.

The trial scene makes Shylock's desire for vengeance particularly clear. He vehemently rejects all cries for pity or a deal, insisting on his legal right to exact the pound of flesh from Antonio. Even when offered three times the loan amount, he was adamant about getting his revenge, demonstrating his tenacious and vindictive nature. Even though he has a perverted concept of justice, Shylock is motivated by a tremendous desire for it. He sees the link as

a way to take back the dignity and authority that he feels has been taken from him by society. His desire for vengeance stems from his conviction that it is a righteous response to the discrimination he has experienced.

Shylock is additionally shown as being money-minded. Throughout the play, his persona is linked to his moneylender work and his fascination with wealth. As a moneylender, Shylock specializes in lending money for profit by charging interest, which was frowned upon by some in Shakespeare's day. His kind of work reveals his focus on monetary gain and reveals a materialistic outlook. Shylock gains wealth and places much emphasis on money-related issues. He sees borrowing as a way to make money and improve his financial situation. His main priorities are repaying his loans and protecting his financial interests.

8.6 EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS

“I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.” – Antonio (Act I, Scene I)

Antonio speaks these lines in Act I, Scene 1. It implies that Antonio views everything as it truly is, devoid of personal importance or attachment. He sees it as a stage, a figurative platform, where each person is given a part to play. It also suggests that Antonio thinks poorly of himself and his place in the world. This implies that he is weighed down by grief or melancholy. Although Antonio does not identify the reason for his unhappiness in this comment, it sets the tone for his character and foreshadows his eventual melancholy attitude. The phrase emphasises Antonio's somewhat detached outlook on life because he sees himself as an actor in the more fantastic world of theatre and accepts the part

allotted to him. It also suggests his internal conflicts or personal sadness, which is more evident as the play progresses.

“Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun.” – Prince of
Morocco
(Act II, Scene I)

The Prince of Morocco utters this passage in Act II, Scene 1. The comment implies that the Prince of Morocco knows that people can have negative opinions of him or mistreat him because of his skin tone. He expects people to detest him or make snap judgments based only on his appearance. Furthermore, it serves as a figurative depiction of the Prince's skin tone. The "shadowed livery," or the dark or shaded apparel or outfit worn by the sun, is how he refers to his dark skin. This suggests that, like the shadows that surround a bright and dazzling sun, his complexion is a characteristic that comes naturally.

“To be ashamed to be my father’s child! But though I am a
daughter to his blood, I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife, Become a
Christian and thy loving wife.” – Jessica
(Act II, Scene III)

Act II, Scene III contains these words, which Jessica utters. Being the daughter of Shylock, who is frequently portrayed in the play as a bitter and loathed character, causes Jessica to feel ashamed and embarrassed. Jessica is aware of how her father's bad reputation and actions affect her and how she is affected by them. The phrases also suggest that, despite being Shylock's biological daughter, Jessica distances herself from his actions and demeanor. She implies that she does not share his bitterness and vengeance and wishes to separate herself from those aspects of him.

The sentences also make clear Jessica's intention to elope with her beloved Christian Lorenzo. She sees this as a chance to start a new life with Lorenzo and escape the tension and conflict at her father's home. She wants a new beginning and to put her father's Jewish ancestry behind her, so she converts to Christianity and marries him. In these lines, Jessica expresses her yearning for autonomy, separation from her father's restrictive atmosphere, and personal freedom. She yearns for a different existence and believes that by accepting a new identity and relationship, she can achieve happiness and eliminate the bad memories associated with her father.

Act III, Scene I is where Shylock says this quote. Shylock challenges the injustices and double standards he has experienced by claiming his shared humanity with Christians and speaking out against the discrimination and persecution he has experienced as a Jew. Shylock emphasises how Christians and Jews share a common humanity. He makes the case that Jews and Christians have the same physical and psychological traits, highlighting their similar human nature. Jews and Christians share the exact fundamental wants, weaknesses, and life cycles, according to Shylock. He draws attention to the similarities in their human experiences. Shylock highlights the universal reactions to physical stimuli and mortal frailty. He contends that Jews and Christians are vulnerable to suffering, happiness, and death.

“I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? . . . and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.” – Shylock (Act III, Scene I)

Shylock is concerned about how offended Jews are treated and implies that they are just as capable of taking retribution as Christians. He questions the idea that Jews should suffer discrimination without speaking out in protest. Shylock declares

his resolve to avenge the treatment he has received. He implies that his cruel treatment has increased his desire for vengeance and will take advice from those who mistreated him. In this lecture, Shylock emphasises both his humanity and the evils his fellow Jews must endure in order to humanise both himself and them. He criticizes the characters' hypocrisy in preaching mercy and charity while denying him the same. The remark emphasises how the play examines issues like prejudice, retaliation, and the ambiguities of justice.

“The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.” – Portia (Act

IV, Scene I)

Portia is indicating that mercy is not compelled or coerced in this situation. It is not a requirement or a restriction. Instead, it is a character trait that naturally results from a kind and generous heart. Portia likens pity to a soft rain descending from the clouds to the earth. Mercy has a similar impact on people who receive it as rain does on the land—it nurtures and renews it. It offers those in need consolation, relief, and compassion. This statement emphasises how merciful acts are mutually beneficial. According to Portia, mercy brings blessings to both the giver and the recipient. People feel moral gratification, fulfillment, and development of their humanity when they exhibit mercy. The recipient of mercy is also offered kindness, comprehension, and an opportunity for atonement or forgiveness.

8.7 LET US SUM UP

Shakespeare's well-known drama "The Merchant of Venice" is thought to have been written between 1596 and 1598. Despite having elements of tragedy and serious subjects, it is categorized

as a comedy. The play's central character is the merchant Antonio, who borrows money from the Jewish moneylender Shylock to aid his buddy Bassanio in courting the affluent heiress Portia. Antonio consents to a strange bond that stipulates that Shylock may take a pound of Antonio's flesh if he cannot pay back the amount. Conflicts emerge as the plot develops, bringing to the fore themes of love, mercy, justice, prejudice, and the intricacies of human nature.

Portia's monologue about mercy is among the play's most notable moments. It is a complete and insightful investigation into forgiveness and compassion. The portrayal of Shylock calls into question issues of prejudice, seeking justice, and the effects of retribution. Overall, the play explores difficult moral choices while showcasing the paradoxes and weaknesses in human nature. It also offers a colourful tapestry of characters. It sparks conversations about social prejudices, the definition of kindness, and the pursuit of true justice. Due to its complex plot and insightful topics, "The Merchant of Venice" is still studied, performed, and discussed.

8.8 KEYWORDS

Anti-Semitism -	Hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people
Catalyst-	A person or thing that precipitates an event
Collateral-	Something pledged as security for repayment of a loan, to be forfeited in the event of a default
Confide-	Tell someone about a secret or private matter while trusting them not to repeat it to others
Debt-	A sum of money that is owed or due

Exacerbated- feeling) worse	Make (a problem, bad situation, or negative
Fidelity-	Faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support
Intricacies- perplexing subject	Details, especially of an involved or
Jeopardise-	Put (someone or something) into a situation in which there is a danger of loss, harm, or failure
Jew-	A member of the people and cultural community whose traditional religion is Judaism and who trace their origins through the ancient Hebrew people of Israel to Abraham
Marginalization-	Treatment of a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral
Nuanced- or expression	Characterized by subtle shades of meaning
Reconciliation-	The restoration of friendly relations
A repercussions-	An unintended consequence of an event or action, especially an unwelcome one
Scapegoating-	Blaming others
Stereotypes-	A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing
Tapestry- of events	Used about an intricate or complex sequence

Tenacious-	Tending to keep a firm hold of something; clinging or adhering closely
Vengeance-	Punishment inflicted or retribution exacted for an injury or wrong
Vulnerability-	The quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally
Well-off-	Wealthy

8.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct option:

1) *The Merchant of Venice* was published in _____.

- a) 1600 b) 1602 c) 1604 d) 1608

2) Bassanio chooses the _____ casket.

- a) gold b) silver c) lead d) copper

3) The name of Shylock's daughter is _____.

- a) Jennie b) Jamie c) Judy d) Jessica

4) Who is sad at the beginning of the play?

- a) Antonio b) Bassanio c) Portia d) Shylock

5) The play has _____ acts.

- a) two b) five c) three d) seven

Answer in brief:

- Examine the friendship between Antonio and Bassanio.
- What was the marriage condition of Portia's father?
- How is revenge a prominent theme of the play?
- Why did Antonio borrow money from Shylock?
- What is anti-Semitism?

Write a detailed note on the following questions:

- Explain the famous quote of Shylock: "Hath not a Jew eyes".
- Is the play a comedy or a tragedy?
- Critically analyse the character of Portia.

8. 10 SUGGESTED READING

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Structure:**9.0 Objectives****9.1 Introduction****9.2 Brief of the Author****9.2.1 Webster's Personal Life****9.2.2 Webster's Formal Education Life****9.2.3 Webster's Literary Chronology****9.2.4 Webster's Other Considerations****9.3 Historical Background of *The White Devil*****9.4 Important References Related to *The White Devil*****9.5 Overview of the Text****9.5.1 Webster's Chief Attention Present in the Text****9.6 Analysis of the Text****9.6.1 Dramatic Structure****9.6.2 Staging and Performance****9.6.3 Critical Reception****9.7 Key Themes****9.8 Characterization in *The White Devil*****9.9 Conclusion****9.10 Five Brief Questions and Answers****9.11 Suggested Readings****9.0 OBJECTIVES:**

- In this unit, students will acquire some information about John Webster.

- This unit will also shed light on the plot summary of *The White Devil*.
- The unit will analyse the critical themes of the play.
- Students will get acquainted with the major characters of the play.
- Lastly, the unit will explain some of the crucial quotations of the play.

9.1 INTRODUCTION:

The White Devil is a tragedy written by John Webster, first performed in 1612. It stands out as a significant work in the Jacobean era of English drama, known for its dark themes, complex characters, and intricate plotting. The play is a compelling exploration of corruption, ambition, and revenge, set against a backdrop of political and moral decay.

John Webster was a contemporary of William Shakespeare and part of the late English Renaissance. His works are characterized by their dark tone and intricate characterizations. *The White Devil* was written during a period of political instability and social change in England, which is reflected in the play's themes of power and corruption.

The plot of *The White Devil* revolves around the illicit love affair between Vittoria Corombona and Duke Bracciano, and the ensuing cascade of betrayal, murder, and revenge.

Act- I: The play opens with a series of political machinations and introduces the main characters. Duke Bracciano falls in love with Vittoria Corombona and plots to dispose of his wife, Isabella, and Vittoria's husband, Camillo.

Act-II: Bracciano conspires with Vittoria and the Spanish doctor Julio to poison Isabella. Meanwhile, Camillo is murdered by Flamineo, Vittoria's brother, under the orders of Bracciano.

Act III: Vittoria is put on trial for the murder of her husband. Despite her spirited defense, she is found guilty and sentenced to a house of convertites, a sort of nunnery.

Act IV: The play reaches its climax with a series of violent and dramatic events. Francisco de Medici, Isabella's brother, seeks revenge against Bracciano. He enlists Lodovico, a disgraced nobleman, to carry out his plans.

Act V: The final act is a bloodbath. Bracciano is poisoned by Francisco and Lodovico. Vittoria and Flamineo are murdered by Lodovico, and the play ends with a sense of tragic inevitability as the remaining characters reflect on the corruption and moral decay that led to the downfall.

9.2. BRIEF OF THE AUTHOR:

John Webster was one of the most powerful and distinctive playwrights of the early seventeenth century. Writing during the reign of James I, Webster became closely associated with the dark, brooding tone of Jacobean tragedy. Unlike the romanticism often found in earlier Elizabethan drama, his plays explore corruption, moral decay, political intrigue, and the psychological consequences of ambition and desire.

Webster's dramatic style is marked by intense imagery, poetic language, and a deep fascination with death and suffering. His characters are rarely purely good or evil; instead, they are complex individuals driven by passion, jealousy, greed, and a longing for power. This psychological depth gives his tragedies a modern resonance, as they probe the darker aspects of human nature and society.

His two most celebrated plays, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, exemplify these qualities. Both dramas centre on powerful female protagonists caught in webs of political manipulation and patriarchal control. Through shocking scenes, moral ambiguity, and haunting dialogue, Webster exposes the violence and corruption underlying aristocratic society. His work remains significant for its dramatic intensity and unflinching portrayal of human vulnerability and cruelty.

9.2.1 Webster's Personal Life

John Webster was born in London, probably around 1580, into a relatively prosperous middle-class family. His father, also named John Webster, was a member of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors, one of the prominent livery companies of the City of London. This affiliation suggests that Webster grew up in a stable and respectable household with access to good educational opportunities. Although there is no definitive record of his attendance at a university, it is widely assumed that he received a sound education, possibly at the Merchant Taylors' School, which was closely connected to the guild.

Compared to some of his contemporaries, relatively little is known about Webster's private life, as documentary evidence is limited. However, parish records confirm that he married Sara Peniall in March 1606 at St Mary Islington. The couple had several children, indicating that Webster balanced his literary career with family responsibilities. Like many playwrights of the early seventeenth century, he likely supplemented his income through collaborations and other writing projects. The scarcity of personal documents has led scholars to reconstruct his life primarily through theatrical records, legal documents, and references from fellow dramatists of the Jacobean period.

9.2.2 Webster's Formal Education Life

Very little reliable evidence survives regarding the formal education of John Webster beyond what can be inferred from his family background and the intellectual sophistication of his works. It is often suggested that he may have attended the Merchant Taylors' School in London, an institution closely associated with the Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors, of which his father was a member. Merchant Taylors' School was known for its rigorous humanist curriculum, emphasising Latin grammar, classical rhetoric, logic, and the study of ancient authors such as Seneca, Ovid, and Virgil—writers whose influence can be traced in Webster's dramatic style and tragic vision.

Despite these plausible connections, there is no concrete documentary evidence confirming Webster's attendance at either the school or any university. Unlike

some of his contemporaries, such as the “University Wits,” Webster does not appear in surviving university registers from institutions like Oxford or Cambridge. However, the absence of records from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is not unusual, as documentation from the period is often incomplete. Scholars therefore rely largely on indirect evidence—his literary allusions, command of classical sources, and stylistic sophistication—to speculate about the breadth and depth of his education.

9.2.3 Webster’s Literary Chronology

John Webster began his literary career in the early seventeenth century, a vibrant period for the London stage. Like many dramatists of his time, he initially worked in collaboration with other playwrights, contributing to plays for prominent theatre companies. Collaboration was a common practice in the Jacobean theatre industry, allowing writers to produce works quickly to meet the demands of performance. Webster is believed to have worked with dramatists such as Thomas Dekker and others, gaining experience in dramatic structure, dialogue, and stagecraft through these joint ventures.

His first major independent tragedy, *The White Devil*, was published in 1612. Although its initial stage performance met with limited success, the printed version revealed Webster’s powerful dramatic voice—marked by intense psychological depth, moral complexity, and dark poetic imagery. Two years later, he produced *The Duchess of Malfi*, a play that achieved far greater acclaim and enduring popularity. This tragedy, with its compelling heroine and chilling depiction of corruption and cruelty, firmly established Webster as one of the foremost tragedians of the Jacobean era. Through these works, he earned recognition for his uncompromising exploration of human ambition, suffering, and moral decay.

9.2.4 Webster’s Other Considerations

John Webster wrote during the turbulent period of James I's reign, a time often referred to as Jacobean England. This era was marked by political uncertainty, court intrigues, religious tensions, and growing concerns about corruption within positions of power. Such instability deeply influenced Webster's dramatic imagination. His tragedies frequently portray courts and aristocratic households as spaces of moral decay, manipulation, and concealed violence, mirroring contemporary anxieties about authority and governance.

In plays like *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, Webster explores the abuse of political power, the vulnerability of individuals within rigid social hierarchies, and the destructive consequences of unchecked ambition. His characters often struggle within oppressive systems, highlighting tensions between personal integrity and public corruption. These themes resonated strongly with Jacobean audiences who were familiar with the fragility of political stability and the dangers of factional rivalry.

Webster's distinctive use of dense poetic imagery, symbolic language, and tightly constructed dramatic scenes intensifies the emotional and moral impact of his tragedies. His bleak vision of human nature—combined with psychological complexity and powerful theatrical effects—has secured his enduring reputation. Today, he is regarded as one of the most significant tragedians of early modern English drama, whose works continue to provoke critical and theatrical interest.

9.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *The White Devil*

The *White Devil* was written at a time of intense political, social, and cultural transformation in England. The transition from the reign of Elizabeth I to that of James I in 1603 marked the end of the Elizabethan era and the beginning of the Jacobean period. While Elizabeth's long rule had provided relative stability, James's accession introduced new political uncertainties. As the first Stuart king of England, James united the crowns of England and Scotland, yet his governance style differed significantly from his predecessor's. He strongly advocated the doctrine of the divine right of kings, asserting that monarchs derived their authority directly from God. This belief often created friction between the monarchy and Parliament, particularly over issues of taxation and royal prerogative.

The Jacobean court quickly developed a reputation for extravagance, patronage, and factional rivalry. Courtiers competed for royal favour, leading to intrigue, alliances, and betrayals behind the scenes. Such an atmosphere of ambition and manipulation contributed to a growing public perception of moral corruption within the ruling elite. At the same time, religious tensions continued to trouble the kingdom. Conflicts between Protestants and Catholics remained unresolved, and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 intensified fears of conspiracy and treason. These events fostered a climate of suspicion and anxiety throughout English society.

Within this context, *The White Devil* can be seen as a dramatic reflection of Jacobean instability. Its depiction of corrupt courts, political scheming, and moral ambiguity mirrors the uncertainties of the age. The play exposes the destructive effects of ambition and power, suggesting a world in which appearances conceal darker realities. By dramatizing violence, betrayal, and ethical decay, Webster captured the spirit of an era grappling with political tension and social unease, thereby grounding his tragedy firmly in the historical moment that produced it.

9.4 IMPORTANT REFERENCES RELATED TO *The White Devil*

The White Devil is deeply rooted in both documented history and a wide range of literary influences. Its plot is primarily derived from the life and violent death of Vittoria Accoramboni, an Italian aristocrat whose scandalous reputation fascinated European audiences. Vittoria's first husband, Francesco Peretti, was murdered under suspicious circumstances, and she later married Paolo Giordano I Orsini, Duke of Bracciano. Their union provoked political hostility and ultimately led to their assassination in 1585. Webster drew upon contemporary accounts of these events, most notably William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure*, a popular English collection of translated Italian tales that provided dramatists with sensational historical material.

Beyond historical chronicles, Webster was heavily influenced by the established tradition of revenge tragedy in English drama. The legacy of Thomas Kyd, particularly through *The Spanish Tragedy*, shaped the conventions of intrigue,

delayed vengeance, moral corruption, and staged violence. Likewise, the dramatic intensity and psychological depth found in the tragedies of William Shakespeare, especially *Hamlet* and *Othello*, resonate in Webster's exploration of jealousy, ambition, and ethical ambiguity.

Classical Roman tragedy also left a profound mark on Webster's style. The works of Seneca provided models for rhetorical grandeur, meditative soliloquies, and graphic depictions of cruelty. Senecan elements such as revenge, reflections on fate, moral decay, and sensational violence are woven throughout *The White Devil*. Additionally, the influence of Italian court culture—often perceived in England as corrupt and Machiavellian—contributed to the play's atmosphere of political scheming and moral instability.

By blending Italian history, English revenge drama, classical tragedy, and contemporary anxieties about power and corruption, Webster created a work that is both historically grounded and theatrically innovative. The result is a tragedy that reflects the sensationalism of its sources while deepening them through psychological complexity and poetic intensity.

9.5 OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

The White Devil is a powerful Jacobean tragedy that probes deeply into themes of corruption, power, desire, and revenge within an aristocratic society riddled with moral decay. At the centre of the drama stands Vittoria Corombona, a woman accused of ambition, sensuality, and manipulation, whose relationship with Paolo Giordano I Orsini (represented in the play as the Duke of Bracciano) sets in motion a chain of violence and retribution.

Vittoria becomes involved in an illicit affair with Bracciano while both are married, defying social, religious, and moral codes. Their passion leads to the calculated murder of Vittoria's husband, Camillo, and Bracciano's wife, Isabella. These crimes are not merely private acts of betrayal; they expose the broader corruption of the courtly world in which personal desire and political ambition intertwine. Webster presents a society where justice is manipulated, appearances are deceptive, and moral integrity is subordinated to power.

Although Vittoria is often described as ambitious and unscrupulous, Webster complicates this portrayal. During her trial scene, she defends herself with intelligence and rhetorical

skill, challenging the hypocrisy of the male authorities who judge her. This ambiguity invites audiences to question whether she is truly a “white devil”—a figure who appears innocent yet embodies evil—or rather a victim of a corrupt patriarchal system.

The affair ultimately leads to escalating revenge plots, culminating in multiple deaths, including those of Vittoria and Bracciano. Their downfall reinforces the tragic vision of a world governed by ambition, jealousy, and retaliation. Through this narrative, Webster offers a bleak yet compelling exploration of human weakness and the destructive consequences of unchecked desire and political corruption.

9.5.1 WEBSTER’S CHIEF ATTENTION PRESENT IN THE TEXT:

In *The White Devil*, John Webster directs his chief attention to the corrupting influence of power and the moral ambiguity that governs human behaviour. The play presents a society in which political authority, social prestige, and personal desire override ethical considerations. Courts and noble households—traditionally associated with order and honour—are shown as spaces of intrigue, manipulation, and concealed violence. Those who hold power misuse it to satisfy personal ambition, while justice becomes distorted by prejudice and self-interest. In such a world, virtue struggles to survive, and innocence is often condemned rather than protected.

