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UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU
JAMMU

SELF LEARNING MATERIAL

B.A. Semester-I

Subject : English Literature **Unit: I-V**

Course No. : EL - 101 **Lesson No. 1-20**

OLD & MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ENGLISH LITERATURE

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SYLLABUS

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Course No.: EL-101 Title : Old & Middle English Literature

Duration of Exam.: 3 Hrs Total Marks : 100

Theory Examination : 80

Internal Assessment: 20

Objective: The objective of this paper is to acquaint the learners with the beginning of English literature and to familiarize them with the fiugres of speech & literature terms required for the better understanding of various literary works prerscribed.

Unit-I : **INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY TERMS** :

Alliteration Assonance, imagery, Metaphor, Simile, Rhyme, Blank Verse, Meter, Couplet, Prologue, Epilogue, Personification, Soliloquy, Farce, Satire, Irony.

Unit-II : **HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE : OLD & MIDDLE ENGLISH LETERATURE**

- Literature in the Age of Chaucer
- Literature of the Revival
- Origin of Drama
- University Wits

Unit-III : **POETRY**

Chaucer Selections from Prologue-characters of Wife of Bath and Monk

Unit-IV : **SONNET**

- Development of English Sonnet

- Sir Thomas Wyatt : 'Whoso List to Hunt'
- Phillip Sydney : O Grammar Rules (Sonnet 63)

Unit-IV : **Drama**

a. Christopher Marlowe : Dr. Faustus.

MODE OF EXAMINATION

THIS PAPER WILL BE DIVIDED INTO SECTIONS A, B & C.

Section-A : MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Section -A will have 12 MCQs covering all the Units.

Students will write the correct answers of any 8 in the answer sheets. (8×1=8 Marks)

Section-B : SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Section-B will have short answer questions from Unit 1 to Unit V. Four out of Five questions will have to attempted by the students. (4×4=16 Marks)

Section-C : LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Section -C Awill have four long answer type questions from Unit II to Unit V with internal choice from the same unit. Candidate will be required to attempt all in about 250-300 words. (14×4=56 Marks)

Internal Assessment (Total Marks : 20)

SUGGESTED READING :

1. Legouis, Emile and Louis Cazamian. History of English Literature. New Delhi: Macmilan, 2001.
2. Daiches, David. A Critical History of English Literature. New Delhi : Supernova Publishers, 2002.
3. Long William J. English Literature. New Delhi : Aitbs Publishers, 2013.
4. Alexander, Michael. A History of English Literature. New Delhi : Macmillan Press, 2000.

5. Sanders Andrews. The Short Oxford History of English Literature. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1994.

6. Peck, John & Martin Coyle, A Brief History of English Literature. New York: Palgrave, 2004.

7. Abrams, M.H. A Glossary of Literary Terms. Madras : Macmillan 1993.

8. Quinn, Edward. A Dictionary of Literary & Thematic Terms. London : OUP, 2001.

9. Murfin, Rose & Supriya M. Ray. A Bedford Glossory of Critical and Literary Terms. Macmillan: New York, 1998.

10. Lever, J. W. The Elizabethan Love Sonnet. London : Methuen, 1956.

UNIT-I **COURSE NO. EL-101**

LESSON NO. 1 **Title : Old & Middle English Literature**

INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY TERMS

STRUCTURE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Literary terms are words used in discussions, classification, criticism and analysis of poetry, novels, and other works of literature.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is:

- To introduce the learners to the literary terms.
- To help learners differentiate various forms of writing and literary devices.

1.3 LITERARY TERMS

1.3.1 Alliteration

"Alliteration" is derived from the Latin word "litera", meaning "letters of the alphabet". Alliteration is a figure of speech in which words or stressed syllables especially at the beginning are repeated. This repetition of sounds brings attention to the lines in which it is used, and creates more aural rhythm. In poems, alliteration can also refer to repeated consonant sound in the stressed syllables of a line. Alliteration has been used as a literary device in the English language for many hundreds of years, prevalent in works of literature all the way back to Beowulf, the eighth-century Old English poem. In Old English poetry alliteration was a continual and essential part of the metrical scheme and until the late MiddleAges was often used thus. A number of Middle English poems, such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman* and the romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, both written in the fourteenth century, continued to use and play variations upon the old alliterative meter. In the opening lines of *Piers* Plowman, for example, all four of the stressed syllables alliterate:

In a somerseson, when soft was the sonne

In later English versification, however, alliteration is used only for special stylistic effects, such as to reinforce the meaning, to link related words, or to provide tone,colour and enhance the palpability of enunciating the words. Alliteration is most common in poems, though it can be found in prose and drama as well. It is often used in the real world in things like nursery rhymes, famous speeches, and advertising slogans.

Common Examples of Alliteration

Many common tongue twisters contain examples of alliteration. For instance:

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

She sells seashells by the seashore.