This thematic concern directly justifies the title *The White Devil*. The phrase itself suggests a paradox: something outwardly pure (“white”) that conceals inner corruption (“devil”). Vittoria is branded a “white devil,” accused of masking evil intentions behind beauty and eloquence. Yet Webster complicates this judgement. The male authorities who prosecute her—cardinals, dukes, and courtiers—are themselves morally compromised. By exposing their hypocrisy, Webster implies that the true “devils” are not easily identifiable. Evil does not wear a single face; it permeates the entire social structure.

The play’s complex structure, abrupt tonal shifts, and densely poetic language further reinforce Webster’s exploration of moral darkness. His imagery of decay, disease, and corruption symbolises the spiritual degeneration of society. Ultimately, Webster’s central focus is not merely individual wrongdoing but the pervasive moral disorder of a world where power eclipses justice. The title

therefore encapsulates the play's tragic vision: a realm in which appearances deceive and corruption hides beneath a surface of seeming purity.

9.6 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT:

John Webster's *The White Devil* is distinguished by its sophisticated characterisation and intricately woven plot, both of which contribute significantly to the justification of its striking title. The play does not present characters as simply virtuous or villainous; rather, Webster crafts psychologically complex figures whose motives are layered and often contradictory. Vittoria, for instance, is at once intelligent, passionate, defiant, and morally questionable. Similarly, Bracciano is both a powerful nobleman and a reckless adulterer. This moral ambiguity reinforces the paradox embedded in the title—"white" suggesting purity, while "devil" implies corruption.

Although the narrative is not strictly non-linear in a modern sense, Webster structures the drama through multiple intersecting plots and carefully staged revelations that create a sense of layered complexity. Political intrigue, personal revenge, courtroom drama, and intimate betrayal operate simultaneously. Subplots involving characters such as Flamineo deepen the exploration of ambition and moral decay. These interwoven strands reflect a world in which truth is obscured and appearances are deceptive, aligning with the thematic suggestion of concealed evil beneath a fair exterior.

The play's vivid imagery further strengthens this idea. Webster frequently employs images of disease, darkness, and decay to symbolise inner corruption. His poetic dialogue—dense, rhetorical, and emotionally charged—heightens the tragic atmosphere while exposing hidden motives and moral contradictions. The famous trial scene, in particular, dramatises how language itself can both reveal and disguise truth.

Thus, through complex character development, layered plotting, and evocative imagery, Webster creates a dramatic world where innocence and guilt are indistinguishable. The title *The White Devil* encapsulates this central tension, pointing to the deceptive nature of appearances and the pervasive moral corruption that defines the play's tragic vision.

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9.6.2 Staging and Performance

Staging *The White Devil* presents considerable challenges because of its intricate plot, rapid shifts in location, and large cast of politically entangled characters. John Webster constructs a drama that moves between courts, private chambers, and scenes of conspiracy, requiring directors to manage complex scene transitions

and maintain narrative clarity. The density of the language and the psychological intensity of the characters demand highly skilled performers capable of conveying moral ambiguity rather than simple villainy or innocence.

The play's dark themes—adultery, corruption, manipulation, and revenge—are intensified by moments of shocking violence. Murders occur both onstage and offstage, and the atmosphere is charged with cruelty and betrayal. A successful production must balance the sensational aspects of these scenes with the deeper ethical questions Webster raises. If staged merely for spectacle, the violence risks overshadowing the moral complexity that justifies the title *The White Devil*. Directors must therefore ensure that the brutality reveals the spiritual corruption of the society rather than functioning as mere dramatic excess.

Modern performances frequently highlight the play's continuing relevance. Contemporary audiences readily recognise themes of political manipulation, abuse of authority, and gendered double standards. Productions often emphasise Vittoria's trial scene to foreground issues of patriarchal judgement and the policing of female sexuality. By presenting Vittoria not only as an accused criminal but also as a woman confronting institutional hypocrisy, modern stagings underscore how power structures shape moral narratives.

Through careful direction, atmospheric design, and nuanced performances, *The White Devil* emerges as a disturbingly modern tragedy. Its staging challenges are inseparable from its thematic depth, as the performance itself must embody the tension between outward appearance and hidden corruption that lies at the heart of Webster's dramatic vision.

9.6.3 Critical Reception

When *The White Devil* was first performed in 1612, it did not achieve notable success on the Jacobean stage. John Webster himself alluded to the play's disappointing reception in his preface, suggesting that the audience may have found its structure too intricate and its tone excessively sombre. Compared to more immediately engaging tragedies of the period, Webster's drama demanded intellectual and moral engagement rather than offering straightforward emotional

satisfaction. Its dense poetic language, morally ambiguous characters, and relentless exposure of corruption may have unsettled contemporary spectators accustomed to clearer distinctions between virtue and vice.

Over time, however, critical opinion shifted significantly. Later scholars and theatre practitioners began to recognise the play as one of Webster's most powerful achievements and a major work of Jacobean tragedy. Critics have particularly admired its psychological complexity, especially in the character of Vittoria, whose intelligence and rhetorical brilliance complicate any simple moral judgement. Rather than presenting a conventional villain, Webster creates a figure who embodies the paradox suggested by the title.

The phrase *The White Devil* has drawn sustained critical attention because it encapsulates the play's central concern with deceptive appearances. "White" symbolises outward purity, innocence, or social respectability, while "devil" signifies corruption and moral evil. Early audiences may have interpreted the title as a straightforward condemnation of Vittoria. Modern criticism, however, often argues that the title is ironic and extends beyond a single character. The true "white devils" are the powerful men and institutions—courts, cardinals, and nobles—who mask their corruption beneath authority and religious virtue.

Thus, the evolving critical reception of the play reinforces the richness of its title. What initially appeared as a dark and confusing tragedy is now understood as a profound exploration of moral ambiguity and systemic corruption, fully justifying its enduring place in English literary studies.

9.7 KEY THEMES

▪ **Corruption and Power:**

The play powerfully examines how the relentless pursuit of political and personal power leads to moral decay. Rulers, courtiers, and churchmen manipulate justice to protect their interests, revealing a society in which authority is inseparable from corruption. Power becomes a destructive force that erodes conscience and humanity. Through the downfall of its central characters, John Webster suggests

that ambition unchecked by morality ultimately destroys both individuals and institutions.

▪ **Revenge and Justice:**

Revenge drives much of the action, as characters respond to betrayal and murder with further violence. However, acts of vengeance do not restore order or moral balance; instead, they perpetuate chaos and suffering. Formal systems of justice, such as the court scene, appear biased and politically motivated. Webster portrays a world where true justice remains elusive, replaced by cycles of retaliation and personal vendetta.

▪ **Appearance vs. Reality:**

A central concern of the play is the gap between outward appearances and inner truth. Vittoria is labelled a “white devil,” implying innocence that conceals corruption. Yet the moral failings of other characters—especially those in positions of religious and political authority—suggest that deception permeates the entire society. Webster repeatedly shows how reputation, status, and rhetoric disguise darker motives, reinforcing the irony of the title.

▪ **Gender and Power:**

The play critiques the restrictive and often hypocritical expectations placed upon women in Jacobean society. Vittoria’s sexuality and independence make her a target of public condemnation, while male characters who commit similar or greater crimes retain social authority. Through her trial and defiance, Webster exposes the gendered double standards embedded within systems of power, highlighting the vulnerability of women within patriarchal structures.

9.8 CHARACTERISATION IN *The White Devil*

One of the greatest strengths of John Webster’s tragedy lies in its complex and psychologically layered characterisation. Webster avoids presenting purely heroic

or villainous figures; instead, he creates morally ambiguous personalities whose ambitions, desires, and resentments drive the tragic action.

Vittoria Corombona

Vittoria is the central figure of the play and one of the most compelling female characters in Jacobean drama. Often described as ambitious and manipulative, she becomes involved in an adulterous relationship with Bracciano, which leads to murder and scandal. However, Webster complicates her portrayal. During her trial, she demonstrates intelligence, rhetorical brilliance, and emotional strength, challenging the authority of those who condemn her. She embodies the paradox of the title “white devil,” appearing outwardly composed and dignified while being accused of moral corruption. Whether she is truly villainous or a victim of a corrupt patriarchal society remains open to interpretation.

Duke of Bracciano

Inspired by Paolo Giordano I Orsini, Bracciano is driven by passion and pride. His adulterous affair with Vittoria and his involvement in the murder of his wife, Isabella, set the tragic events in motion. Though powerful and charismatic, he is reckless and morally compromised. His desire for dominance and personal gratification reflects the destructive nature of unchecked authority.

Flamineo

Flamineo, Vittoria’s brother, is one of the most complex and cynical characters in the play. As a malcontent figure, he resents his lower social status and manipulates others to gain advancement. He acts as a mediator between Vittoria and Bracciano, facilitating their affair and the ensuing crimes. His sharp wit, bitterness, and moral detachment make him both fascinating and disturbing.

Francisco de Medici

Francisco, Bracciano’s rival and the brother of Isabella, represents calculated revenge. Outraged by his sister’s dishonour and murder, he schemes patiently to

avenge her death. Unlike the impulsive Bracciano, Francisco's revenge is cold, strategic, and politically motivated, adding further layers of intrigue to the drama.

Isabella

Isabella, Bracciano's virtuous wife, serves as a moral contrast to Vittoria. Her innocence and loyalty highlight the injustice of her fate. Her murder intensifies the tragic conflict and fuels Francisco's desire for vengeance. Though she appears briefly, her death symbolises the destruction of virtue within a corrupt society.

Through these characters, Webster constructs a tragic world shaped by ambition, resentment, passion, and revenge, reinforcing the moral complexity at the heart of the play.

9.9. CONCLUSION

The White Devil remains one of the most powerful and intellectually demanding tragedies of the Jacobean age. In this work, John Webster offers a penetrating exploration of human ambition, moral corruption, and the destructive consequences of unchecked desire. The play refuses to present a morally ordered universe in which virtue is rewarded and evil punished in a simple or reassuring manner. Instead, Webster portrays a world governed by political intrigue, hypocrisy, and shifting loyalties, where justice is manipulated by those in authority and innocence is often sacrificed.

The tragedy's enduring relevance lies in its honest depiction of the darker aspects of human nature. Themes such as corruption, revenge, power politics, and gender inequality continue to resonate strongly with modern audiences. Contemporary societies, like Webster's Jacobean world, grapple with questions about the abuse of authority, the fragility of justice, and the tension between public reputation and

private morality. The title itself encapsulates this timeless paradox: the coexistence of outward respectability and hidden vice.

Moreover, the play's complex characterisation and poetic intensity ensure its continued critical and theatrical interest. Vittoria's moral ambiguity, Flamineo's cynical realism, and the calculated revenge of Francisco reflect psychological insights that remain strikingly modern. The richness of Webster's imagery and dramatic structure invites repeated interpretation and analysis.

This reading has provided a comprehensive overview of the play, including insights into Webster's life and times, the historical background of Jacobean England, major thematic concerns, and detailed character analysis. For deeper engagement, further scholarly readings on Jacobean tragedy, revenge drama, and early modern theatre will enrich understanding of both the genre and Webster's lasting contribution to English literature.

9.10 FIVE BRIEF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. What motivates Vittoria's actions in the play?

Vittoria is driven by ambition and a desire for power and status.

2. How does Webster portray corruption in *The White Devil*?

Webster portrays corruption as pervasive and deeply ingrained in society, affecting both the powerful and the powerless.

3. What role does revenge play in the narrative?

Revenge is a central theme, driving the actions of several characters and leading to the play's tragic conclusion.

4. How does Webster use language to enhance the play's themes?

Webster's poetic dialogue and vivid imagery underscore the play's dark themes and emotional intensity.

5. What is the significance of the title *The White Devil*?

The title reflects the play's exploration of hypocrisy and the contrast between outward appearance and inner corruption.

9.11 SUGGESTED READING:

1. The Duchess of Malfi by John Webster
2. The Revenger's Tragedy by Thomas Middleton (often attributed to Cyril Tourneur)
3. The Spanish Tragedy by Thomas Kyd
4. Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe
5. Hamlet by William Shakespeare

Structure

- 10.0 Objectives**
- 10.1 Overview of Metaphysical Poetry**
- 10.2 John Donne as a poet**
- 10.3 “Death, Be Not Proud”**
 - 1.3.1 Stanza by stanza explanation**
 - 1.3.2 Major themes of the poem**
 - 1.3.3 Form, Meter and Rhyme Scheme**
- 10.4 “The Canonization”**
 - 10.4.1 Stanza by stanza explanation**
 - 10.4.2 Major themes of the poem**
 - 10.4.3 Form, Meter and Rhyme Scheme**
- 10.5 “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”**
 - 10.5.1 Stanza by stanza explanation**
 - 10.5.2 Major themes of the poem**
 - 10.5.3 Form, Meter and Rhyme Scheme**
- 10.6 Let us sum up**
- 10.7 Keywords**
- 10.8 Check your progress**
- 10.9 Suggested reading**

10.0 OBJECTIVES

- In this unit, students will understand metaphysical poetry and understand the genre's ideals
- The students will also understand the context in which such poetry was written
- Additionally, the students will identify the critical characteristics of metaphysical poetry
- The unit will conduct a close reading of some of the famous poems of John Donne
- Lastly, the unit will also shed light on the significant themes, form, meter and rhyme scheme of these poems

10.1 OVERVIEW OF METAPHYSICAL POETRY

A literary trend known as metaphysical poetry first appeared in England in the 17th century. It is distinguished by its cerebral and complicated style, which combines philosophical and spiritual issues with wit, conceits, and unusual imagery. In the 18th century, Samuel Johnson used the term "metaphysical" to designate a group of poets whose works had a few things in common. John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan and Richard Crashaw, among others, were among the metaphysical poets who probed deep issues like the essence of existence, love, faith, and the connection between the material and spiritual worlds. They extensively drew on the philosophical and intellectual currents of the day, especially the resurgence of interest in the writings of classical philosophers like Plato and the ideas of Renaissance thinkers.

"Meta" means "beyond". So Metaphysical means beyond the physical world, something science cannot explain. Metaphysical conceits, which are intricate and even fantastical contrasts or analogies that connect seemingly unconnected objects or concepts, are one of the characteristics that distinguish metaphysical poetry. These conceits were employed to examine complex metaphysical ideas and to convey strong feelings. In his

poem "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," John Donne, for instance, compares the relationship between two loves to the turning of a compass.

Additionally, wit, contradiction, and clever wordplay were used by metaphysical poets. They frequently questioned the established poetry standards of the day by combining the sacred with the profane, the material and the spiritual, and using vernacular language. The complexity, depth, and study of abstract concepts distinguished their poetry. Metaphysical poets covered a wide range of topics in their works. Their works frequently dealt with the issue of love in all its manifestations, although it was frequently done in an intellectualized and unusual way. They discussed issues of faith, salvation, God's character, and other theological and spiritual concepts.

Later generations of poets were greatly influenced by metaphysical poetry. It prepared the way for creating the following poetry movements, such as the Romantic poets of the 18th and 19th centuries, emphasizing philosophical study, complex metaphors, and merging many subjects and ideas. Metaphysical poetry is short, concise and full of wit, humour and imagery. Overall, metaphysical poetry represents a significant and distinctive time in the history of English literature and is distinguished by its unique synthesis of intellectualism, wit, and spiritual inquiry. It is still studied and valued for its in-depth examination of challenging philosophical and metaphysical ideas.

10.2 JOHN DONNE AS A POET

English poet John Donne (1572–1631) is often considered the founder of metaphysical poetry. Early in the 17th century, Donne began producing secular and sacred poetry, which launched his creative career. His poetry is known for its deep investigation of concepts like love, faith, and mortality and its metaphysical conceits, intellectual intricacy, and profundity. His works frequently combined the material and the divine, the sensual and the sacred, weaving an intricate web of feelings and concepts.

A few of Donne's most well-known poems are "The Flea", "Death, Be Not Proud", "The Good-Morrow", "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", "The Sun Rising", "Go and Catch a falling star", "The Canonization", "No Man is an Island" and "The Ecstasy". In these poems, he used complex metaphors and unusual imagery to address love, spiritual commitment, and the fleeting nature of life. A sense of urgency and emotional intensity were frequently present in Donne's poetry, which was incredibly introspective and highly personal.

Donne made significant contributions to the sonnet form's evolution in English poetry. He created Petrarchan sonnets in the conventional sense, but he also tried his hand at a form known as the "Donne sonnet" or the "metaphysical sonnet." These sonnets frequently used wit, paradoxes, and atypical imagery, and their rhyme schemes were inconsistent. Donne's novel use of the sonnet form influenced the Romantic poets of the 18th and 19th centuries. He not only wrote sonnets but also elegies, lyrics and satires. John Donne made significant contributions to English literature by transforming literary and poetic norms, examining love and spirituality, and fusing intellect, emotion, and wit singularly. His writings are still analysed, praised, and valued for their profound insights and long influence on English poetry and prose.

10.3 “DEATH, BE NOT PROUD”

The sonnet "Death, Be Not Proud" was written around 1609. It was published posthumously in 1633 in the collection titled *Holy Sonnets*. The collection has nineteen sonnets. “Death, Be Not Proud” is sonnet number ten, which is also known as sonnet X. The poem is as follows:

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

10.3.1 STANZA BY STANZA EXPLANATION

“Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.”

Explanation of lines 1-4:

It is immediately apparent from the direct address that the speaker is 'talking' to Death, who is personified in this situation. It is interesting how pride, the deadliest of the seven deadly sins, is portrayed as a human trait. Death has earned a poor reputation throughout human history, and many people now find it terrifying. Nevertheless, the speaker will not have any of it. Reputations do not matter much because, in the speaker's opinion, Death is not actually "powerful and horrible" at all. The haughty voice continues. Death may think he has triumphed over his victims, but the situation is not yet over. People do not die, and the speaker adds his immunity and asserts that he is immune from death for comic effect. The speaker indicates in a pretty sarcastic manner that Death is oblivious of this—poor Death—as though sorrow is being expressed. Death is being treated reasonably dishonorably.

“From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.”

Explanation of lines 5-8:

Who does not relish the idea of a restful night's sleep after a strenuous day at work? Rest and sleep are enjoyable. The speaker claims that death is nothing more than a little extra rest and slumber. Sleeping is a natural activity, and it makes us feel better. More so than Death, but similar. The exceptional die young, so to speak, yet even if Death may take the best men, they do so with a twofold advantage: they get to rest and their souls are delivered. In addition to bringing pleasure, death has assisted in the soul's birth, making it a crucial component of the afterlife because delivery is linked to birth.

“Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?”

Explanation of lines 9-12:

The final six lines intensify the fight against Death. According to the speaker, Death is a slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men and has no power or control over anything. Only unforeseen events, political systems of law and justice, poison, war, and illness can cause death. Opium is derived from plants, such as the poppy, while charms are created through magic; both are just as effective sedatives as Death. Even better. How demeaning. It is absurd to swell with pride when it is unwarranted, and Death is reduced to a weakling.

“One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.”

Explanation of lines 13-14:

The circumstance is perfectly expressed in the final couplet. Since a person will awaken from their brief death and continue living eternally, free from death, death is a brief nap for them. The worst insult: Death will therefore cease to exist. From a Christian viewpoint, this final straw

proves that Death itself is alive and logically subject to its own death. The speaker will appear to wake up from sleep but never actually die.

10.3.2 MAJOR THEMES OF THE POEM

- **Defiance against death**

The central theme of "Death, Be Not Proud" is defiance against death. The poem by John Donne asserts the limitations of death. It declares the triumph of life over death, challenging the traditional notion of death as an all-powerful and terrifying entity. Death is addressed directly by the speaker, who humanises it. The speaker shows defiance and fearlessness in the face of mortality by directly approaching and engaging with Death.

Death's authority is continuously questioned by the speaker, who claims that it is not as solid or terrifying as it is frequently thought to be. The poem questions the idea of death's invincibility by referring to death as "not proud" and asserting that it cannot defeat or kill the speaker. The poem emphasises how wonderful life is to death. According to the speaker, death is only a transitional state before an eternal waking, and proper rest, pleasure, and awakening are all found beyond the realm of death. This focus on the victory of life over death displays a defiant attitude towards death's inevitable nature and finality

The speaker portrays death as a slave to various outside powers, including fate, chance, rulers, and desperate individuals. This portrayal emphasises Death's dependence on outside forces while downplaying its autonomy. The poem claims that Death is not an independent, all-powerful force that should be feared by showing it as subject to these forces. The poem's last line, "And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die," expresses the most substantial resistance to death. The contradictory claim implies that death will ultimately be vanquished and eliminated. This statement states that, despite the appearance of superiority, death will finally be defeated by a greater strength or force.

- **Sleep and rest as miniature versions of death**

In his poem "Death, Be Not Proud," John Donne argues that repose and sleep can be viewed as a depiction or miniature of death. The transient states of sleep and relaxation and the more permanent state of death are contrasted in the poem.

In line five, Donne writes, "From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be", meaning that the speaker refers to relaxation and sleep as "pictures" of death, suggesting that they resemble or depict the experience of death in some way. Rest and sleep are portrayed as passing or ephemeral states resembling death's more profound realm. In line eleven, Donne writes, "And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well", meaning that the speaker claims that opium (referred to as "poppy") and charms (referred to as "charms") can make people fall asleep. By drawing this comparison, the speaker implies that sleep, like death, can be attained or influenced by outside forces.

The poem proposes that by depicting sleep and rest as reflections or echoes of death, we can get a glimpse or feel a shadow of what dying would be like. Death is not the final state of fulfillment or rest, the speaker claims in the end, for proper rest, joy, and awakening are found elsewhere. The poem's subject of everlasting life is furthered by comparing sleep, repose, and death, emphasizing how fleeting life is. It implies a greater waking after death—a state of eternal life or spiritual existence that transcends the constraints of mortality—just as there is an awakening when we arise from sleep.

10.3.3 FORM, METER AND RHYME SCHEME

"Death, Be Not Proud" is a sonnet which can be divided into an octave (a stanza containing eight lines) and a sestet (a stanza containing six lines). The rhyme scheme of the poem is ABBAABBA CDDCEE. The poem uses iambic pentameter, meaning five iambs are in every line. An iamb is a foot that contains two syllables, where the first is unstressed and the second is stressed.

10.4 "THE CANONISATION"

"The Canonization" was written somewhere around 1590. It was published posthumously in 1633 in the collection titled *Songs and Sonnets*. The poem is as follows:

“For God's sake, hold your tongue, and let me love,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his honor, or his grace,
Or the king's real, or his stampèd 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 drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed 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 us 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 the eagle and the dove.
The phœnix 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 tombs and hearse
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
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!"

10.4.1 STANZA BY STANZA EXPLANATION

“For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his honor, or his grace,

Or the king's real, or his stampèd face
Contemplate; what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.”

The speaker asks the reader or listener to stay silent and let him begin the poem by expressing his affection. It implies the speaker will initiate an impassioned monologue about his sacred love. The speaker requests that the reader refrains from making fun of or mocking his bodily afflictions, which are represented here by "palsy" (tremors) and "gout," a painful joint condition. These bodily flaws serve as a metaphor for his vulnerability and the challenges he encounters when looking for love.

The speaker requests that the reader refrains from making fun of his five grey hairs or his financial woes. This highlights how insignificant material concerns are in comparison to the strength and importance of his love. The speaker also understands that society may place a higher value on things like wealth, education, status, or even kingly fealty. He claims that none of these things will matter to him as long as he is permitted to love. The speaker questions societal expectations and says love should precede outward signs of prosperity and power.

“Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed 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.”

Sadly, his making of love does not damage anyone. His laments have drowned no commercial ship. His tears have not started any floods, and the bitterness of his anxieties has not made winter last longer or prevented spring from arriving. The intensity of his love has not expanded the list of

people who died from the pandemic. While the lawyers are engaged in their litigation, the soldiers continue to fight in the wars. The world continues to function normally despite his love, so why should anyone oppose him making love?

“Call us 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 the 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.”

The speaker and his lover are what they are due to their love, regardless of what the buddy calls them (crazy or amusing). The speaker might be compared to a fly by a friend and the speaker's beloved to another fly pursuing the light. He might refer to them as candles because their shared love consumes them. Because both are fierce, soft, and prey on one another, he can compare them to the eagle and the dove. The Phoenix mythology could best describe the speaker and his sweetheart. Their two sexes blend so well that they create a unisex being, meaning that when they pass away, they reappear in precisely the same form as before, just like the Phoenix does when it rises from its ashes. Their love secret will be revered, much like the mystery of the Phoenix.

“We can die by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tombs and hearse
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
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.”

If the couple cannot achieve immortality via their love, they can at least sacrifice their lives for it. The tale of their love may not deserve monuments and tombs, but it is at least suitable for poetry. They may not have written volumes of history about their love, but sonnets and songs will have referenced it. They will be revered by the world as canonised lovers (saintly lovers), much as the ashes of famous men are preserved in an attractive urn or in graves covering an area of half an acre. They will be canonised for the sake of love, just as saints are canonized for the love of God. They have sincere and selfless 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!"”

People will pray the following for the couples' blessings after they have been recognized as saints of love: “Since each of you was a world unto themselves, you are the saints of love who made each other your trip. Love may have been a ferocious passion for some, but it provided calm and happiness to you. In each other's eyes, you could see the entire universe reflected. You accomplished the miracle of shrinking the planet (in your vision). You perceived a more meaningful universe since you could see the nations, cities, and tribunals through your eyes. We want God to mold our love after your example since you are the saints of love so that we might love just as you did.”

10.4.2 MAJOR THEMES OF THE POEM

- **Mature and eternal love**

John Donne depicts a love that transcends material concerns and endures time throughout the poem. The speaker in "The Canonization" disapproves of contemporary standards and expectations that emphasize wealth, position, and ambition. Instead, he contends that true love is the most important and gratifying component of life. Even in the face of cultural pressure, this defiance shows a mature understanding that love should be the primary motivator.

In the poem, love is shown as a robust and transformational force. The speaker claims he and his partner were "made such by love." Their deep connection and elevated status brought about by their love allow them to transcend everyday life. This transformational quality of love argues that it transcends the constraints of time and mortality and has an eternal nature. The speaker declares that he is prepared to suffer for love. He calls both his lover and himself "tapers too, and at our own cost die." This represents a selfless commitment to love, even at the price of personal convenience or material success. Mature, lasting partnerships are characterised by dedication and sacrifice made for love.

- **Pure, consecrated and sacred love**

John Donne portrays love as a holy and elevated emotion throughout the poem. The speaker sees the experience of love as holy and sacred. He requests that the reader "hold your tongue" and refrain from disparaging or trivializing his love. This suggests that the speaker elevates love above everyday concerns and views it as something to be revered and respected. The poem shows love as having transformational power greater than material concerns. The speaker claims that he and his loved one were "made such by love," implying that their love had transcended the ordinary and made them extraordinary. This transformational quality

highlights the holiness of their love and its capacity to promote spiritual upliftment and human development.

The speaker's readiness to give up and dedicate himself to love further emphasises the sacredness of love. He calls himself and the object of his affection "tapers too, and at our own cost die," meaning a selfless dedication and a readiness to face difficulties for love's sake. This selflessness strengthens the feeling of consecration and emphasises the sacredness of their relationship. Even the word "canonization" itself conjures up religious connotations. The speaker suggests that their love deserves adoration and acknowledgement, similar to the canonisation of saints in religious traditions, by saying that their love deserves to be canonised. This analogy supports the notion that love is a holy and consecrated feeling. Overall, portraying pure, consecrated, and sacred love as a transformational and elevated power, "The Canonization" addresses the idea of this kind of love. It highlights the respect, commitment, and sacrifice that are part of this kind of love. The poem claims that love can transcend the commonplace and transform into a sacred and divine experience when felt in its pure form.

10.4.3 FORM, METER AND RHYME SCHEME

The poem contains five stanzas, and each stanza has nine lines. Most of the poem is in iambic pentameter; however, some lines have four or three iambs. The rhyme scheme of each stanza is ABBACCAA.

10.5 “A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING”

“A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” was written somewhere around 1612. It was published posthumously in 1633 in the collection titled *Songs and Sonnets*. The poem is as follows:

“As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say

The breath goes now, and some say, No:

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

Moving of 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
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

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

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

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

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

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

10.5.1 STANZA BY STANZA EXPLANATION

“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:”

In the poem's first lines, the speaker describes how noble individuals died peacefully and quietly, with their souls departing in a whisper. While some of their bereaved friends say goodbye in silence, others choose to remain in denial and refuse to acknowledge their passing.

“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.”

Now the speaker turns to his lover. He also begs them to leave quietly, without sobbing or wailing in agony. He believes that publicly declaring their love and anguish would be a disgrace to their prior bliss.

“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.”

Here, the speaker appears to be daydreaming. He claims that while the movement of celestial spheres, which is of far more significant consequence, appears innocent enough, the movement of the Earth, or earthquakes, causes humanity to worry. He is saying that while the death of more enormous creatures is peaceful, the death of regular individuals is an event marked by tremendous commotion.

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

Here, the speaker asserts that because their souls are "elemented" by the love that unites them and forms the foundation of their entire being, the lovers under the moon can never be separated.

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

The speaker claims that his love is much more "refined," too refined for them to be able to define. They are so interconnected in their minds that the loss of insignificant bodily components like "eyes, lips, and hands" has no impact whatsoever on their love.

“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.”

Their souls are one, according to the speaker. Even though he must leave his lover, all he sees is the growth of their love, much like how gold expands as it is hammered rather than separated.

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

Nevertheless, to say that their souls were two separate souls would mean that they are linked together like the two compass points. The foot that is still, the only one that moves, or himself if the other does, is the soul of his cherished lover.

“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.”

Here, the compass's iconography is still present. He emphasises how his lover is merely seemingly immobile, like the fixed foot. The immobile foot is constantly drawn to the moving foot, leaning towards it and yearning for it. Each time the wandering foot returns "home," it rushes joyfully.

“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.”

According to the speaker, his adored sweetheart was a constant in his life that he revolved around. He keeps going around her because of her steadiness, and he ends up where he started: in love with her.

10.5.2 MAJOR THEMES OF THE POEM

- **Secure and eternal love**

John Donne addresses the idea of a strong spiritual bond between lovers in this poem, a bond that overcomes physical distance and ensures the consistency and duration of their love. The poem focuses on the steadiness and security of the love the speaker and his sweetheart share. Donne

conveys this idea of constancy through geographical and natural metaphors. He likens their love, for instance, to a "fixed foot" and "stiff twin compasses" that remain linked even when separated by distance. These pictures convey a sense of everlasting stability and a love that can withstand separation and distance.

The poem implies that the speaker's love for his beloved goes beyond the physical world's limits. They are defined as having a "sublunary lovers' love" that transcends earthly matters' transient and fleeting nature and exists in a spiritual realm. Given that it is not dependent merely on proximity to one another, their spiritual connection strengthens the notion that their love is safe and eternal. The speaker refers to their relationship as a "refined love" based on mutual respect and harmony. He employs images of the soul and spiritual dimensions to highlight the harmony and compatibility between them. The poem implies that their love will flourish and remain even in the face of physical separation or passing away. Donne argues that their separation should not be a reason for sadness by equating their love to the virtue of good men who "pass mildly away." This suggests that their love is not limited by time and may have endless potential.

- **Graciousness and control of emotions**

John Donne suggests in the poem that a cool-headed reaction to separation characterises true love. Amid their imminent separation, the speaker exhorts his beloved to maintain her composure and grace. He exhorts her not to show visible anguish or mourning. This implies that a kind reaction to parting is regarded as an indication of their relationship's strength and maturity.

The poem emphasises the importance of keeping one's emotions under check when experiencing separation. The speaker begs his sweetheart not to cry or cause a "tear-flood," calling such actions "profanation" of his anguish. This restraint shows that true love can remain calm in emotional upheaval. In order to express a sense of stability and equilibrium, the

speaker used metaphors like the "fixed foot" and "stiff twin compasses". These pictures emphasize the graciousness theme by suggesting balance and control. Their capacity to remain calm and in control of their emotions is a reflection of how persistent their love is.

The poem emphasises how spiritual ties are preferable to physical ones. According to the speaker, their spirits are interwoven and united; this spiritual connection can endure physical separation. This focus on the soul's fortitude implies that fleeting feelings do not easily influence true love but remains calm and collected. In general, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" examines the idea of generosity and emotional restraint by showcasing a love that maintains its composure in the face of separation. According to the poem, true love is characterized by the capacity to restrain strong feelings, maintain equilibrium, and rely on one's inner fortitude. The couple demonstrates their maturity and the depth of their relationship by maintaining their composure and forbearance.

10.5.3 FORM, METER AND RHYME SCHEME

There are nine stanzas in the poem, and each stanza contains four lines. The lines are written in iambic tetrameter, and the stanza's rhyme scheme is ABAB.

10.6 LET US SUM UP

John Donne's critical poems "Death, Be Not Proud," "The Canonization," and "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" all demonstrate the breadth and complexity of his poetic skills. Each poem examines various dimensions of the human experience, such as language's power, spirituality, love, and mortality.

The poem "Death, Be Not Proud" is a piece from Donne's Holy Sonnets collection, reflecting his profound spiritual reflection and investigation of life, death, and salvation. The song "Death, Be Not Proud" aims at death's personification and claims that it cannot ultimately prevail over the immortal soul. The poem presents an optimistic and defiant view of

mortality, highlighting the victory of spiritual life over material death. It demonstrates Donne's depth of thought, theological understanding, and talent for developing lofty ideas and intricate imagery.

The metaphysical theme of "The Canonization" is the transcendence of social conventions and expectations by love. It upends preconceived ideas about love and transforms it into a sacred and life-changing event. The thesis of "The Canonization" is that true love is a power that sanctifies and immortalizes lovers, deserving of devotion and acknowledgement. The poem demonstrates Donne's command of philosophical humour, complex ideas, and paradoxical reasoning while also illuminating his unusual and rebellious nature by challenging social standards.

The book "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" addresses the idea of transcendent and spiritual love between two souls. The speaker urges his beloved to be calm and unwavering in the face of separation in the departure scene, demonstrating the strength of their spiritual connection. The poem "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" demonstrates Donne's skill at fusing the profundity of thought with emotional sensitivity. It is a perfect example of how he uses metaphysical allegories, like comparing their love to a compass, and how he can craft a moving meditation on love, harmony, and the enduring strength of the spirit.

These poems reveal Donne's mastery of philosophical investigation, intricate imagery, and metaphysical conceits to investigate significant issues. They highlight his unique style and poetic voice, establishing him as one of the most important poets in the metaphysical tradition. These poems still strike a chord with readers today, inspiring thought and reflection on the eternal truths of human existence.

10.7 KEYWORDS

Abstract- Existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence

Atypical- Not representative of a type, group, or class

Bereaved- death	Deprived of a close relation or friend through their
Canonized-	(in the Roman Catholic Church) officially declare (a dead person) to be a saint
Chide-	Scold or rebuke
Conceit-	An ingenious or fanciful comparison or metaphor
Connotations-	An idea or feeling that a word invokes for a person in addition to its literal or primary meaning
Disparaging- worth; derogatory	Expressing the opinion that something is of little
Haughty-	Arrogantly superior and disdainful
Iconography-	The visual images and symbols used in a work of art or the study or interpretation of these
Intellectualism- emotions	The exercise of the intellect at the expense of the
Intricate-	Very complicated or detailed
Metaphor- something else	A thing regarded as representative or symbolic of
Miniature-	A thing that is much smaller than normal, especially a tiny replica or model
Opium-	A reddish-brown heavy-scented addictive drug prepared from the juice of the opium poppy used illicitly as a narcotic and occasionally in medicine as an analgesic
Paradox- features or qualities	A person or thing that combines contradictory
Phoenix bird-	(In classical mythology) a unique bird that lived for five or six centuries in the Arabian desert; after this

	time, burning itself on a funeral pyre and rising from the ashes with renewed youth to live through another cycle
Profanation-	The act or an instance of profaning
Profundity- emotion	Great depth or intensity of a state, quality, or emotion
Resurgence-	An increase or revival after a period of little activity, popularity, or occurrence
Sanctifies-	Make legitimate or binding by a religious ceremony
Theological- religious belief	Relating to the study of the nature of God and religious belief
Trend- developing or changing	A general direction in which something is developing or changing
Trivializing-	Make (something) seem less important, significant, or complex than it is
Wit-	Keen intelligence

10.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct option:

- 1) **An iamb has _____ syllables.**
 - a) three
 - b) two
 - c) five
 - d) four

- 2) **_____ used the term "metaphysical" to designate a group of poets which included John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan and Richard Crashaw.**
 - a) Samuel Johnson
 - b) John Dryden
 - c) Alexander Pope
 - d) T. S. Eliot

3) “Death, Be Not Proud” is also known as sonnet ____.

- a) VIII b) IX c) X d) XI

4) Each stanza of “A Valediction: Forbidding mourning” contains ____ lines.

- a) eight b) six c) four d) nine

5) “The Canonization” was published in ____.

- a) 1633 b) 1625 c) 1603 d) 1649

Answer in brief:

- 1) Why is Donne considered 'the father of Metaphysical poetry'?
- 2) How is ‘defiance against death’ a theme in “Death, Be Not Proud”?
- 3) How does “The Canonization” depict love that transcends material concerns and endures time?
- 4) In "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", why does the speaker suggest not making any noise of departure?
- 5) In “The Canonization”, why does the speaker request the reader/listener to stay silent?

Write a detailed note on the following questions:

- 1) What are the major themes of “The Canonization”?
- 2) What is the attitude of the speaker in “Death, Be Not Proud”?
- 3) How does "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" reflect transcendent and spiritual love between two souls?

10.9 SUGGESTED READING

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Structure:

- 11.0 Objectives**
- 11.1 Historical and Social Background of the Age**
- 11.2 Author's biography, literary career and his works**
 - 11.2.1 Introduction**
 - 11.2.2 Early Life**
 - 11.2.3 Early poems**
 - 11.2.4 After Restoration**
 - 11.2.5 His Last years**
- 11.3 Marvell as a Metaphysical poet**
- 11.4 To His Coy Mistress**
- 11.5 The Garden**
- 11.6 Let's Sum Up**
- 11.7 Key Words**
- 11.8 Appendix**

11.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we will discuss,

1. The life span and bio-sketch of the metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell
2. The select works of Marvell in detail
3. Critical appreciation of Marvell's poetry

11.1 HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGORUND OF THE AGE

Andrew Marvell was born and most of the years of his writing career include the age of English civil wars which broke out during the middle of the 17th century between the lord protector Charles - I and the British

parliament. The Stewart (French) king Charles - I believed in the divine right theory which considered the king as the lord protector of the country. The situation was quite different during his reign as the king was dependent on the masses and the parliament as an outsider though he had the right to rule and be a part of the family and a successor.

11.2 AUTHOR'S BIO SKETCH AND LITERARY CAREER

To understand the works of Marvell, being one of the important politicians of his age who sat in the House of Parliament, we need to learn and understand his personal biographical, political, and other social details which had a huge impact on his literary career as a poet.

11.2.1 Introduction

Our previous metaphysical poet Donne was at the threshold of the seventeenth century, born in 1571, he was almost fifty years older than Marvell and known to be a contemporary of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Bacon. It can be said that Donne was the product of the Sixteenth century and was the mature mind of when Marvell was born as he is much junior to Donne.

Like Milton and Pope, Andrew Marvell belongs to the post-Shakespearean time known as the Commonwealth period and is a well-known English poet, satirist, and politician who sat in the House of Commons for almost twenty years from 1659 to 1678. The subjects of Marvell's poetry have a wide range of varieties including love songs such as "To His Coy Mistress", politics on an era such as "Upon Appleton House", "An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland", during his later period, Marvell also wrote political satires which includes famous works "Flecknoe" and "The Character of Holland".

11.2.2 Early life

Marvell was born on 31 March 1621 in Winestead-in-Holderness, East Riding of Yorkshire, near the city of Kingston upon Hull. His father,

senior Andrew Marvell, was a clergyman and a lecturer at Holy Trinity Church. Marvell studied at Hull Grammar School and later graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge in 1639. During the period of civil war in England, until 1647, Marvell was traveling in continental Europe including The Netherlands, France, Italy, and Spain. During this time, while visiting Rome in 1645, Marvell met two Villiers brothers, Lord Francis, and Richard Flecknoe who was the second Duke of Buckingham. It is this Flecknoe on which Marvell, later on, composed his satirical poem on Flecknoe.

11.2.3 Early poems

Before Interregnum and Oliver Cromwell, Marvell was one of the great supporters of Charles - I's reign which is reflected and can be seen in his earliest works. These poems indicate his associations with the Tory/Royalist literary circles. His early poems are mostly written either in Latin or Greek language during his university years. As we have studied earlier, Charles I was executed on 30 January 1649. After almost a year, in 1650 he wrote 'An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland' of May 1650 to show his support and praise the new Republic even though the poem includes the laments of the regicide. The poem is a celebration of Oliver Cromwell's return from Ireland. His next work, 'The First Anniversary of the Government under his Highness the Lord Protector, 1655' recognizes an 'indefatigable' Cromwell who *'cuts his way still nearer to the Skyes, Learning a Musique in the Region clear, To tune this lower to that higher Sphere'*.

In June 1650, Cromwell's former commander-in-chief, Thomas, Lord Fairfax, resigned his parliamentary commission and withdrew from public life to his Yorkshire estates. Here at Nun Appleton Marvell joined him as a tutor to his daughter. During this period, Marvell wrote Mower poems. His famous poem 'Upon Appleton House: To My Lord Fairfax' was

written during this time only. Considered to be one of his best-known poems, "To His Coy Mistress" was also written during this period.

At this time, England was fighting against the Dutch in the Anglo-Dutch War of 1652. It is during this time that Marvell wrote the satirical piece known as "Character of Holland". In 1653, he started living with his pupil John Oxenbridge's house in Eton. His trips to Bermuda inspired Marvell to write the poem *Bermudas*. The next year in 1657, he joined blind Milton in service as Latin secretary to Cromwell's Council of State at a salary of £200 a year.

When Oliver Cromwell died, Marvell wrote the poem on his death entitled 'A Poem upon the Death of His Late Highness the Lord Protector' (1658).

11.2.4 After the Restoration

The monarchy was restored in England in 1660 by the return of Charles II to his empire. He convinced the king to save his friend John Milton from the sentence of execution for anti-monarchical writings and revolutionary activities. This friendship between Milton and him can be seen in Marvell's contribution to the poem, entitled "On Mr. Milton's *Paradise Lost*", to the second edition of Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*. In 1667, Marvell wrote his longest verse entitled *Last Instructions to a Painter* which is a satire and a response to the political corruption that had contributed to English failures during the Second Anglo-Dutch War. His prose work *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* which is an attack on Samuel Parker was published in two parts in 1672 and 1673.

11.2.5 His Last years

From 1659 until his death in 1678, Marvell served as a London agent for the Hull Trinity House shipmasters' guild. It is during this time Marvell traveled to the Dutch Republic, Russia, Denmark, and Sweden. In 1676, he wrote his famous prose works entitled *Mr. Smirke* or *The Divine* in

Mode criticizing Church of England intolerance as well as a Short Historical Essay, concerning General Councils, Creeds, and Impositions, in matters of Religion. He died of fever on 18 August 1678 while attending a popular meeting of his old constituents at Hull. He was buried in the church of St Giles in the Fields in central London.

Check your progress:

Answer the following questions in 50 - 100 words.

1. Discuss Marvell as Post Shakespearean poet.

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2. Discuss the relevance of contribution of Marvell's works in the context of English literature.

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3. Discuss Andrew Marvell as a political poet.

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11.3 MARVELL AS A METAPHYSICAL POET

As we have learnt earlier, It was Dr. Samuel Johnson who coined the term Metaphysical poets. It refers to a loosely associated group of Seventeenth century poets whose works focused on wit, logical arguments, use of ordinary words and jarring imagery. According to Johnson, these poets were sloppy with meter and made poems pleasing when spoken aloud; the comparisons were too wild and far fetched from various domains of knowledge. When Johnson was negative about this school of poetry, it was our modern American-English poet T. S. Eliot who had praised Metaphysical poets for their use of wit, ambiguity they employed both in their verse and their imagery.

Being a metaphysical poet, Andrew Marvell is said to have adhered to the established stylized forms of his contemporary neoclassical traditions. He adopted familiar forms and infused them with his unique conceits, analogies, reflections and preoccupations with larger questions about life and death. T.S. Eliot wrote of Marvell's style that "It is more than a technical accomplishment, or the vocabulary and syntax of an epoch; it is, what we have designated tentatively as wit, a tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace". He also identified Marvell and the metaphysical school with the "dissociation of sensibility" that occurred in 17th-century English literature.

The uniqueness of Marwell’s analogy between unrequited passion and geometric equations provides a poignant interplay between deep emotions

and the cold rationality of math. The structure of Metaphysical poetry established premises and extrapolated to conclusions though their extrapolations were often as humorous as they were serious. The best example of this kind of poetry is Marvell's famous poem "To His Coy Mistress. The form of the poem is argumentative in nature, it is directly addressed to the listener with a striking imagery of the analogy between two lovers and amorous preying birds.

As a metaphysical, one can find the perfect use of logical argument in the works of Marvell. Logical arguments are basically a series of interconnected facts or premises when demonstrated by support to be true, leading to only one conclusion.

Check your progress:

Select the correct options for the following questions.

- 1. Which of the following coined the term Metaphysical poets?**
(A) John Dryden
(B) Ben Jonson
(C) T.S. Eliot
(D) Samuel Johnson

- 2. Who among the following had praised Metaphysical poets for their use of wit, ambiguity they employed both in their verse and their imagery?**
(A) Samuel Johnson
(B) John Dryden
(C) T.S. Eliot
(D) Ben Jonson

- 3. What is the structure of Metaphysical poetry?**
(A) Premises followed by Conclusion
(B) Conclusion followed by Premises

(C) Assertion followed by Premises
followed by Assertion

(D) Premises

11.4 “TOHIS COY MISTRESS”

Andrew Marvell’s poem To His Coy Mistress is divided into three stanzas. The first stanza has 20, second 12 and third has 14 lines making it a total 46 lines poem. The poem is written in the form of a Dramatic monologue written in iambic tetrameter. There are eight syllables per line having four iambs or unstressed followed by stressed beats called feet. The rhyme scheme of the poem follows AABBCDD. The whole poem is arranged in a form of logical argument with the first two stanzas as premises whereas the third concluding stanza provides a logical conclusion. The poem was published posthumously but it has been argued by the critics that it was composed while Marvell was working as a tutor to Mary Fairfax.

Now let us understand the poem and analyze it line by line. The poem starts with an assertion.

Had we but the world enough, and time

This Coyness Lady, were no crime. 2

‘Had’, here, used as an assertion for ‘If’ trying to convince the mistress that if the time and world would not have any kind of boundaries, her quietness or shyness to play hard would have not been a problem. One can not predict the relationship that the speaker and the listener, mistress share. The poet has not provided any other details of the speaker and the mistress such as their name, age, etc. It can be assumed with the further reading of the poem that both of them would be young and having courtly affairs which was quite common during their time. We can see that without providing any kind of logic, in the opening lines of the poem itself, the coyness of the mistress has been portrayed as a criminal act by

the speaker as he says in the second line “*This Coyness Lady, were no crime.*”

In the remaining lines of the stanza, the speaker uses different strategies or ways to prove the assertion that he makes in the opening lines of the poem. This can be thought of as the ways that the speaker attempts to get laid with the mistress or seducing the young lady. We cannot be sure about the honesty of the speaker. Throughout the stanza or even in the whole poem, the lady remains completely silent and does not respond to the speaker which makes it a true dramatic monologue in form. The strategy used by the speaker of the poem can be thought as woo and win the lady. In the following lines, he discussed how he would have possibly chased and courted her if they had enough time and space to do that.

We would sit down and think which way

To walk and pass our long love’s day.

Thou by the Indian Ganges’ side

Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide

Of Humber would complain. I would

Love you ten years before the Flood

And you should, if you please, refuse

Till the conversion of the Jews. 10

In the above stanza, we can see the two significant things. One, the reversal of gender roles and the other, flaunting the knowledge that Marvell has of the colonies ruled by England at that time.

As we have learnt in the last units that the gender roles of men and women were quite fixed and rigid. During the colonial era, only men used to go to the colonies for administrative or business purposes. Women used to remain in England at their home and cry or complain about their waiting for their husbands. Here Marvel with his wit reverses the gender roles as

the speaker asks her mistress that if they both had the time and world enough, how would they have spent their days. He would have sent her to Eastern India near the Ganges river where it had been assumed to have white expensive jewels known as rubies where as a far distant apart on the other bank of Humber in Northern England, he would have been sitting idly and complaining like other lovers longing for their beloveds.

In the next few lines of the same stanza, he says he would have asked for love even for 10 years before the biblical flood of Noah described in the Old Testament and the book of Genesis. It refers to before the omnipotent deity or before dawn of the time. Further the speaker claims that she could deny his love till the conversion of Jews into Christianity which refers to the second coming of Christ. It was believed by the people of England during Marvel's time that the conversion of Jews would be the last event before the end times. This refers to the denial till the time and world ends. Thus, this way, the speaker will chase her to convince her that before the beginning to till the end times.

In the next lines, to create such striking images, the speaker takes the help of many metaphors, symbols and hyperboles to continue his arguments.

*My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart; 18*

As it can be read in the above lines, the speaker uses the metaphor of vegetable love to prove his assertion. His love is as organic as vegetables

quick pace which is contradictory to the endless time he had been imagining in the first place. Also, the chariot that has been used as a metonymy is typically used during the time of war. The chariot (time) moves or passes quickly but it also brings violence and disastrous results. Deserts of the vast eternity can be seen as contradictory with the mortal life that has been discussed in the first stanza. With the further examples, the poet focuses on how things will be over with the time and nothing will be deserving to save for the future.

*Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song: then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:* 30

In the above lines, the poet comes to the central argument of his long assertions, which is to fulfill his desires to sleep with the mistress. He describes that your beauty will no longer remain with the time. Your grave will be still and silent where the speaker's praise of her cannot be heard anymore. This is contradictory or reverse to the previous school of poetry where Shakespeare discussed making his lover immortal through his sonnet Shall I compare thee to Summer's day? One should also notice the tone of the stanza it moves from Conditional tone in the first stanza to the future tone in the second stanza. The speaker further says that the virginity that she worked hard for her honor will be eaten by the worms and with that even his lust to make love with her will turn into ashes. The speaker, in the last two lines of the poem, tries to prove his point that why should they make love right away. He states,

*The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace. 32*

The last couplet of the second stanza establishes the argument to seize the day. It indicates that even after having availability of time, space and privacy, after the death of a person, a dead body cannot embrace or make love.

The third and the final concluding stanza of fourteen lines completes the Carpediem logic of “If..But..Therefore”. The stanza starts with

*Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires, 36*

Finally, to conclude his argument of seizing the day and convincing her to sleep with him, the speaker begins with the comparison of the mistress who is still young enough with morning dew. Like morning dew, she is beautiful and delicate but her youth only lasts for a very short period of time just as morning dew. Transpires of the speaker has to be noticed in the concluding stanza as a contradiction of his argument in the first stanza. He further says,

*Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapt power. 40*

One of the features of Metaphysical poetry is metaphysical conceits that are comparisons from two farfetched domains. This an unconventional conceit or the image of two romantic lovers. Birds of prey have voracious appetite, power and nobility. Even it creates striking imagery due to the harsh sound of words such as devour, power, prey etc. This stanza concludes the argument of the speaker, they should ‘sport’ (make love)

while they have time. Like birds of prey, they should swallow their time whole rather than passing it slowly in parts. He further suggests,

*Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life: 44*

The speaker suggests making a single ball of their strength and sweetness to wrench their pleasure through the iron gates of life. The rolling of sweetness and strength into a single ball can be imagined as a perfect union of two lovers. The iron gates of life refer to barriers of society or life itself. In the last couplet of the poem, the poet says

*Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run. 46*

The above concluding couplet of the poem possibly refers to an allusion to the feat of Joshua who made the sun stand still while he took revenge on Israel's enemy. Marvell might not have the knowledge of Mahabharata in which Krishna did the same. He can not stand the sun still or stop to set but with his Sudarshana Chakra, he masked the sun to create an illusion of sunset.

There can be two major perspectives of the poem. One is the lust of the speaker and his ways or strategies to convince her to sleep with him. The other way to read or interpret the poem is the poet's urge to the mistress to not submit to the social expectations of the society pertaining to gender roles rather to seize the day and fulfill the natural urges of one's own.

Check your progress:

1. Discuss in detail: the use of Metaphysical elements in the poem To His Coy Mistress.

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2. Discuss the theme of Carpe Diem in the poem To His Coy Mistress.

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3. Discuss the autobiographical elements in the poem To His Coy Mistress.

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11.5 THE GARDEN

Now let's discuss the other poem of Marvel entitled Garden. One of the hortus poems by Marvel, The Garden establishes the life of garden superior to the active life of humans. The poem is rich in symbolism and expresses the pleasure of solitary seclusion. There are total 9 stanzas with

each stanza of 8 lines making it total 72 lines long poem. The poem follows the rhyme scheme *aabbccdd*.

The poem starts with a humorous tone. In the first stanza, the poet starts with the question of the ways men run after winning the virtues of life in form of crowns. Man vainly waste his time to win the emblems of particular branches of trees like of Oak, Palm and Bays. The trees are used as symbols for the crowns or emblems given in honors or for achievements in specific fields. The palm here represents military, the oak, political honors, and the bay or laurel represents poetic achievements. These people continually or endlessly make attempts just to win the crowns of these trees. The short and ever-narrowing shades of these trees wisely rebuke such men for their hard labors. At the end of the stanza, the poet says that the garland of flowers and trees are superior for their act of unity. They are the garlands of rest and tranquility.

The poet starts the second stanza with the use of personification. The quietness and innocence are personified as sisters, the poet says that he could find them in among plants in any garden which he mistakenly was trying to find them in the company of men since quite long. He further says that the sacred plants of the fair quiet and innocence can only grow in gardens and not in the busy places of humans. He goes to an extent by saying that solitude of man is much delicious than this rude society. We can see that the exterior conditions of the garden free up space in the speaker's heart and mind for the developing of spiritual principles that society and everyday activities had previously compelled him to overlook.

In the next stanza, the poet praises the green shade of the garden. The poet finds lovely green more appealing than red and white, the colors that the poets generally use to describe the feeling of love in their poems. The poet further mocks on the lovers who carve their mistress' names in the trees. The speaker feels this kind of actions to be worthless because the trees

already contain more beautiful imprints. Here one can also note that the poet considers the green color more beautiful than white and red, the colors used to praise a woman. It indicates that the poet finds the beauty of nature or any tree more beautiful than the beauty of woman.

In the fourth stanza, the speaker shows his metaphysical love for trees and plants above humans. In this stanza, to emphasize this, he uses conceits from Greece mythology. Apollo tried to rape nymph Daphne, river god Penus turns her into Laurel tree. Another example he uses is when Pan tried to pursue nymph Syrinx, she transformed into hollow a reed. By this, the poet tries to establish that sensual appeal of garden is not sexual in nature.

Next stanza discusses the garden as Earthly Paradise and all its innocence. The poet compares the difference between heavenly Paradise and Earthly Paradise. He says that here in garden, a fall is not tragic or of a light consequence. Neither nature nor man is fallen. It is therefore unlike heavenly garden, not a trap for virtue but a paradise of perfect innocence.

The sixth stanza focuses on poet's idea of happiness of the imagination of garden in mind. The stanza basically talks about mind can create worlds, here gardens, which has nothing to do with the physical worlds that already exists. The poet expresses that his mind separates from his body while the body stays on the grass as it is not interested in such inferior pleasures of the fruits. The mind finds the happiness from the resemblance of the mind itself rather than from the exterior world. The poet compares the mind with the ocean. The way each creature living on the earth has its counterpart in ocean, the same is possible in mind where different counterparts of the real worlds is possible to create. The mind annihilates everything and creates positive thoughts in the shades of green tree.

In the seventh stanza, one can notice the influence of English mystic philosophy and Platonism. The poet uses the symbol of fountain here for purity. The bird here symbolizes the emblem of the soul. Here in 'The Garden', close to fountains, where the feet slip on account of the wetness of the ground, or, close to some fruit trees the lower parts of the trunks of which are covered with moss, the Soul discards the outer garment of the body and goes noiselessly into the branches of the trees. There, on the branches, the soul sits like a bird and sings; then the soul preens and combs its bright wings as a bird does; and finally, having prepared itself for a longer flight waves the manifold light in its wings.

The eighth stanza discusses the special solitude which can only exist in the absence of women. The poet compares it with Adam's happiness of solitude when he was alone in the garden of Eden without Eve. He considers this state in the garden as pure and sweet. It refers to an idea of inferior joy that a woman offers in place of the joy of solitude. The absence of Eve(woman) in Eden would have been equivalent to the paradise.

In the last stanza, the poet admires the god as the gardner. He says the time for us and the bees is sweet and rewarding. The poet admires the the gardner to grow the plants and flowers so skillfully. He says the pattern created by this serves as a sun-dial. The poet considers the sun to be milder due to the heat in the garden is substituted by fragrance of the flowers. The rays of the sun passes through the green leaves is compared with the signs of Zodiac. The time is spent in fragrant than in heat. The poet calls the bees industrious may be used for their hard work in the garden and these bees are given the ability to compute the passing time by consulting the sundial.

This sweet and refreshing time could be reconed in the garden except by means of the sun-dial formed by flowers and plants.

Hence, the poem presents various themes on harmony between nature and man through which salvation can be achieved. His thoughts are expressed by metaphors and symbols from the nature itself.

Check your progress:

Discuss The symbols of colors in the poem The Garden.

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2. Do you think that the poem The Garden is misogynist in nature? Justify your answer with relevant references from the poem.

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**3. “How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the Palm, the Oke, Or Bayes” - Critically appreciate the stanza with reference to the poem The Garden by Marvell.**

contradictions, and ambiguities. It also examines life, death, and the universe.

- 2. Dramatic Monologue:** A type of poetry in which a single speaker addresses a silent listener. The observations and comments of the speaker on his/her own story give readers psychological insight into the character.
- 3. Personification:** Attributing human qualities (characteristics, emotions, and behaviors) to nonhuman things.
- 4. Metonym:** The substitution of the name of a thing or concept for something that is closely associated with it.
- 5. Symbolism:** One person/place/thing is a symbol for, or represents, some greater value/idea.
- 6. Metaphor:** The direct comparison of two unlike things not using like/as
- 7. Simile:** The comparison of two unlike things using like/as.

11.8 APPENDIX:

Time line of Andrew Marvell and his works:

Year	Event
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31 March, 1621	Born in Yorkshire
1624	Moved to Hull
1633	Graduated from Trinity college, Cambridge
1659	Selected as M.P. for Hull (- till 1661)
1640	The Long Parliament of imprisoned William Laud
1642	Beginning of Civil War
1645	William Laud was eventually tried and beheaded
30 January, 1649	King Charles - I was beheaded
1650	An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's return from Ireland
1653	New Commonwealth was established of which Cromwell became the Protector
September, 1658	Cromwell died.
May 1660	Charles - II restored the throne

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Origin of the word epic
- 12.3 Epic Setting
- 12.4 Supernatural Elements
- 12.5 Invocation of the Muse
- 12.6 Heroic Protagonist
- 12.7 Epic battles
- 12.8 Quest or Journey
- 12.9 Catharsis
- 12.10 Modern and Contemporary Epics
- 12.11 Famous epics in literature
- 12.12 Let us sum up
- 12.13 Keywords
- 12.14 Check your progress
- 12.15 Suggested reading

12.0 OBJECTIVES:

The current chapter will:

- Provide a clear definition of the epic genre, highlighting its distinctive features and characteristics.
- Explore the origins and characteristics of early epics, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Iliad, and the Odyssey, to understand their historical and cultural significance.

- Investigate the structural elements of epics, including division into books or cantos, the use of elevated language, and the invocation of the Muse.
- Examine the portrayal of heroic figures in epics, identifying common traits and the evolution of the epic hero from ancient to modern times.
- Analyze the recurring motif of the hero's journey in epic narratives, identifying stages and transformations that characters undergo.
- Investigate the evolution of the epic genre in modern and contemporary literature, film, and other art forms, analyzing how themes and storytelling techniques have adapted to reflect contemporary issues.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

A literary form that has been enjoyed for millennia and has crossed cultural boundaries, the epic is a timeless example of humanity's natural tendency to create stories of grandeur and importance. The epic, which is ingrained in human history, is a storehouse of civilizations' collective imagination, embodying their values, convictions, and goals. The epic genre has endured, changed, and grown from the Greeks' old oral traditions to the recorded masterpieces of many nations, leaving a lasting impression on the literary fabric of our common human experience. The epic is fundamentally a type of storytelling that goes beyond the typical bounds of storytelling. It delves into the fantastical, portraying cosmic conflicts, valiant expeditions, and interactions between gods and humans. Epics are frequently written in verse, and their regal, lofty language aims to convey the majesty of the stories they tell. These stories transport readers to worlds where the lines separating the supernatural from the everyday are blurred, thanks to their vast vistas and larger-than-life protagonists.

Epics were originally oral recitations that became written writings as civilizations developed and writing became more widely used. The "Epic of Gilgamesh," which describes the exploits and existential insights of the

Sumerian king Gilgamesh, is one of the first known literary epics and is inscribed on ancient Mesopotamian tablets. Epics were able to transcend both geographical and temporal limits as a result of this transition, which signified a change in the transmission of cultural narratives. Epics moved from oral recitation to written texts as civilizations developed and writing became increasingly common. Recounting the adventures and philosophical contemplations of Gilgamesh, the Sumerian ruler, the "Epic of Gilgamesh," is one of the first known literary epics, having been inscribed on ancient Mesopotamian tablets. This development signaled a change in the way cultural tales were transmitted, enabling epics to cross borders of time and space.

However, epics are not limited to the study of antiquity. Remarkably versatile, the genre has found expression in many different eras and nations. The epic tales of India, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, demonstrate the depth of epic narrative by fusing philosophy, morality, and mythology. In a similar vein, the Norse sagas, including the *Poetic Edda* and the *Prose Edda*, explore the valiant adventures of gods and men within a milieu unique to northern Europe. Chivalric epics such as the Arthurian legends, which tell stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table as embodiments of courage, honour, and courtly love, first appeared during the medieval era. The epic has changed even more in more recent years, giving rise to postcolonial epics like *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and literary epics like *Paradise Lost* by John Milton. The epic's ability to capture timeless human struggles and global themes makes it eternally relevant. Epics serve as a window into the collective mind of humanity, whether they are examining the complexities of fate, the fallout from hubris, or the age-old conflict between good and evil.

We will travel across time and culture as we examine the epic genre, following the development of storytelling from ancient oral traditions to modern literary forms. The ageless concerns that have reverberated across history and transcended cultural divides to shed light on the common human experience are encountered via the prism of epics. We encourage

the reader to travel with us across the vast landscapes of epics, as we take them on a journey into the core of narrative, where the epic genre continues to stand as a timeless tribute to the limitless potential of the human imagination.

The first epic leaves a lasting impression on the literary canon as it rises out of the mists of old storytelling, like to a primal force. Although identifying a single "first epic" is difficult, the oldest epic poems that have been discovered are from ancient societies and serve as the cornerstones of the epic tradition. One of the oldest known texts is the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which was written in ancient Mesopotamia on cuneiform tablets. This Sumerian epic, which dates to approximately 2100 BCE, chronicles the exploits of Gilgamesh, the King of Uruk, as he wrestles with themes of friendship, mortality, and the quest for wisdom. Its conceptual richness and narrative breadth prepared the way for later epic ventures. The "first epic" is a mosaic of cultural contributions that fit into the larger picture of human storytelling within the hazy field of literary origins. The first epic, whether it is written on clay tablets or is read aloud by bards, captures the spirit of human imagination. It is a timeless investigation of the extraordinary found in the ordinary and establishes the foundation for the epic tradition that reverberates throughout literary history.

An other pillar of the epic tradition is represented by Homer's epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. These writings, which are thought to have been written in the eighth century BCE in ancient Greece, describe the heroic deeds of Achilles during the Trojan War and Odysseus's difficult trip home. They also call for divine assistance.

12.2 ORIGIN OF THE WORD EPIC

The word "epic" originates from the Greek word "epos," which means a word, tale, or song. An epic is a lengthy narrative poem that honours bravery and adventure in Greek literature. This genre is best represented by the well-known Homeric masterpieces, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. With time, the term came to refer to any large-scale, heroic, or massive work of art, going beyond poetry to include books, movies, and other

creative endeavours. Currently, the term "epic" is sometimes employed to depict something remarkable, imposing, or grandiose in scope, encapsulating the spirit of its literary and historical roots in a more expansive modern setting.

12.3 EPIC SETTING

The epic setting is a crucial and captivating element in the wide tapestry of literary landscapes, creating a narrative canvas that extends beyond the boundaries of everyday realities. This unique component, which has its roots in the antiquated traditions of epic poetry, has influenced stories of bravery, gods, and fantastical exploits across time and cultural boundaries. The epic setting, which ranges from the towering summits of Mount Olympus to the vast cosmic reaches of Tolkien's Middle-earth, is a place where the unusual happens and leaves a lasting impression on listeners and readers alike.

Every epic begins with a location that is more than just a backdrop; it is a dynamic force that shapes the story as it unfolds. An epic setting's immense scope and diversity are among its most crucial characteristics. Epics go across a variety of locations, from the heavenly homes of gods to the earthly domains of mortals, setting up a multifaceted stage for the epic action. The expansive vistas introduce viewers to other worlds where the exceptional takes center stage and the commonplace vanishes, demonstrating the epic poets' and authors' limitless imagination.

This broad setting technique is best exemplified by the epics of the ancient Greeks, such as Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. The plains of Troy serve as a battlefield during the Trojan War in *The Iliad*, a conflict between heroes and divine intervention in human affairs. Every location, from the halls of Mount Olympus to the devastated fields of battle, adds to the story's grandeur as the backdrop turns into a furnace of tragedy and courage. In *The Odyssey*, on the other hand, the protagonist Odysseus sets out on a voyage across the Mediterranean, coming across legendary creatures and overcoming the difficulties of the sea. The epic is made

more complex by the variety of places, which mirror the size of Odysseus's trip.

Epics have ventured into fanciful worlds that exist only in the mind, beyond the confines of the classical world. The environment takes on a life of its own, influencing the group's fates and establishing the scene for a titanic conflict between good and evil. Epic locations frequently straddle the line between the supernatural and the natural, giving the story an unearthly feel. Ancient epics tell of gods that often come down from heaven to interact with people, affecting events and forming destinies. The scene becomes more intricate due to the divine presence, as the realms of the mortal and immortal merge in a cosmic dance. The epic environment changes and reacts to the story as it is told; it is not just a static backdrop. It turns into a mirror of the struggles, victories, and changes experienced by the hero on his journey. Within the Arthurian legend, Camelot represents an idealized society that rises and falls in proportion to King Arthur and his knights' destiny. The epic backdrop serves as a mirror reflecting the characters' moral and spiritual environment, enhancing the story's thematic relevance. This is how the epic setting is a grand and complex world that lies outside the bounds of traditional narrative. It is a canvas on which the magnificent tapestry of gods, heroes, and fantastical animals is woven.

12.4 SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

The distinction between the normal and supernatural worlds is usually muddled in epics due to the presence of gods, goddesses, and mythological creatures. The supernatural acts as a captivating force in the world of epics, where mortal heroes walk and fates are woven, surpassing the ordinary and adding components to the story that are not found in the natural world. The supernatural woven through epic narratives adds levels of mystery, wonder, and cosmic significance, from the magical realms of mythical animals to the divine interventions of ancient gods.

The existence of gods and goddesses—powerful entities who influence mortal fate—is a common theme in many epic tales. Greek mythology

describes the gods of Mount Olympus as watching over human affairs, deciding who wins battles, sending blessings, and controlling destiny. Divine interventions are prevalent in Homer's *The Iliad*, where gods such as Zeus, Athena, and Apollo actively take part in the Trojan War, affecting the results of battles and the destiny of mortal heroes. In this setting, the supernatural becomes the impetus for the epic's grandeur, propelling the story into cosmic spheres and beyond the everyday. Supernatural entities exist outside of the canon of ancient epics; they might be either benign guides or evil powers. Guided by the spirit of the ancient Roman poet Virgil, the poet travels through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven in Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*, where he meets angels and devils among other celestial creatures. The incorporation of supernatural elements not only illustrates the afterlife but also delves into deeper issues of divine justice, morality, and salvation.

The supernatural usually appears in epics as mystical elements that enthrall the reader with their story. Mythological entities that inhabit the terrain and defy natural laws are another characteristic that sets the supernatural in epics apart. The fearsome guardian of the Cedar Forest, Humbaba, is introduced to Gilgamesh, the hero of ancient Mesopotamian epic poetry. Monsters like the dragon Níðhöggr and the world-serpent Jörmungandr inhabit the world of Asgard in Norse mythology. While traveling, the heroes encounter these legendary monsters' challenges and sense of unpredictability.

In epics, the supernatural frequently reaches within characters' psyches and transcends outside powers. Heroes are given a glimpse into the cosmic fabric of fate through prophetic visions and superhuman knowledge. The witches' predictions send the title character of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into a tragic downward spiral of hopelessness and ambition. Here, the supernatural blurs the distinctions between fate and free will and acts as a catalyst for moral and personal change. Moreover, morality, cosmic order, and the conflict between good and evil are commonly entwined with supernatural concepts. John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* delves into

theological issues of sin, redemption, and divine justice as it chronicles the fall of Satan and the rebellion of angels. The supernatural aspects provide a background for thoughtful moral and philosophical reflection.

In epic tales, the supernatural acts as a doorway to other worlds, giving the narrative a sense of cosmic significance, wonder, and amazement. The supernatural components in epics propel the stories into a world where the limits of reality are pushed and the imagination soars, whether via the interventions of gods, the wizards' wizardry, or meetings with legendary creatures. The supernatural in this ethereal tapestry not only impacts the external struggles that heroes face, but it also explores the inner recesses of their souls, revealing the deepest secrets of existence.

12.5 INVOCATION OF THE MUSE

Epics typically start with an invocation or supplication asking a muse or divinity for wisdom and direction. The calling forth of the Muse becomes a holy rite and a literary gesture that goes beyond simple narrative at the border of epic poetry, when stories of grandeur and valor are told. This ancient custom, which has its origins in Greek epic poetry, is a moving preamble and a modest request to the celestial muses for inspiration, direction, and the gift of eloquence. The very heart of the invocation is its recognition of the poet's limited mortal abilities in attempting to convey the grandeur and scope of the epic story. The poet respectfully acknowledges the need for heavenly assistance in navigating the maze of words and emotions that makes up the epic voyage by calling to the Muse. This rite is embodied in the first lines of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, where the poet begs the Muse to sing through him, giving him the power to weave a tapestry of words appropriate for the heroic tales that are about to unfold.

In Greek mythology, the Muse, who resides on Mount Helicon or Mount Parnassus, is more than just a symbol; she is a wellspring of inspiration. The poet creates a holy link with the divine source by calling upon the Muse, who serves as a conduit for the stories of both gods and mortals. The action is a symbolic gesture that harmonizes the poet's creative work

with the cosmic forces directing the plot's development, as well as a pragmatic admission of artistic limitations. The Muse's invocation takes the epic beyond its usefulness and makes it more than just a work of fiction. It emphasizes the stories' cultural and spiritual value and gives the story a sense of weight. The poet takes on the role of a conduit, a vessel through which the mythology, ethos, and collective wisdom of a society are passed down to succeeding generations.

The Muse's invocation can be heard in later literary traditions in the poetry of writers like Virgil in *The Aeneid* and John Milton in *Paradise Lost*. The idea of evoking inspiration is still present in modern literature, however frequently altered or reinterpreted. The act is a timeless rite that emphasizes the eternal power of storytelling and the pursuit of artistic quality. It acts as a bridge between the divine and the mortal. Therefore, calling upon the Muse in epic poetry is a long-standing custom that cuts over both cultural and temporal barriers. It is a ceremony that not only asks God to guide the poet but also raises the epic story to a level where the divine touches the commonplace and the ordinary becomes spectacular. Epic poetry finds its voice in this sacred dance between the poet and the Muse, echoing through the years as a timeless monument to the power of narrative.

12.6 HEROIC PROTAGONIST

Epics usually have a heroic main character who possesses extraordinary abilities, traits, or virtues. Every epic story revolves around a heroic protagonist—a person of remarkable stature whose actions and moral qualities transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. The heroic protagonist, steeped in the rich traditions of old storytelling, represents the principles and values of a society and serves as the epic's central theme and source of inspiration. A distinguishing feature of the heroic protagonist is their extraordinary abilities, be it in strength, intelligence, bravery, or a blend of these traits. Greek epics like Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* feature heroes like Achilles and Odysseus who are not only physically strong but also possess clever intellect and unyielding will,

making them ideals of virtue. These heroes turn into archetypes, standing in for the goals and values of their respective communities. The quest or series of challenges that characterize the heroic protagonist's journey serve as a narrative device that advances the epic and gives the hero a chance to prove their mettle.

But the heroic hero is more than just a one-dimensional ideal. They frequently struggle with internal issues, defects, or vulnerabilities that give their characters more nuance. For example, Achilles is a powerful warrior, yet his tragic weakness is his hubris. Because of these inner conflicts, the hero becomes more approachable and the viewer can relate to their journey. Moreover, the heroic figure is not just an individual; rather, they embody a broader cultural or ethical framework. They engage with gods, goddesses, or other supernatural entities in numerous epics, taking their journey to a cosmic level. These exchanges highlight the hero's importance in the universe's larger scheme, as their deeds have an impact on both the mortal and immortal domains. Therefore, the heroic protagonist—a character whose qualities, struggles, and fate reflect the essence of the epic tradition—is the beating heart of epic storytelling. The hero's journey is universal, regardless of the setting—be it wearing Greek armor, a sword in medieval Camelot, or the weight of a magical ring in a far-off fantasy land. The epic narrative's enduring appeal is reinforced by the heroic protagonist, who is a living example of virtue and a timeless archetype whose stories enthrall and inspire listeners.

12.7 EPIC BATTLES

Large-scale, fierce fights or conflicts are essential for displaying the hero's bravery and strength. The resounding clash of epic battles is the pinnacle of epic narratives, with their vast vistas and valiant heroes. These epic battles are not just skirmishes but rather vast spectacles that embody the spirit of the genre, acting as furnaces where destiny is shaped, heroes are put to the test, and worlds' very fates are at stake. Epic battles are remembered as crucial times in history, when the clash of swords, the howl of monsters, and the screams of fighters combine to produce a war

symphony that reverberates through the annals of literature. The conflict between enormous forces, whether they be armies, legendary animals, or cosmic phenomena, lies at the heart of epic battles. When the Trojan War breaks out on Troy's plains in Homer's *The Iliad*, the clashing of bronze weapons creates a symphony that echoes throughout the poem. In the middle of this epic battle, where the results of individual fights and group combat determine a nation's fate, the valor of Achilles and Hector is on display.

These conflicts represent larger cosmic struggles in addition to being physical fights. The cosmic scale of the heavenly conflict between the forces of Heaven and Hell in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is reminiscent of the titanic struggles of earlier myths. The fights become symbolic depictions of the never-ending conflict between good and evil since the stakes are nothing less than the fate of the entire universe. Epic wars involve heroes who are engaged in both internal and external strife. Often, the hero's journey entails facing one's own limitations, moral quandaries, or personal demons. Furthermore, the scope of these battles transcends the material world and touches on the paranormal. Epic fights sometimes feature gods and other mythical creatures, which increases the story's cosmic significance. The great Kurukshetra War is not just a mortal struggle but also a stage where gods and celestial forces participate in the drama that is being played out in Hindu epics such as the *Mahabharata*.

In this sense, epic battles constitute the core of the epic tradition, serving as the point at which the story achieves its climax and becomes intertwined with themes of fate, bravery, and struggle. These fights capture the majesty and intensity that characterize the enduring appeal of epics, whether they are fought on the plains of ancient Troy, the fields of Middle-earth, or the celestial realms of mythology. These conflicts' clashing swords, thundering hooves, and cosmic reverberations reverberate as enduring echoes that transcend literary pages and leave an enduring impression on societies' collective imaginations throughout time.

12.8 QUEST OR JOURNEY

The hero sets off on a noteworthy mission or adventure, overcoming difficulties along the way to accomplish a noble goal. Every epic begins with a transforming odyssey, a journey that takes heroes far beyond the familiar and into dangerous and mysterious places. A key element of the epic tradition is the topic of the trip, which embodies the essence of exploration, development, and destiny, whether it takes place in far-off places, mythological realms, or the innermost recesses of the soul. In epics, the quest or voyage acts as a structural support for the story, giving the hero's odyssey direction and purpose. The titular journey of Odysseus in Homer's *The Odyssey* is a complex adventure through the landscapes of morality, temptation, and self-discovery rather than just a physical travel across the seas. An metaphorical map of the hero's internal and exterior exploration is created by the hero's meetings with gods, cyclopes, and sirens, which reflect the difficulties of the human predicament.

The epic voyage frequently ventures outside of the material world and into the mystical and spiritual spheres. In the age-old Indian epic, the *Ramayana*, Prince Rama sets out on a mission to save his wife Sita who has been abducted. His voyage takes on the qualities of a pilgrimage driven by duty, dharma, and devotion, weaving cosmic importance into mortal challenges. The adventure turns into a holy odyssey when the hero's route coincides with a greater cosmic order. The epic voyage also has a lot of symbolism, which reflects moral, spiritual, and cultural aspects. Similar to the search for the Holy Grail, hero's journey narratives in Arthurian legends combine themes of honor, virtue, and the pursuit of an impossibly lofty ideal. The epic voyage turns into a rite of passage, a life-changing event that goes beyond the individual objectives of the hero and speaks to the aspirations of the community as a whole.

12.9 CATHARSIS

Epics frequently arouse powerful emotions in the audience and offer a cathartic experience, arousing sentiments of fear, pity, and amazement. Catharsis is a transformational and purifying flame that appears in the

broad fabric of epic storytelling, evoking strong emotional reactions in viewers. This idea, first introduced by Aristotle and derived from ancient Greek tragedy, has been ingrained in the epic tradition and offers a visceral and profound experience that cuts over time and cultural barriers. In the framework of epics, catharsis acts as a purging agent for the audience's feelings, enabling sympathy and terror. The difficulties that heroic characters encounter arouse empathy, a source of sympathy for their plight and a terrified expectation of their outcomes. The terrible death of Hector at the hands of Achilles in Homer's *The Iliad* causes spectators to experience a moving catharsis as they consider the intricacies of honor, mortality, and the unstoppable march of fate. In epics, catharsis encompasses not only the experiences of the individual hero but also the communal experiences of societies and cultures. Similar to the development and fall of civilizations, the fall of Troy in *The Iliad* and the catastrophic dissolution of Arthur's kingdom in Arthurian legends serve as a collective catharsis. In this way, the epic transforms into a contemplative basin that lets viewers face the unavoidable cycles of life, death, and rebirth.

In addition, catharsis functions as a transforming force, imparting a deep sense of emotional closure and enlightenment to viewers. The victories and setbacks of the hero serve as a reflection of the human condition, providing comfort, understanding, and a fresh outlook on life's intricacies. The trip through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven in Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy* concludes in a cathartic vision of divine justice, salvation, and the majestic beauty of the cosmos. In epic stories, catharsis goes beyond mere amusement and turns into a testing ground for the human condition. The written word is transformed into a visceral and evocative journey by the emotional alchemy, which enables audiences to confront, purify, and finally transcend the range of human emotions.

12.10 MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY EPICS

The genre of epics has evolved dynamically over time, with modern and contemporary works adjusting to the subtleties and complexity of the

contemporary world. Modern and contemporary epics explore the intricacies of the human experience, societal shifts, and global challenges, whereas the classical epics of antiquity frequently concentrated on mythological heroes and heavenly interventions. The strands of modern and contemporary epics construct a story that mirrors the complex patterns of our quickly changing reality within the literary expression fabric. These epics explore the triumphs and sufferings of individuals against the backdrop of the contemporary world, delving into the human condition and departing from the ancient narratives of gods and heroes.

Modern epics are no longer limited to the lyrical cadence of antiquated oral traditions; they can be found in a variety of literary mediums, such as expansive novels and visually stunning films. Modern epics frequently feature technology as a major theme, illustrating the influence of the digital age on our daily lives. *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson is a cyberpunk epic that delves into a dismal future in which virtual and physical realities converge. Stephenson skillfully crafts a story that tackles the fallout from unbridled corporate power and the fuzziness of the lines separating the real and virtual worlds. throughout addition, the idea of the epic hero changes throughout modern and contemporary epic literature. These heroes are common people dealing with exceptional situations, not merely gods. *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy is a family epic that follows the lives of twins in post-colonial India. Roy creates a striking portrait of the intricacies of society and the human consequences of rebellion via their fights against family expectations and societal conventions.

Modern epics address global concerns as well, giving readers a perspective through which to consider the intricacies of our interconnected world. Epics like Peter Jackson's cinematic version of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* demonstrate how the epic tradition transcends the written word. Jackson captivates audiences all over the world with his

cinematic storytelling, bringing to life a world of legendary races, titanic wars, and moral quandaries. Epics of the modern and contemporary era so transcend the limits of tradition and time. They act as windows into our shared consciousness, capturing the complexity of our life, our search for purpose, and our identity in a world that is constantly changing.

12.11 FAMOUS EPICS IN LITERATURE

Beowulf (Anonymous), an Old English epic poem, dating back to the early medieval period, telling the heroic tale of the warrior Beowulf and his battles against monsters.

The Faerie Queene by Edmund Spenser, a lengthy allegorical poem written in the late 16th century, celebrating virtues and exploring themes of chivalry, morality, and politics.

Paradise Lost by John Milton, a 17th-century epic poem that retells the biblical story of the Fall of Man, exploring themes of free will, temptation, and redemption.

The Prelude by William Wordsworth, though not a traditional epic, this autobiographical poem is considered an epic of the growth of a poet's mind, exploring the development of Wordsworth's poetic sensibility.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage by Lord Byron, an epic narrative poem written in the early 19th century, reflecting the travels and reflections of the Byronic hero, Childe Harold.

The Faust by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (translated into English), while originally in German, various English translations exist for this two-part play, exploring the tragic tale of Faust's pact with the devil.

Omeros by Derek Walcott, a Caribbean epic that draws inspiration from Homer's works, exploring themes of identity, history, and post-colonialism.

The Waste Land by T.S. Eliot, Often considered a modernist epic, this poem written in the early 20th century is a complex and fragmented exploration of contemporary culture.

The Cantos by Ezra Pound, a long, unfinished poem written in the 20th century, incorporating historical and cultural references, modernist experimentation, and diverse literary allusions.

The Aeneid by Virgil (translated into English), Originally in Latin, various English translations exist for this ancient Roman epic that narrates the legendary journey of Aeneas.

The Ramayana is an ancient Indian epic that narrates the divine prince Rama's quest to rescue his wife Sita from the demon king Ravana, embodying ideals of dharma, righteousness, and devotion. It is attributed to the sage Valmiki and holds a significant place in Hindu literature and culture.

The Mahabharata is a monumental Indian epic that unfolds the Kurukshetra War between the Pandavas and Kauravas, exploring complex themes of duty, righteousness, and the cosmic order, while incorporating the Bhagavad Gita, a philosophical discourse delivered by Lord Krishna. Attributed to the sage Vyasa, it stands as one of the longest and most revered epics in the world.

12.12 LET US SUM UP An extensive tapestry of stories that cut across time and cultural boundaries has been uncovered by studying the epic genre. The epic genre continues to be a vibrant and timeless style of storytelling, from the old epics of Gilgamesh and Homer to the modern and contemporary manifestations in literature, film, and other media. There is no denying its impact on cultural identity, societal values, and the human experience. We see heroes grow and adapt to new environments as we travel across the varied landscapes of epic stories and engage in a constant conversation with universal ideas. The epic genre is proof of the enduring power of storytelling throughout generations, as it can both reflect and shape cultural standards."

12.13 KEY WORDS

- Epic Genre: The overarching term defining the literary form characterized by long, narrative poems centered around heroic figures and grand themes.

- **Heroic Figures:** Characters who embody the virtues and ideals of their culture, often undertaking monumental journeys or quests.
- **Oral Tradition:** The historical practice of passing down epic narratives through spoken word before they were transcribed into written form.
- **Cultural Significance:** The impact of epics on shaping and reflecting cultural values, beliefs, and identity.
- **Historical Development:** The evolution of the epic genre over time, from ancient epics like the Iliad to modern and contemporary expressions.
- **Structural Elements:** The formal characteristics that define epics, such as division into books or cantos, the use of elevated language, and the invocation of the Muse.
- **Elevated Language:** The distinctive style and use of poetic language associated with epic poetry.
- **Mythology and Religion:** The incorporation of divine beings, myths, and religious themes within epic narratives.
- **Hero's Journey:** The recurring pattern of a hero's quest, challenges, and growth throughout the narrative.
- **Cultural Heroes:** Figures who represent the ideals and aspirations of a particular culture or society.
- **Global Perspectives:** The examination of epics from different cultures and their unique contributions to the genre.

- **Adaptation and Transformation:** How the epic genre has adapted to changing cultural, technological, and literary contexts.
- **Social Commentary:** The use of epics to comment on societal issues and norms.
- **Literary Legacy:** The lasting impact of epic literature on subsequent generations of writers and artists.
- **Comparative Analysis:** The examination of similarities and differences between epics from different cultures and historical periods.

12.14 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct option:

1. What is the primary characteristic of the epic genre?

- A. Short length
- B. Prose style
- C. Narrative poetry
- D. Dramatic dialogue

Ans.: C. Narrative poetry

2. Who is the credited author of the ancient Indian epic *Ramayana*?

- A. Vyasa
- B. Valmiki
- C. Homer
- D. Ovid

Ans.: B. Valmiki

3. Which ancient Mesopotamian epic is considered one of the earliest known works of literature?

- A. The Iliad
- B. The Odyssey
- C. The Epic of Gilgamesh

D. The Aeneid

Ans.: C. The Epic of Gilgamesh

4. What is the purpose of the invocation of the Muse in many classical epics?

A. To provide background information

B. To seek inspiration and guidance

C. To introduce the main characters

D. To establish the setting

Ans.: B. To seek inspiration and guidance

5. In the context of the epic, what is an epithet?

A. A poetic form

B. A descriptive phrase used to characterize a person or thing

C. A moral lesson

D. A type of epic hero

Ans.: B. A descriptive phrase used to characterize a person or thing

6. Which of the following is a key characteristic of the hero's journey in epics?

A. Static character development

B. Linear and straightforward plot

C. A quest or journey with challenges

D. Absence of supernatural elements

Ans.: C. A quest or journey with challenges

7. Which epic features the hero Aeneas and is considered a foundational work of Roman literature?

A. The Iliad

B. The Odyssey

C. The Epic of Gilgamesh

D. The Aeneid

Ans.: D. The Aeneid

8. In the Mahabharata, what significant discourse is presented by Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield?

- A. The Bhagavad Gita
- B. The Upanishads
- C. The Vedas
- D. The Ramayana

Ans.: A. The Bhagavad Gita

9. What term refers to the use of formulaic expressions and repeated phrases in epic poetry?

- A. Simile
- B. Metaphor
- C. Epithet
- D. Allegory

Ans.: C. Epithet

10. Which of the following is a common theme explored in epics?

- A. Romantic comedy
- B. Exploration of the ordinary
- C. Moral and ethical dilemmas
- D. Realism

Ans.: C. Moral and ethical dilemmas

11. What is the purpose of the division into books or cantos in many epic poems?

- A. To confuse the reader
- B. To provide a chronological timeline
- C. To create suspense
- D. To organize and structure the narrative

Ans.: D. To organize and structure the narrative

12. Which of the following works is considered a modern epic exploring post-colonial India?

- A. The Epic of Gilgamesh
- B. The God of Small Things
- C. Snow Crash
- D. Cloud Atlas

Ans.: B. The God of Small Things

13. In what literary form did ancient epics like the Iliad and the Odyssey originate?

- A. Novel
- B. Drama
- C. Poetry
- D. Short story

Ans.: C. Poetry

14. What term describes the blurred boundaries between the digital and tangible worlds in modern epics?

- A. Magical realism
- B. Cyberpunk
- C. Gothic
- D. Realism

Ans.: B. Cyberpunk

Write a detailed answer to the following questions:

1. Explore the evolution of the epic genre over time, highlighting key characteristics that have remained consistent and those that have evolved.
2. Analyze the cultural significance of epics in shaping and reflecting the values of societies. Provide specific examples from classical and modern epics to illustrate their impact on cultural identity and societal norms.

3. Examine the role of supernatural elements and divine intervention in epic narratives. How do these elements contribute to the grand themes and moral lessons conveyed in epics, and what significance do they hold in the overall structure of the genre?
4. How has the definition of heroism within epics changed from ancient times to the modern era?

Write a short notes on following topics:

1. Evolution of the Epic Genre
2. Structural Elements and Style in Epic

12.15 SUGGESTED READING

Guerber, H. A. *The Book of the Epic: The World's Great Epics Told in Story*. Project Gutenberg.

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Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Brief information about John Milton
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- 13.3 Plot summaries from Book 1 to Book 12
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13.0 OBJECTIVES

- In this unit, students will get an overview of Milton as a writer.
- The students will also understand the context of *Paradise Lost*.
- Additionally, the unit will summarize all books of *Paradise Lost*.
- The unit will examine the significant themes of *Paradise Lost*.
- The unit will also analyse major characters of *Paradise Lost*.

13.1 BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT JOHN MILTON

John Milton (1608–1674) was an English poet, prose writer, and polemicist who had a significant impact on 17th-century English politics and literature. On December 9, 1608, John Milton was born in London, England, into a well-to-do middle-class family. After receiving his

education at St. Paul's School, he continued his studies at Cambridge's Christ's College. In his early schooling, Milton shown a great talent for languages and literature. He spoke Hebrew, Italian, Greek, Latin, and other languages fluently. The pastoral elegy "Lycidas," his first significant composition, was composed in 1637 as a memorial to a friend who had drowned. Milton lived amid a time of political unrest in England and grew more and more involved in religious and political issues.

He authored a number of pamphlets endorsing the Commonwealth's tenets and advocating for King Charles I's death. Milton's "Areopagitica," a fervent defense of press and speech freedom, was published in 1644. It is still regarded as one of the most important pamphlets on the topic. Milton was blinded by the early 1650s, most likely from glaucoma. With the assistance of an amanuensis, he continued to write while being blind. Among his most important compositions at this time are the epic poems "Samson Agonistes," "Paradise Regained," and *Paradise Lost*. Milton's masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*, was first published in 1667. It is an epic poem that explores themes of free will, temptation, and salvation while recounting the biblical account of the Fall of Man.

Milton encountered political difficulties once the monarchy was reinstated in 1660 as a result of his Commonwealth support. Nevertheless, he was later granted a pardon and led a very quiet life in his final years. The writings of John Milton, especially *Paradise Lost*, have had a significant and enduring influence on English literature. Readers and academics are still drawn to his examination of difficult theological and philosophical issues as well as his support of individual liberty. John Milton was one of the greatest poets and thinkers in the history of the English language. He went suddenly on November 8, 1674, but his literary impact lives on.

13.2 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF *PARADISE LOST*

John Milton wrote the epic poem *Paradise Lost*, which was initially published in 1667. It is regarded as one of the best pieces of English

literature ever written and a mainstay of Western literature. The poem uses a big, majestic style typical of epic poetry, spanning twelve books and approximately 11,000 lines of verse. After revolting against God, Satan and the other fallen angels are sent to Hell at the beginning of the poem. Undeterred by his setback, Satan suggests tainting God's most recent creation, Man. To determine their next move, the fallen angels convene in council. God's Knowledge and Satan's Arrival in Eden: God knows the future Fall of Man and the plans of Satan from his throne in heaven.

In the meantime, Satan disguises himself as a serpent and enters Eden. He marvels at Adam and Eve's innocence as he watches them and decides to take advantage of their weakness. Raphael, a celestial messenger, tells Adam of the revolt in Heaven and cautions him of Satan's plans. Satan, meantime, manages to get inside Eden and seduces Eve when she is by herself. Adam and Eve converse with Raphael over the universe's creation. After returning to Hell, where his servants are changed into serpents, Satan finds it unable to endure the purity of Eden. The crucial moment comes when Eve is seduced by Satan, who is posing as a serpent. She gives in to the urge and consumes the forbidden fruit. When Adam and Eve realize, they are naked and guilty, they feel ashamed. Adam and Eve are judged by God for their transgression. The Son gives himself as a ransom for the sins of humanity. Adam and Eve apologize and ask for pardon. Adam is shown glimpses of the future by Michael, the archangel, which include the lives of his offspring and the arrival of the Messiah. After being driven from Eden, Adam and Eve are given hope by the Messiah's promise of restoration.

13.3 PLOT SUMMARIES FROM BOOK 1 TO BOOK 12

BOOK 1

In order to find inspiration to tell the tale of Man's first transgression and the "fruitful" repercussions that followed, the poem opens with an

invocation to the Muse. The poet states that he intends to investigate the Fall narrative and defend God's actions to people. After their disobedience against God, Satan and the other fallen angels are now in the scene; they have been sent to Hell. It is said that the fallen angels are bound and laying on a lake of fire in a gloomy location. Their leader, Satan, emerges from the flaming lake, exhibiting mental and physical fortitude in spite of his terrible situation.

Another fallen angel, Beelzebub, is addressed by Satan, and they talk about their predicament. Satan declares his intention to fight God and recover their lost glory. They make the decision to get even by corrupting Man, God's latest creation, who lives in Eden. Satan offers to carry out this dangerous task. It becomes clear that Satan is a charismatic, arrogant, and pompous man. He says that it is preferable to rule in Hell than to serve in Heaven, demonstrating his readiness to suffer. The book closes with Satan and his adherents getting ready to travel to Earth and Eden, establishing the scene for the drama that will eventually play out including temptation, disobedience, and the Fall of Man.

In Book 1, the main conflict of the poem is established, Satan is introduced, and the framework for exploring issues like free will, rebellion, and the fallout from disobedience is established. The majesty of Milton's vision is reflected in the language's magnificent and epic tones.

BOOK 2

After being banished from Heaven, the fallen angels convene in council to discuss their predicament and decide how to respond to being sent to Hell. Moloch advises going to fight openly with God, saying that it is preferable to suffer certain annihilation than to take no action. He is a champion of defiance and retaliation. More moderate opinions are expressed by Belial and Mammon, two more fallen angels. Belial emphasizes the pointlessness of opposing God's power in his argument against open warfare. Mammon takes a more dejected stance, speculating that they might establish their own empire in Hell that is unaffected by God.

As the discussion progresses, Satan makes his appearance after travelling through Chaos and Night. Speaking to the group, he admits the challenges they confront but declares his intention to disobey God and exact retribution. He suggests a more covert strategy: corrupting Man, God's new creation, in Eden. Motivated by their own hopelessness and impressed by Satan's oratory, the fallen angels unite in support of his scheme. The council decides to accompany Satan on his journey to Eden and Earth. After making this choice, Satan, who is now more determined than ever, sets out to lead the fallen angels to the next battlefield where they will face God's most recent creation.

The character of Satan is extensively developed in Book 2, with a focus on his persuasiveness and charisma. The discussion among the fallen angels lays out the details of their predicament and prepares the audience for what is about to happen on Earth. The book looks at topics of disobedience, rebellion, and the fallout from questioning supernatural authority.

BOOK 3

With angels encircling him, God sits atop his celestial throne at the start of Book 3. God tells the angels that he predicted the Fall and its effects since he is aware of Satan's plans to ruin Man. One of the divine persons in the Holy Trinity, the Son, comes forward to save humanity by giving himself as a sacrifice. God accepts the Son's willingness to take in human form and endure suffering in order to save humanity. The Son's sacrifice is profound, and the angels show their love and admiration for him.

Satan, meantime, arrives at the gate of heaven and mulls over his next course of action. At the gate, Satan runs into the guardian angels, but is nonetheless permitted to pass through since God has given him some latitude in carrying out his evil schemes. Satan assumes a false look in order to deceive Uriel, one of the angels, utilizing his persuasive abilities. Satan is unintentionally led to Earth and Eden by Uriel. When the angels return to Heaven, God tells them that although Man will fall, redemption

is still possible because of the sacrifice made by the Son. The poem focuses on the revelation of divine providence and the omniscience of God.

In Book 3, the story moves from the Hellish realm to the Heavenly realm, revealing God's redemptive plan and laying the groundwork for the events leading up to Man's fall. The Son's persona becomes evident as a key component of God's plan for saving humanity. This book's main topics are the difference between Heaven and Hell, as well as divine foresight and atonement.

BOOK 4

In the book's opening scene, Satan appears as a serpent and enters Eden. He looks at Adam and Eve, the first people, and is struck by how beautiful the garden is. Their happiness and innocence strike Satan. The angels in heaven are aware of Satan's plans in the interim. The Sun's angel Uriel talks of an amazing and strange guest he's seen cruising the celestial realms. But the other angels don't know the real identity of Satan.

When Satan returns to Eden, he approaches the Tree of Life and sees Adam and Eve contentedly standing there. In addition to being jealous of their joy, he is in awe of their beauty. Satan listens in on Adam and Eve's discussion about the forbidden fruit and their resolve to follow God's instructions. Satan is more motivated than ever to fulfil his goal of seducing and corrupting humanity as he keeps watching. The portrayal of Satan's innermost thoughts and sentiments sheds light on his complicated personality as he struggles with opposing emotions including adoration, jealousy, and resolve.

The dramatic tension builds in Book 4 as Satan infiltrates Eden's lovely setting. It also draws attention to the contrast between the evil plans of Satan's disguise and the innocence of Adam and Eve. Now, the scene is prepared for the temptation to materialize and the ultimate fall of man, which will be covered in the next few volumes of *Paradise Lost*.

BOOK 5

As Raphael finishes his account of the world's creation, the book opens with Adam and Eve getting ready for dinner in Eden. The angels in Heaven, meantime, are still lamenting the effects of the approaching Fall. The celestial council is where the angels are convened in heaven. God sent the archangel Raphael to warn Adam of Satan's plans, and he tells Adam the story of Satan's uprising and the battle in Heaven. He talks about how the uprising resulted in Satan and his minions being driven out. Raphael recalls the Son's selfless offer to save humanity and emphasizes the significance of doing what God commands.

He exhorts the angels to consider the repercussions of their deeds and highlights the possibility of free will and reasoned decision-making. The debates about the heavens go on as Raphael shares his understanding of the divine design, focusing on the ideas of justice, mercy, and redemption. It is encouraged for the angels to hold firm to their commitment to God. Back in Eden, Adam and Eve savour their evening meal and converse with Raphael, who responds to their inquiries and shares knowledge regarding the universe's nature, the angelic hierarchy, and the cosmos.

By providing insights into the divine design and the effects of the heavenly revolt, Book 5 acts as a link between the narrative focus on Satan's actions in Eden and the larger cosmic viewpoint. The cosmic conflict between good and evil, obedience and free will are all emphasized throughout the book.

BOOK 6

Raphael describes the aftermath of the war in Heaven at the beginning of the book. The obedient angels under the leadership of the archangel Michael vanquished the fallen angels for their rebellion against God. The disobedient angels were transferred from Heaven to Hell. Then Raphael describes how Satan showed tenacity and resolve in spite of his loss. After changing into serpents, Satan and his adherents took refuge in the bottom

of Hell's flaming lake. Raphael highlights how crafty Satan is and how he can take advantage of any circumstance.

Adam shows interest in the stars, the formation of the earth, and other celestial bodies as Raphael tells the story. With an emphasis on the formation of the celestial bodies and the universe's order, Raphael discusses the cosmology of the cosmos. He talks about the hierarchical structure known as the Great Chain of Being, which symbolizes the universe's divine order. Raphael cautions Adam and Eve against having an insatiable curiosity and wanting to snoop around in areas they don't fully grasp. He tells them not to seek knowledge of the huge cosmos, but to concentrate on their own lives and the paradise they live in.

Adam and Eve are getting ready for the evening feast as the book comes to a close. Following Raphael's departure, the action returns to Heaven, where angels are praising God with hymns. In addition to giving Adam heavenly wisdom—particularly regarding the universe's creation—Book 6 also warns against having an excessive thirst for knowledge. The cosmological justifications broaden the epic's focus by highlighting the size and complexity of God's creation. Furthermore, the guidance that Raphael gives Adam and Eve lays the foundation for what happens later in Eden.

BOOK 7

With Raphael continuing his story to Adam, the book begins. He explains how God created the world in six days, highlighting the diversity, order, and beauty of the natural elements. Raphael depicts the genesis of the Earth in vibrant and realistic detail, including the division of light and dark and the formation of the land, sea, and sky. Raphael explains the role of the sun, stars, and other celestial bodies in indicating the passage of time and the seasons. He emphasizes God's wisdom and strength in creating the celestial realm as he also discusses the hierarchy in Heaven and the creation of angels.

The archangel warns against arrogance and disobedience, emphasizing the value of humility and obedience among the angels. Raphael tells the tale of how Satan's ambition and envy culminated in his last revolt against God and banishment from Heaven. Next, Raphael tells the story of Adam and Eve's creation, highlighting their special place in the universe. He describes the splendour of Eden; it's plenty of resources, and the divine purpose behind Adam and Eve's placement in this paradisiacal environment.

Adam pays close attention as Raphael tells the story, and he is overcome with awe and thankfulness for God's kindness. As he draws to a close, Raphael exhorts Adam to remember the lessons of gratitude, humility, and submission to God. As a didactic digression, Book 7 gives Adam the background information he needs to understand the universe, the angelic hierarchy, and the occasions leading up to Satan's fall. Setting the scene for the events that would transpire in Eden later on, the story emphasizes the concepts of obedience, humility, and the repercussions of rebellion.

BOOK 8

The morning following Adam and Eve's first night together opens Book 8. When the pair awakens in the Garden of Eden, their love is said to be harmonious and pure. The joy and purity of their connection are emphasized throughout the book. The angelic messenger Raphael joins Adam and Eve as they get ready for the day. God has sent Raphael to advise Adam and Eve and to respond to any queries they may have. When the topic of the universe's creation comes up, Raphael tells the story of what happened before Earth was created.

Raphael tells the story of the conflict in Heaven, Satan's uprising, and the expulsion of the disobedient angels into Hell. In his explanation of how the Earth was made, he highlights the might and intelligence of God. Through Raphael's story, Adam and Eve are made aware of the larger cosmic background of their life. As the day goes on, Raphael and Adam talk about a variety of subjects, such as the hierarchy of heavenly beings,

the makeup of the cosmos, and the characteristics of angels. Additionally, Raphael cautions Adam against becoming overly curious and tells him not to pursue knowledge that goes beyond what God has revealed.

As Raphael ascends back to Heaven at the end of the book, Adam and Eve are left to consider the knowledge they have gained. There is peace and satisfaction in the air in Eden. As an interlude, Book 8 offers crucial background knowledge regarding the cosmic occurrences that preceded the creation of Earth. It provides a brief break in the story while supporting the poem's overarching theological and philosophical ideas. Milton's ability to blend theological discourse with epic storytelling is on full display in this book.

BOOK 9

After successfully entering Eden, Satan is at the start of the book, waiting for the right opportunity to carry out his scheme to corrupt Adam and Eve. As he observes them labouring in the garden, he is struck by how lovely and innocent they are. Eve is separated from Adam when Satan appears to her as a serpent. Eve is questioned by Satan, who is posing as a serpent, regarding the ban on eating from the Tree of Knowledge. He hints gently that they would become truly free if they ate the forbidden fruit, elevating them to the level of gods and rendering God's prohibition unfair. Eve is initially apprehensive, but Satan deftly seduces her and gets her to consume the fruit.

Eve gives in to temptation and eats the forbidden fruit because she yearns to be wise and independent. She notices a significant difference as soon as she eats. She learns about good and evil, and her view of the world is changed. When Eve realizes how her actions have affected others, she feels guilty and ashamed. Unaware of Eve's wrongdoing, Adam returns to discover her transformed in the interim. When he sees that Eve has changed and understands that she has defied God's will, he is horrified and disturbed. Adam chooses to share in Eve's fate and eats the forbidden fruit because he is divided between his love for her and his devotion to God.

In the book's denouement, Adam and Eve briefly experience a state of ecstasy before realizing their shame and the repercussions of their disobedience. The poem prepares the reader for the heavenly judgment and Adam and Eve's subsequent departure from the Garden of Eden in the books that follow. Themes of temptation, free will, and the results of disobedience are examined in Book 9. The story takes a significant shift at this time when the Fall of Man is acknowledged and Adam and Eve's actions start to have repercussions.

BOOK 10

After successfully tempting Eve, Satan departs from Book 10 and heads back to Hell. Although his supporters applaud him, his victory is fleeting. Satan's children, Sin and Death, have constructed a bridge from Hell to Earth in Hell in preparation for the impending flood brought on by God's wrath. Adam and Eve, meantime, undergo a significant transformation following their consumption of the forbidden fruit. When they realize they are nude, they start blaming each other for it because they are so overcome with guilt and humiliation. But they also convey regret and contrition for their disobedience.

Jesus Christ, the heavenly Son, offers himself as a sacrifice for humanity's salvation and makes intercession on their behalf. While accepting the Son's gift, God says that Adam and Eve's sin must nevertheless have repercussions. After the human couple is sentenced, God commands that they will suffer, labour, and die. Nevertheless, the promise of ultimate redemption via the Son's sacrifice is also present. Then, Adam and Eve are dispatched to be escorted out of Paradise by the angel Michael. Michael gives Adam a glimpse of the future before they are banished, showing him the effects of the Fall on humanity. This covers the narratives of the deluge, Cain and Abel, and the final coming of the Messiah.

As Book 10 comes to a close, Michael, their defender and guide, leads Adam and Eve out of Eden. For them, leaving Paradise is a trip both physically and spiritually, and it represents a turning point in the story. In

summary, Book 10 of *Paradise Lost* examines Adam and Eve's struggles following the Fall and the hope of redemption found in the Son's sacrifice. Themes of repentance, judgment, and the divine purpose for human salvation are still present in the story as it progresses.

BOOK 11

Michael, the archangel, continues his story to Adam at the start of Book 11. He gives Adam glimpses into the future, emphasizing the lives of his heirs and the occasions that will define the course of human history. As Michael's vision develops, Adam is given a sneak peek at some of the most important scenes.

The Flood and Noah's Ark: Michael tells the biblical tale of the Great Flood, in which God decides to purify the Earth because he is unhappy with humanity's depravity. After Noah is selected to construct an ark, the floods finally recede, enabling Noah and his family to repopulate the planet.

Abraham and the Covenant: After that, Michael tells Adam the tale of the patriarch Abraham and the agreement that God made with his offspring. The covenant highlights God's continuing relationship with humanity by promising blessings and people that are chosen.

The Exodus and the Ten Commandments: The story then shifts to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt and the Exodus and the Ten. Michael emphasizes the moral and ethical guidelines that God offers for humans as he relates the story of the Ten Commandments being given on Mount Sinai.

The Judges and Kings of Israel: Michael briefly discusses the time of the Judges and the founding of the Israeli monarchy, bringing up notable individuals like Gideon, Samuel, and Saul.

The Babylonian Captivity and the Prophets: The vision emphasizes the themes of exile and redemption by focusing on the Israelites' captivity in Babylon and the prophets' involvement during this time.

The redeeming Mission of Jesus Christ and His Birth: The depiction of Jesus Christ's birth and redeeming mission marks the culmination of the vision. Michael highlights humanity's hope of salvation as he narrates the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

The Final Judgment: A glimpse of the Final Judgment, in which all people will be judged according to their deeds, is shown at the end of the vision. The wicked will suffer punishment, while the righteous will receive an eternal recompense.

Adam learns more about the developing redemptive plan as he observes these future occurrences. The story highlights the idea of God's grace and the promise of redemption, giving Adam hope despite the effects of the Fall. By linking the biblical account to the redemptive plan and providing a thorough review of human history from a Christian perspective, Book 11 acts as a bridge between the past and the future.

BOOK 12

Book 12 opens with the archangel Michael giving Adam a vision. In his vision of his descendants' futures, Adam sees the Flood, the rise and fall of countries, and the arrival of the Messiah (Jesus Christ), among other significant moments in human history. After that, Michael explains to Adam what the coming Messiah means by sacrifice and salvation. He places a strong emphasis on the necessity of having faith and obeying God in order to be saved.

Adam apologizes for his disobedience and admits his own guilt as he mulls over the vision. He discovers that, in spite of the Fall's effects, there is a way to be saved through the promised Saviour. After that, Michael leads Adam to a hilltop overlooking the future location of Jerusalem. Michael argues there that man will be saved via the sacrifice of Jesus Christ at some point in the far future. Adam receives assurances from the archangel that humanity may overcome the consequences of the Fall and find salvation if they have faith and live righteously.

Adam and Eve are shown departing the Garden of Eden at the poem's conclusion. As Michael guides them to the gate, he shows them a vision of the angel with the fiery sword watching over the entrance. Adam and Eve, in spite of being banished, take comfort in the prospect of salvation and the assurance that a future saviour will vanquish Satan. The story comes to a satisfying conclusion in Book 12, which gives readers a peek into God's redemptive plan and the ultimate victory of good over evil. This last book's interwoven themes of sin, salvation, and theodicy support the poem's examination of intricate theological and philosophical concepts.

13.4 MAIN THEMES OF *PARADISE LOST*

Fall of Man

One of *Paradise Lost's* main and recurring themes is the Fall of Man. The poem's main theme is the story of the Fall, which is taken from the biblical account of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis. Adam and Eve's disobedience is the main event that led to the Fall. Eve is seduced by Satan, who appears as a snake, and she shares the forbidden fruit with Adam after eating it from the Tree of Knowledge. An important turning point in the story, this act of disobedience signifies the start of humanity's fall from God. Adam and Eve's disobedience had far-reaching effects. They lose their innocence and realize they are guilty and nude. They are expelled from the perfect, paradisiacal state of Eden, and humanity is condemned to a life of toil, pain, and mortality.

The personification of Sin and Death is introduced in The Fall. Born from the head of Satan, sin grows into a terrible figure, and Death is her progeny. This symbolic portrayal emphasizes the idea that sin has repercussions of its own. Milton examines theological ideas related to the Fall, such as theodicy, divine foresight, and the nature of free choice. The characters debate the fairness, kindness, and compatibility of divine sovereignty with human free will.

Even though the Fall is a terrible occurrence, the poem also presents the idea of salvation and restoration. The Son gives his life in order to save humanity, offering a ray of light in the midst of the Fall's gloom. The whole idea is explored in "Paradise Regained," which is essentially a follow-up to *Paradise Lost*. Milton examines human nature, susceptibility, and the possibility of both virtue and weakness through the prism of The Fall. The multifaceted human experience is embodied by the characters of Adam and Eve, whose decisions have a lasting impact for the whole human race. Milton explores moral and philosophical issues regarding the origin of good and evil, the fallout from disobedience, and the prospect of salvation through the Fall. The poem invites readers to contemplate the human condition and the implications of moral choices.

Temptation and Sin

A prominent theme in *Paradise Lost*, "Temptation and Sin" is deeply woven throughout the story, influencing its progression and delving into significant facets of morality and human nature. The main and most famous scene in *Paradise Lost* is when Satan, disguised as a serpent, tempts Eve. Eve is tricked by Satan into eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge by taking advantage of her curiosity and thirst for knowledge. The Fall of Man is initiated by this act of disobedience. Milton explores the ethical conundrums that plagued Adam and Eve. The topic of temptation draws attention to the decisions people make and the results of those decisions.

The characters debate issues of knowledge, obedience, and the attraction of forbidden pleasures. The way Eve is portrayed highlights how susceptible she is to temptation. Satan preys on her fears and skillfully manipulates her thinking. The poem examines the psychology of temptation and shows how people can be misled by outside forces. The metaphorical figures of Sin and Death represent the results of giving in to temptation. Death is the offspring of Sin, which is produced as a result of

Satan's rebellion and assumes a terrible shape. Such symbols emphasize the idea that sin has repercussions of its own.

Paradise Lost considers the nature of sin and how it affects both the person and the larger human race. Adam and Eve's disobedience brings sin into the world, ushering in a break from Eden's ideal condition of purity. Adam and Eve realize they are nude and feel guilty after they disobey. The characters' understanding of their moral shortcomings and the repercussions of deviating from divine authority are closely related to the issue of temptation.

Milton is able to ponder theological and philosophical issues through the theme of temptation. The poem examines the conflict between divine foresight and free will as well as theodicy, or the effort to make sense of evil in light of God's omnipotence and goodness. As the story progresses, the idea of salvation and redemption becomes apparent, even as temptation leads to the Fall. In order to redeem humanity, the Son gives his own sacrifice, providing an alternative to the negative effects of temptation.

Free Will and Predestination

Paradise Lost revolves around the intricate theme of "Free Will and Predestination." The poem addresses the theological conflict that arises from God's omniscient foresight and the concept of human free will. The poem presents God as omniscient and all-knowing from the outset. He is fully aware of all that has happened, even the Fall of Man. This begs the question of whether a God who already knows the future can coexist with authentic free will. An early examination of the issue is provided by Satan's and the fallen angels' rebellion against God. Satan and his adherents choose to reject the divine authority, exercising their free will even if God is aware of their rebellion.

Adam and Eve are portrayed as having the ability to exercise free will. They are granted the ability to choose, including whether or not to follow

God's instruction to abstain from eating the forbidden fruit. A major portion of the story revolves around the effects of their decisions. The key event emphasizing the concept of free choice is when Satan tempts Eve. Eve is given an option, and she chooses to exercise her free will by choosing to eat the forbidden fruit. The poem considers how moral accountability for one's decisions rests with each individual. Adam muses over the nature of free will and declares his belief in the right to make decisions in Book 3.

He emphasizes the moral agency bestowed upon humans by acknowledging that God has endowed them with the capacity for reason and decision-making. The poem has suggestions of predestination even though the protagonists exercise their free will. God's awareness of the Fall points to a planned sequence of events. The consistency of predestination with true human choice is called into question by this, raising theological concerns. The work examines the theological conundrums that arise from the themes of free will and predestination. Milton debates whether true free will permits people to make moral decisions in accordance with their true nature or whether God's omniscience means a predestined fate for each human. The introduction of the Son's offer to give his life in order to save humanity adds even more intricacy to the concept. This begs the question of whether redemption results from the use of free choice or is predestined.

13.5 ANALYSIS OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

God

God is presented in *Paradise Lost* as the all-powerful deity who created the universe. Even though God is not a major character in the poem because He is not directly involved in the events that occur on Earth, His choices, acts, and characteristics play an important role in forming the story and examining theological concerns. God is portrayed as omniscient, having total knowledge, and omnipotent, having limitless power. The establishing of His rule and sovereignty over the universe is facilitated by

His characteristics of omnipotence and omniscience. Justice and mercy are both qualities of God's nature. Because disobedience cannot go unpunished, divine justice leads to the Fall of Man.

But God's plan of redemption—which includes the Son's sacrifice—shows His kindness and compassion for people. The study of theodicy—the effort to make sense of the coexistence of evil and suffering with the concept of an all-powerful, loving god—is aided by God's deeds and choices. This investigation centers on God's explanation for permitting free choice and the results of disobedience. It is said that God is the universe's creator and architect. His role as the architect of the universe's order and beauty is established by the creation of Heaven, Earth, and all living things. God is frequently shown as a parent figure. His dealings with the Son and the angels are indicative of a father's care and direction.

God's function as a loving and benevolent deity gains emotional depth from this fatherly part of His nature. The poem emphasizes the immutable and unchanging essence of God. This feature emphasizes His heavenly perfection and sets Him apart from the changeable and imperfect nature of all created entities, such as angels and people. The existence of free will and predestination are called into question by God's knowledge of future events, including the Fall of Man. The poem's depth in philosophy is enhanced by the conflict between God's knowledge and human free will. Justice and order are hallmarks of God's rule over the cosmos. His choices and decrees influence angels' and humans' destinies, demonstrating the divine power that upholds the moral and cosmic order. God's answer to the rebellion of Satan demonstrates both the severity of disobedience and God's justice. God's steadfast dedication to upholding law and order and punishing disobedience is demonstrated by the casting of Satan and the rebellious angels into Hell.

Satan

One of the most fascinating characters in *Paradise Lost* is Satan, a complicated and nuanced entity. Milton's depiction of Satan subverts

conventional ideas of valor and villainy, giving the character a captivating and dynamic quality. It is said of Satan that he is a persuasive and charismatic figure who can mobilize his supporters and even change the allegiances of other characters, like Beelzebub. Despite his disobedience to God, he is a captivating leader because of his eloquence and capacity to inspire loyalty. Satan's vanity and ambition are his main transgressions. Because he defies the authority of the divine hierarchy, he rebels against God. His arrogant character is exemplified by his desire for self-determination and to "reign in Hell" as opposed to serving in Heaven.

Milton gives Satan heroic attributes, placing him in the mold of the "Miltonic hero." Satan is an antagonist and a fallen angel, but he possesses traits that are heroic, if tragically so, like tenacity, fortitude, and a sense of purpose. Satan turns as a representation of resistance and disobedience to alleged oppression. Milton's own political ideas are reflected in his revolt, which is motivated by a desire for autonomy and independence and resonates with themes of political and religious dissent throughout the poet's time. Satan is an expert at trickery and deceit. His cunning and brilliance are demonstrated by his ability to trick and seduce people, particularly Eve. The scenario of temptation in Book 9 exemplifies his nuanced style and persuasive discourse.

Satan's terrible shortcoming is his unwillingness to turn from his sin and pursue peace with God. Satan is aware of God's omnipotence, but he doesn't change. As a result, he keeps sinking deeper and deeper into darkness. Although Satan appears confident and defiant on the outside, there are times when he struggles inside. He has periods of uncertainty and hopelessness, especially when he sees how drastically different Eden's beauty is from Hell's emptiness. One interpretation of Satan is as a metaphor for the human quest for independence and the results of unbridled ambition. The concepts of individualism and the quest for freedom are relevant to his character. Satan's character has a terrible irony

in that his quest for power and freedom ultimately results in his own slavery in Hell.

Rather than leading to the autonomy he desired, his rebellion brings about endless suffering and severance from God. Some critics contend that Milton uses Satan to further his own ideas about religious and political freedom. According to this reading, Satan takes on a multifaceted persona that embodies both the temptation of disobedience and the possible outcomes of unbridled ambition.

Adam

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* has Adam, a pivotal figure who symbolizes mankind before to the Fall in all its purity. Adam is a nuanced and multidimensional figure who embodies both virtues and faults. At first, Adam is portrayed as being made in God's likeness, pure and upright. His youthful amazement in the world around him and his unshakable devotion to God serve to highlight his innocence. According to popular belief, Adam was a very clever person who could reason and give names to the animals in Eden. His talks with Raphael, in which he discusses creation, the universe, and the character of God, demonstrate his intelligence. Adam is a unique person in part because of his ability to love and be among people.

The main premise of the story is his love for Eve, and his happiness in her company represents what God intended for human relationships. Adam is given authority over the land and the animals by God. Adam is in charge of giving the animals their names and taking care of the Garden of Eden. This dominion stands for a certain amount of power and accountability that God has bestowed onto humanity. Since Adam has free will, his decisions are significant to the story. Eve influences his choice to eat the forbidden fruit, which causes the Fall and his eventual banishment from Eden. Adam feels a great deal of guilt and regret following the Fall. In Book X, he apologizes for defying God in his utterances.

But Adam's acknowledgment of his sin and remorse also open the door to the prospect of redemption. Adam represents all of humanity, and his trials, temptations, and opportunities for atonement are all reflected in his experiences. His tale serves as a little representation of humanity. Adam's aptitude at eloquence is demonstrated by his eloquent statements, especially in Books VIII and IX. His capacity to convey nuanced feelings and ideas adds to the character's depth. Adam experiences tremendous change and development during the course of the epic. His character develops from youth to maturity, and he gains a deeper knowledge of both himself and his relationship with God.

Eve

In John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Eve is the first woman and Adam's lover. She is a multifaceted figure who is essential to the story. Eve's creation emphasizes her subservient role to Adam by serving as his friend and helper. Her creation emphasizes the orderly system that God created. Milton characterizes Eve as having exquisite beauty and grace, attributes that enthrall Adam and the other creatures in Eden. Later in the narrative, temptation uses her physical beauty as a tool. Eve discovers the forbidden Tree of Knowledge as a result of her curiosity and thirst for knowledge. She eventually eats the forbidden fruit, causing the Fall, after her chat with the serpent makes clear that she is easily tempted.

Eve is presented as articulate and intellectually strong. Her ability to hold in-depth debates about creation, God, and their duties in Eden is demonstrated by her chats with Adam and later with Satan. Even in her subservient position, Eve has some autonomy and agency. When she approaches the Tree of Knowledge and decides to eat the forbidden fruit, she takes an independent action. Eve feels a great deal of regret and guilt following the Fall. In Book X, she regrets giving in to temptation and owns up to her part in introducing sin into the world through her utterances. Eve's nature perseveres after the Fall and she gives birth to humanity. In her talks with Adam, she expresses her optimism for the

future, seeing a better life for their offspring and the prospect of forgiveness.

In Milton's epic, Eve represents femininity symbolically. Her deeds and experiences further the discussion of gender roles, the repercussions of disobedience, and the definition of virtue. Eve and Satan are frequently contrasted and compared. Both characters rebel against God, but Eve does it out of curiosity and a desire to learn, whilst Satan does so out of pride and disobedience. Eve is strong and resilient despite her part in the Fall. The story's possibility of redemption is bolstered by her willingness to take accountability and her dedication to Adam despite their fallen situation.

13.6 LET US SUM UP

John Milton's epic work *Paradise Lost* narrates the biblical account of the Fall of Man. After rebelling against God, Satan and his fallen angels are shown in Hell at the beginning of the poem. Driven by retaliation and arrogance, Satan chooses to pervert God's most recent creation, Man. He schemes with his adherents to sneak into Eden and seduce Adam and Eve into breaking the law. God knows what Satan wants to accomplish and anticipates the Fall from Heaven. God accepts the Son's offer to give his life in order to save humanity. In the meantime, Satan enters Eden by disguising himself as a serpent. He is successful in tempting Eve, which causes her to disobey and causes the Fall of Man.

As a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience, sin and death entered the earth and they were banished from Eden. But the poem also presents the notion of redemption. Adam and Eve find hope in the promise of a future Messiah, and the Son volunteers to give his life in order to save humanity. Themes of free will, temptation, sin, justice, mercy, and theodicy are all explored in *Paradise Lost*. It is praised for its grand style, in-depth theological analysis, and enduring influence on English literature.

13.7 KEYWORDS

Amanuesis -	A literary or artistic assistant, in particular one who takes dictation or copies manuscripts.
Tainting -	Contaminate or pollute something.
Archangel -	An angel.
Fallen angel -	An angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven.
Pompous -	Characterized by pomp or splendour.
Annihilation -	Complete destruction.
Covert -	Not openly acknowledged or displayed.
Celestial -	Positioned in or relating to the sky, or outer space as observed in astronomy.
Interim -	Intended for a short period only.
Vanquished -	Defeated.
Denouement -	The final part of a play, film, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved.
Conundrum -	A confusing and difficult problem or question

13.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct option:

1. Which form did Satan take in Book 4?

- a) Serpent b) Tiger c) Alligator d) Man

2. Which fallen angel advises to fight openly with God?

- a) Beelzebub b) Moloch c) Mammon d) Belial

3. ***Paradise Lost* contains how many books?**
a) 9 b) 12 c) 15 d) 14
4. **Who does God send to warn Adam about Satan's plan?**
a) Eve b) The Son c) Raphael d) Sin
5. **In which Book do Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit?**
a) Book 6 b) Book 7 c) Book 8 d) Book 9

Answer in brief:

1. What is the significance of Satan in the poem?
2. What is the significance of the Garden of Eden in *Paradise Lost*?
3. What is the central theme of *Paradise Lost*?
4. What is the significance of Satan in the poem?
5. What is the role of God in *Paradise Lost*, and how is He portrayed?

Write a detailed note on the following questions:

1. Discuss the portrayal of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. How does Milton characterize him, and what is the significance of Satan as a central figure in the narrative?
2. Explore the theme of free will versus predestination in *Paradise Lost*. How does Milton address the concept of human choice, and what implications does it have for the characters, especially Adam and Eve?
3. Explore the significance of the Fall in *Paradise Lost*. How does Milton depict the consequences of disobedience, and what commentary does it offer on human nature?

13.9 SUGGESTED READING

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Muir, Kenneth. *John Milton*. Longmans, 1968.

Structure

14.0 Objectives

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14.12 Satan's encounter with Sin and Death and Satan persuading Sin to open the gates of Hell: Lines 629-889 (Book II)

14.13 Satan’s encounter with the rulers of Chaos and the conclusion of his journey:

Lines 890-1055 (Book II)

14.14 Main themes of Books I and II

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14.18 Suggested reading

14.0 OBJECTIVES

- In this unit, students will understand the characteristics of an epic and also get an overview of Milton as a writer.
- The students will also understand the context of *Paradise Lost*.
- Additionally, the unit will discuss some essential lines of Books I and II.
- The unit will examine the significant themes of Books I and II.

14.1 BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT JOHN MILTON

One of the greatest writers in the English language, John Milton (1608–1744), was an English poet and scholar. His father wanted him to become a clergyman, but Milton was too independent and anti-royalist for the Church under Charles I. In 1632 at 24 years old, he decided to become a poet. He learnt French, Italian, Hebrew, Latin and Greek languages. His first collection of poems was published in 1646. He lost his eyesight by 1652. Although he is most known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, his literary works include poetry, prose, and political essays. Milton's other notable lyrical works include *Paradise Regained* and “Samson Agonistes”. As a follow-up to *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* focuses

on the tale of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. The dramatic poetry "Samson Agonistes" depicts the tragic hero Samson and is influenced by Greek tragedy.

Blank verse, a type of unrhymed poetry that imitates the natural rhythms of speech, is a defining feature of Milton's writing style. He was renowned for his rigorous attention to detail and for using vivid language to arouse strong feelings and ideas. His works frequently engage with complex philosophical and theological ideas, demonstrating his intense interest in contemporary political and religious challenges. Milton was a prolific writer of prose in addition to poetry. He wrote many political essays and pamphlets, notably "Areopagitica," an impassioned defense of the right to free speech. Milton's political writings demonstrated his steadfast opposition to censorship and authoritarian control and his dedication to republican values.

John Milton's works continue to be studied and praised for their profound intellectual depth, literary skill, and study of complex moral and theological subjects. His contributions to the growth of the English language and his profound influence on English literature have cemented his status as one of history's most influential authors.

14.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EPIC

The word epic is derived from the Greek word "epikos," meaning a word, song, or speech. Epic is a long narrative poem usually spanning multiple books. The plot of an epic usually centres around a hero of colossal stature. The hero goes on exceptional adventures or quests and exemplifies noble traits. They are larger-than-life characters with extraordinary brilliance, courage, and strength. The epic involves deeds of superhuman strength and valour. The setting of an epic is vast. The supernatural or divine is also commonly present in epics. They could include deities, goddesses, fantastical creatures, and supernatural interventions that impact

how things turn out. These paranormal components enhance the epic's relevance and add a feeling of awe. Formal and stylized.

14.3 MILTON'S IDEA OF HEAVEN, UNIVERSE AND HELL IN *PARADISE LOST*

According to John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Heaven, the world, and Hell are hierarchically organized and given specific locations. Milton's universe is portrayed as having a hierarchy, with Heaven being the highest sphere. Above the Earth and other heavenly bodies, it is situated. The poem refers to Heaven as a celestial location brimming with bright light and magnificent majesty. It is where God and the submissive angels reside. God is the supreme authority in Heaven, with different degrees of hierarchy and order.

Milton's conception of the universe contains several worlds, including Heaven, Earth, and Hell. The poem's unfolding events take place on a critical stage: the Earth, which is at the centre of the universe. The universe is shown as a vast expanse with various celestial bodies and cosmic occurrences that stretch far beyond human comprehension. Hell is pictured as an underground kingdom that lies deep below the surface of the Earth. It is depicted as being physically separated from and far away from Heaven. In "Paradise Lost," Satan and the fallen angels are sent to Hell as retribution for their disobedience to God. According to the Bible, Hell is a region of torment, anarchy, and darkness that starkly contrasts Heaven's order and brightness. The physical location of Hell is described as a bottomless pit where sinners are imprisoned for all eternity.

With Heaven being the highest and most divine domain, Earth serving as the intermediary stage for human drama, and Hell serving as the lowest and darkest region, linked with punishment and disobedience, Milton's arrangement of these realms reflects the hierarchical structure of his universe. The themes of obedience, temptation, and the effects of Sin that are handled throughout the poem are further supported by the spatial arrangement.

14.4 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF BOOKS I AND II

Paradise Lost begins in media res. At the beginning of the epic, man's disobedience and the loss of Paradise are mentioned. When the epic begins, Satan lies in the centre of Hell because he has revolted against God in Heaven. Both Book I and Book II focus on Satan. The vital theme of the epic is the battle between good v/s evil. There are 798 lines in Book I and 1055 lines in Book II. Almost all the lines are composed in iambic pentameter.

14.5 MILTON'S INVOCATION AND THE SCOPE OF THE POEM: LINES 1-49 (BOOK I)

The epic poem *Paradise Lost* is introduced, and the scene for the story is set in the opening 49 lines of Book I. The poem begins with a prayer to the ancient Greek goddess of inspiration, the Muse. Milton, the speaker, requests the Muse's assistance in telling the tale of humanity's fall from grace and the repercussions that followed. Milton begins by stating the poem's central issue, "man's first disobedience." The speaker cites the biblical story of Adam and Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden, which destroyed Paradise. He claims that Satan's pride and envy led to this transgression. Once a mighty and beautiful angel, Satan rebelled against God and was expelled from Heaven and his minions.

14.6 THE DESCRIPTION OF HELL AND SATAN'S FIRST SPEECHES: LINES 50-155 (BOOK I)

The speaker of the epic poem describes Satan's trip from Hell to Earth after being banished from Heaven in this passage. The verses portray Satan's fall and his subsequent vow to exact retribution on God. Around line 50 in this text, Satan is confronted by the other fallen angels in total darkness and confusion. He talks about his overwhelming hopelessness and the weight of his recent guilt. Despite this, he embraces his rebellious side rather than giving in to despair. Satan uses his persuasive language to motivate the fallen angels because he is arrogant and ambitious.

The other fallen angels are next addressed by Satan, who exhorts them to rebel against their oppressors. He arouses their emotions by bringing back memories of their previous radiance and their happiness in Heaven. He stresses that they are all in this together and begs them not to accept their current penalty. Satan tries to give his fellow fallen angels a sense of purpose and hope. As the discourse continues, Satan intends to declare war on God and return their lost Paradise. He talks about their earlier struggle with God's soldiers and their loss, but he thinks the fight is still ongoing, and they can yet overcome the heavenly might.

Satan's arguments demonstrate his arrogance, ambition, pride, and capacity for persuasion. He wants to persuade the other fallen angels that they can triumph against their predicament and the powers of God. Lines 50 to 155 of Book I of Paradise Lost explore Satan's personality and the reasons behind his rebellion against God. They demonstrate his tenacity, capacity to persuade others to support him, and unyielding will to exact vengeance and reclaim his former grandeur.

14.7 SATAN'S DESCRIPTION AND INTRODUCTION OF FALLEN ANGELS AS PAGAN GODS: LINES 156-521 (BOOK I)

Satan outlines his plans to explore Earth and solicit their help in his ongoing discourse with the fallen angels in Hell. He acknowledges their difficulties but implores them not to give up. He suggests they set forth, investigate Earth, and devise a retaliation plan against God's creation. He emphasises the fallen angels' capacity for deception and manipulation while highlighting the value of their banding together and fortitude. Satan explains the contrasts between the several orders of angels and the hierarchical organisation of Heaven. He stresses the need for a unified front and issues a caution against factionalism and dissension. He encourages his followers not to let their defeat define them by drawing a comparison between their current predicament and their previous setback. Satan marshals his troop.

Satan suggests they might form their kingdom in Hell, independent of God, where they could establish dominance and enjoy their authority. He admits to envying Adam and Eve, the first humans living in the Paradise of Earth. He devises a scheme to subvert God's creation by corrupting and deceiving them. Milton also introduces several mythological and pagan deities. Line 490 of Book I refers to the pagan God Belial. Different traditions refer to Belial as a demonic or hellish entity that stands for wickedness, worthlessness, and treachery. Another pagan deity named in line 392 is Moloch. In early mythology, Moloch was a violent and vengeful deity linked to child sacrifice.

Line 409 mentions the word Chemos, also spelt Chemosh. Chemos, an ancient Canaanite god commonly honored by offering human sacrifices, was a god of battle. Dagon does not appear in Book I of Paradise Lost but does in later books. Dagon was a Philistine god of agriculture and fertility, frequently pictured as having a human and fish hybrid body. Milton uses a multitude of mythologies and religious traditions to incorporate these paganism-related deities and mythological characters into the epic poem to give it more depth and richness.

14.8 SATAN MARSHALLING THE FALLEN ANGELS AND BUILDING OF PANDAEMONIUM: LINES 522-798 (BOOK I)

Although, as usual, certain statements would undercut this favourable impression, Satan appears to be really concerned for his troops and encourages them by appealing to arms. We are likewise informed of Satan's moral and physical decay, although we may be more aware of what is still there than what has been lost. Since the Bible uses similar metaphors for God, the comparisons of Satan to a tower and the shrouded sun imply that he is godlike. Additionally, Satan delivers his first political address, and while he does briefly enlighten his soldiers about Earth, its objective is to influence rather than inform them. The discussion then shifts to the construction of Pandemonium. Milton devised the moniker "Pandemonium" for the hellish Parliament structure.

It is constructed in the style of a Greek temple, fitting for the classical troops that the angels are currently portraying. Satan commands the fallen angels to gather in Pandemonium, a magnificent building they constructed as a gathering place. Milton describes Pandemonium as a splendid castle that outshines all heavenly construction. Satan addresses the gathered angels, acknowledging their demise from Heaven and the difficulties they confront. He intends to overcome their current situation and exact revenge on God. Satan summons the group to deliberate on their alternatives and formulate a plan. He stresses the value of cooperation and reaffirms their shared goal of fighting God.

The fallen angels converse, airing their complaints and pleading for liberation. While some call for direct conflict with God, others favour crafty and covert methods. One of the fallen angels, Moloch, makes fervent arguments in favour of a direct and violent conflict with God, even if it means definite destruction. Other fallen angels like Belial and Beelzebub continue to weigh in on the discussion. Belial emphasises the futility of their uprising while advising caution and arguing against taking hasty decisions. Beelzebub suggests a more cunning strategy: to snare God's recent creations, Adam and Eve, by exploring the Earth and trying to discover a method to interfere with them. Milton presents the fallen angels as a varied bunch with various viewpoints and strategies throughout this section. They are united in their common revolt against God yet show different levels of defiance, hopelessness, and strategic thought.

14.9 SATAN'S ELEVATION AND SPEECHES OF MOLOCH AND BELIAL:

LINES 1-228 (BOOK II)

In the first few lines of Book II, Satan is seen seated on a regal throne, representing his arrogance and ambition. The contrast between Satan's majesty and splendour in his fallen state, the wealth of Ormus and Ind, and the opulence of the East. The speeches of Moloch and Belial appear in Book II when Satan calls a meeting of his fellow fallen angels in Hell to

decide what they should do next. Moloch and Belial provide two of the most notable speeches among the fallen angels' presentations of their thoughts.

One of the fallen angels who support open conflict with God is Moloch. He thinks they should fight hard and do as much havoc and harm as possible since they have already been sentenced to Hell. In his discourse, Moloch displays a spirit of rebellion and a thirst for vengeance. Belial, on the other hand, adopts a more circumspect and reasonable stance. He opposes open combat because he thinks it would be pointless and merely result in further punishment. Belial urges the fallen angels to accept their fate and make the most of their situation. He advises them to avoid useless fighting and instead concentrate on enjoying and indulging in their newly discovered universe. While Belial's speech encourages a more passive and self-indulgent mentality, Moloch emphasises a confrontational and violent position. Both lectures highlight varied approaches to dealing with their fallen nature, reflecting the disparate opinions and disputes among the fallen angels.

14.10 THE RESPONSE OF THE FALLEN ANGELS AND BEELZEBUB'S PROPOSAL: LINES 229-429 (BOOK II)

The fallen angels react in a variety of ways to Moloch and Belial's statements. While some back Moloch's demand for all-out war, others are drawn to Belial's offer of indulgence and acceptance. The fallen angels' comments reveal the variety of their personalities and motivations. However, the assembly's attention is ultimately drawn to Beelzebub, one of Satan's top lieutenants. Beelzebub offers an alternative strategy, which becomes the conversation's main point of discussion.

Beelzebub's proposition centres on exploring a recently created globe (Earth) and upsetting God's recently created human race (Adam and Eve). He advises them to infiltrate this world and corrupt God's prized creations to retaliate against God indirectly. Beelzebub contends that the fallen angels can lessen God's joy in His creation and cause Him anguish by

luring and seducing people into Sin and disobedience. They can seek retribution through Beelzebub's suggested plan while avoiding confrontation with God, which would be pointless given His limitless power.

Beelzebub's proposal intrigues and motivates the fallen angels. They perceive it as an intelligent scheme that might not only thwart God's goals but also allow them to gain domination and positions of power over the human world. They think that by taking advantage of people's flaws and causing them to reject God, they might defeat their divine foe in a sort of vicarious victory. Beelzebub's idea moves the fallen angels since it gives them a chance to continue their rebellion, albeit in a different way, and reclaim some sense of purpose and power. The epic's remaining events and their subsequent trek to Earth are set in motion by this.

14.11 SATAN'S OFFER TO JOURNEY TO EARTH AND EXPLORATION OF HELL: LINES 430-628 (BOOK II)

Satan thinks he can hurt God and thwart His purposes for humanity by corrupting people and luring them into Sin. Satan's decision to travel is crucial in his thirst for vengeance and vanity. He fights to make his authority and influence known in whatever manner imaginable since he will not accept his failure. Satan wants to demonstrate that he can still challenge God and express his power by aiming at God's prized creation.

Additionally, Satan sees humans as a potential way to reclaim his former power and grandeur. He feels he can rule over them and possibly even the entire human race if he successfully corrupts Adam and Eve. Satan knows the difficulties that lie ahead in these verses. He describes the journey out of Hell as long and arduous, with Hell acting as a stronghold enclosed in flames. Hell has no way out because its gates are built of blazing adamant, impenetrable material. Satan emphasises that overcoming these barriers requires great physical effort and carries the potential for annihilation in the depths of unessential Night. Satan declares his resolve despite the significant risks and uncertainty. Given his status and influence, he asserts

that it would be improper for him to be discouraged by any potential challenge or threat. As a leader and representative of imperial dominion, he feels obligated to take on these responsibilities, especially given how seriously the planned scheme will affect their disobedience against God.

14.12 SATAN'S ENCOUNTER WITH SIN AND DEATH AND SATAN PERSUADING SIN TO OPEN THE GATES OF HELL: LINES 629-889 (BOOK II)

Hell is the location of the confrontation between Satan, Sin, and Death. After being expelled from Heaven, Satan looks for a means to exact revenge on God and reclaim his lost grandeur. He travels through Chaos until he reaches the entrance to Hell, where he meets his progeny, Sin, and Death, who is with her. Satan sees Sin, and Death standing watch at the entrances of Hell. Sin is portrayed as a woman with a lovely upper body and a serpent-like lower body, indicating her conflicted nature. She reminds us of Satan's fall from grace because she is the incarnation of his twisted desires. Similar to how Athena was born from Zeus in Greek mythology, Sin is said to be born from Satan's head.

Sin recognizes Satan as her father and opens the gates of Hell for him. She tells him she was created due to his arrogance and rebellion against God. God has appointed Sin and Death, represented as skeletal figures with a terrifying appearance, to guard the gates of Hell and ensure that nobody escapes. Satan puts forward a scheme to Sin and Death while they talk. He advises creating a passageway from Hell to Earth so they can overrun and defile God's freshly formed realm. Sin, bent by her cravings and swayed by Satan's craftiness, consents to the scheme. She promises to aid Satan by allowing him entry to the material cosmos by opening the gates of Chaos, a place of Chaos and darkness.

Sin and Death agreed to build a bridge, and so they did. The bridge represents the link between Hell and Earth and plays a crucial role in Satan's future schemes to deceive humanity. In Paradise Lost Book II, Satan, Sin, and Death interact, illuminating the nuanced interactions

among these figures. Death stands for the result and penalty of disobedience, while Sin represents the spawn of Satan's rebellion and the embodiment of his evil desires. Their cooperation in constructing the bridge symbolises the alignment of evil powers and their resolve to usurp God's rule.

We can see that Satan has manipulated Sin's sense of duty and allegiance as his progeny by appealing to her desires and emotions and convincing her to unlock the gates of Hell. Satan exploits Sin's attachment to her as a daughter. He accepts her as his child, reassuring her of their shared relationship and the child's inherent desire to obey their parent. He seems to be in extreme trouble to win her sympathy and support and asks for her assistance. Satan flatters Sin, saying how beautiful she is and how much she resembles her mother, whom he calls a goddess. He tries to win her favour and control her emotions by complimenting her, playing on her conceit and ego. Satan highlights their shared cause and how their interests are aligned. He contends that because they were both expelled from Heaven and sentenced to Hell, they share a similar plight and should band together to exact revenge on God.

By emphasizing the possible advantages of their cooperation, Satan appeals to Sin's self-interest. He asserts that they can gain power and fulfillment by opening the gates of Hell to increase their domination over and influence over the world of humanity. Satan emphasises that Sin must serve him by reminding her of her appointed task to guard the gates of Hell. He used a combination of authority and persuasion to persuade her that opening the gates is not only desirable but also her responsibility. In order to persuade Sin to unlock the gates of Hell and support him in his mission to deprave humanity, Satan ultimately takes advantage of her emotional vulnerabilities, familial ties, and sense of responsibility.

14.13 SATAN'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE CHAOS AND THE CONCLUSION OF HIS JOURNEY: LINES 890-1055 (BOOK II)

Chaos is portrayed as a personified force, a primordial being that existed before the universe was created. It is defined as a chasm of whirling confusion and darkness, signifying Chaos and formlessness. The idea of Chaos depicts it as a robust and enormous force linked to storms and tempests. Satan encounters a variety of difficulties and impediments as he moves through Chaos. The realm is shown as a turbulent and dangerous area with shifting terrain and swirling storms. Satan is buffeted by the erratic forces surrounding him and fights to maintain his course and direction. Satan converses with Chaos itself while on his voyage. Satan may interact with Chaos in person. However, their exchange is brief. The cryptic language and riddles Chaos uses to communicate further contribute to the aura of mystery and ambiguity surrounding this encounter. Chaos reveals to Satan a route to Earth in the heart of the chaotic realm, allowing him to get where he needs to go and carry out his plans for vengeance against God. Amid the confusion, this insight gives Satan hope and a course to follow, enabling him to intensify his opposition.

14.14 MAIN THEMES OF BOOKS I AND II

Books I and II examine several significant issues. After Satan revolts against God and his exile to Hell, Book I opens with its consequences. It focuses on the adverse effects of disobeying heavenly authority while examining the vanity and ambition that contributed to his downfall. The poem explores the characteristics of evil and its genesis. Milton investigates the corrupting influence and destructive power that Satan and the other fallen angels wield as the incarnation of evil. Milton uses the figure of Satan to examine the ideas of free will and determinism. The conflict between human agency and divine providence is highlighted by Satan's use of his free will to rebel against God even though his actions are predestined.

The fallen angels gather in a council in Hell in Book II to decide how to proceed after their defeat in the conflict with God. The essence of tyranny,

the value of human liberty, and the effects of their rebellion are only a few of the moral and political points raised in this discussion. The remarks made by the fallen angels during the council serve as a vehicle for Milton to highlight the effectiveness of rhetoric and persuasion. This theme examines how words can mislead, control, and inspire people. In Book II, Satan develops as a tragic hero with ambition, bravery, and tenacity. Milton presents Satan as a multidimensional character despite his depravity, one who has redeeming qualities but is ultimately doomed because he disobeyed God.

14.15 LET US SUM UP

Milton begins the epic poem in Book I by narrating the rebellion of the fallen angels against God and their consequent exile to Hell. Satan, once known as Lucifer, gathers his fellow rebellious angels and plans an attack on God. Nevertheless, they are quickly vanquished and sent to Hell. The main character is revealed to be Satan, driven by conceit and ambition. He vows to get revenge on God by tainting His just-formed globe, Earth. In a lake of fire, Satan and his followers are debating their course of action.

Satan rallies the fallen angels in Hell at the beginning of Book II, urging them to gather their power and devise a scheme to get revenge on God. While Belial advocates for a quiet acceptance of their fate, Moloch advocates open combat. However, Satan suggests a different strategy, propelled by his conceit and thirst for retribution. He decides to invade Eden, the Paradise God has just created, and defile God's ideal creation, humanity. In order to reach Earth, Satan and his followers disguise themselves as various creatures. They are in awe of Eden's beauty as they watch Adam and Eve, the first humans, live innocently and contentedly. Envious of them, Satan considers numerous ways to seduce and deceive them to bring about their demise. In the story, Satan comes into contact with the demonised figures of Sin and Death, who serve as the gates of Hell. Sin, Satan's child born from his thinking, opens the gates for him.

Then, Satan starts his perilous trek into Eden, prepared to meet Adam and Eve and sabotage their blissful existence.

14.16 KEYWORDS

Wilderness -	A neglected or abandoned area
Retribution -	Punishment inflicted on someone as vengeance for a wrong or criminal act
Spatial -	Relating to or occupying space
Transgression -	An offence
Subvert -	Undermine the power or authority of an established system or institution
Philistine -	A person who is hostile or indifferent to culture or arts
Pagan -	A person holding religious beliefs other than those of the central or recognized religions
Defile -	Damage the purity
Impediments -	A hindrance or obstruction in doing something
Determinism -	The thesis that all events in the universe, including human decisions and actions, are causally inevitable
Rhetoric -	The art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing

14.17 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct option:

1. How many lines are there in Book I of Paradise Lost?

- a) 798 b) 1055 c) 764 d) 1045

2. Where is Satan at the beginning of Paradise Lost?

- a) In Heaven b) On Earth c) In Hell d) Not specified

3. Name the pagan God of agriculture and fertility.

- a) Dagon b) Chemos c) Belial d) Moloch

4. Who is the father of Sin?

- a) God b) Belial c) Satan d) Death

5. Name the garden that Satan wishes to arrive at.

- a) Ruth Garden b) Garden of Eden c) Spencer Garden d) Miracle Garden

Answer in brief:

- a) Explain Milton's idea of Heaven, Universe and Hell in *Paradise Lost*.
- b) Write a note on Satan's description and the introduction of the fallen angels.
- c) What do Moloch and Belial suggest in the opening of Book II?
- d) Discuss Satan's encounter with Sin and Death.
- e) Examine the character of Satan in the first two books.

Write a detailed note on the following questions:

- a) Write a detailed note on the major themes of the first two books.
- b) How do the fallen angels react in both books?

c) How is "Good v/s evil" reflected in both books?

14.18 SUGGESTED READING

Campbell, Gordon, and Thomas N. Corns. *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*, Oxford

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Dobranski, Stephen B. *Reading John Milton: How to Persist in Troubled Times*, Stanford

University Press, Stanford (Calif.), 2022.

Forsyth, Neil. *John Milton: A Biography*, Lion Books, United States, 2013.

Gillington, Byron May Clarissa. *Day with John Milton*, Perlego, 2012.

Hawkes, David. *John Milton: A Hero of Our Time*, Counterpoint, Berkeley, 2011.

Milton, John, and A. W. Verity. *Paradise Lost*. Nabu Press, 2010.

Muir, Kenneth. *John Milton*. Longmans, 1968.

युनिवर्सिटी गीत

स्वाध्यायः परमं तपः

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शिक्षण, संस्कृति, सद्भाव, दिव्यबोधनुं धाम
डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर ओपन युनिवर्सिटी नाम;
सौने सौनी पांण मणे, ने सौने सौनुं आत्म,
दशे दिशामां स्मित वडे डो दशे दिशे शुभ-लाभ.

अत्मज्ञ रही अज्ञानना शाने, अंधकारने पीवो ?
कडे बुद्ध आंबेडकर कडे, तुं था तारो दीवो;
शारदीय अजवाणा पळोव्यां गुर्जर गाभे गाम
ध्रुव तारकनी जेम झणडणे अकलव्यनी शान.

सरस्वतीना मयूर तमारे इणिये आवी गळेडे
अंधकारने हडसेलीने उजसना झूल मळेडे;
बंधन नही को स्थान समयना जवुं न घरथी दूर
घर आवी मा हरे शारदा दैन्य तिमिरना पूर.

संस्कारोनी सुगंध मळेडे, मन मंदिरने धामे
सुषुप्ती टपाल पळोव्ये सौने पोताने सरनाभे;
समाज केरे दरिये हांडी शिक्षण केरुं वहाण,
आवो करीये आपण सौ
भव्य राष्ट्र निर्माण...
दिव्य राष्ट्र निर्माण...
भव्य राष्ट्र निर्माण