1.3.2. Assonance

It is the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences, and together with alliteration and consonance serves as one of the building

blocks of verse. Assonance does not have to be a rhyme; the identity of which depends merely on sequence of both vowel and consonant sounds. Thus, assonance is a resemblance of units that are generally less than a syllable. Sometimes it is also called 'vocalic rhyme'; it consists of the repetition of similar vowel sounds to achieve a musical effect.Assonance occurs more often in verse than in prose. It is used in (mainly modern) English-language poetry, and is particularly important in Old French, Spanish and the Celtic languages.

Common Examples of Assonance

Several proverbs in English contain examples of assonance. The assonance in these phrases helps to make them more memorable in a subtler way than through rhyming words. A few of these proverbs are highlighted below:

The early bird catches the worm.

Honesty is the best policy.

A stitch in time saves nine.

1.3.3 Imagery

As a literary device, imagery consists of descriptive language that can function as a way for the reader to better imagine the world of the piece of literature and also add symbolism to the work. Imagery draws on the five senses, namely the details of taste, touch, sight, smell, and sound. Imagery can also pertain to details about movement or a sense of a body in motion (kinesthetic imagery) or the emotions or sensations of a person, such as fear or hunger (organic imagery or subjective imagery). Using imagery helps the reader develop a more fully realized understanding of the imaginary world that the author has created.

Imagery examples are prevalent in all types of literature from cultures around the world. Poets, novelists, and playwrights use imagery for many reasons. One of the key usages is that the imagery in a piece can help create mood, such as the clichéd opening "It was a dark and stormy night." While this line is too hackneyed for any author to actually use it, it is a good example of imagery in that the reader immediately pictures the kind of setting in which the story may take place. This particular imagery also

creates a mood of foreboding. Indeed, even Shakespeare used this type of opening for his famous play *MacBeth:* in which the three witches in the beginning speak of the "thunder, lightning [and] rain" and the "fog and filthy air." While an author may use imagery just to help readers understand the fictive world, details of imagery often can be read symbolically. In the example of *MacBeth*, the thunder and lightning that open the play symbolize both the storm that is already taking place in Scotland and the one that is about to begin once MacBeth takes over the throne. Thus, when analyzing literature it is important to consider the imagery used so as to understand both the mood and the symbolism in the piece.

Common Examples of Imagery

We use imagery in everyday speech to convey our meaning. Here are some examples of imagery from each of the five senses:

Taste: The familiar tang of his grandmother's cranberry sauce reminded him of his youth.

Sound: The concert was so loud that her ears rang for days afterward.

Sight: The sunset was the most gorgeous they'd ever seen; the clouds were edged with pink and gold.

Smell: After eating the curry, his breath reeked of garlic.

Touch: The tree bark was rough against her skin.

1.3.4. Metaphor

A metaphor is a rhetorical figure of speech that compares two subjects without the use of "like" or "as." Metaphor is often confused with simile, which compares two subjects by connecting them with "like" or "as" (for example: "She's fit as a fiddle"). While a simile states that one thing is like another, a metaphor asserts that one thing is the other, or is a substitute for the other thing.

A metaphor asserts a correlation or resemblance between two things that are otherwise unrelated. The English word "metaphor" originates from the Greek metaphorá, which means "to transfer" or "to carry over." Indeed, a metaphor transfers meaning

from one subject on to another so that the target subject can be understood in a new way.Rhetoricians have further elaborated on the definition of metaphor by separating and naming the two key elements. There are a few different sets of names for these two parts: they can be called the "tenor" and the "vehicle", the "ground" and the "figure", or the "target" and the "source". Consider this famous example of a metaphor from Shakespeare's "As You Like It":

"All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players."

In this example, the world is the primary subject, and it gains attributes from the stage (ie, from theater). Thus, in the binary pairs, the world is the "tenor," the "ground," and the "target," while the stage is the "vehicle," the "figure," and the "source."

Metaphor is a key component of all forms of literature, including poetry, prose, and drama. This is not only because metaphor is a highly useful literary device, but also because it is such a vital part of all language and communication. Many cognitive theorists have researched and written about the importance of metaphor in the way we understand the world around us. For example, in western culture the phrase "time is money" is quite prevalent. This is not just a cliché, though; we talk about time in terms of wasting it, spending it, saving it, and so on. The metaphorical comparison of these two concepts ends up influencing the way people in cultures actually perceive time.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that there are examples of metaphor in literature from every culture. The use of metaphor allows authors to present unfamiliar ideas or situations in ways that the reader is able to comprehend by comparing unknown things to known things. This can be a good technique for fantasy writers or science fiction writers to make the worlds they create seem more familiar to the reader. Metaphors can also be used, however, to compare very common things to one another. This type of usage forges a cognitive link between previously unrelated objects and makes readers appreciate them in a new way.

1.3.5. Simile

Simile is an explicit comparison between two unlike things through the use of connecting words, usually "like" or "as." The technique of simile is known as a rhetorical

analogy, as it is a device used for comparison. Simile can be an excellent way for an author either to make an unusual thing seem more familiar (i.e., "The planet Zenoth was as cold as ice") or a familiar thing seem more unique (i.e., "Her smile was jagged like a broken zipper"). In this way, similes can help the reader imagine the fictive world of a piece of literature. Good similes can also make readers think about things in a new way, and can sometimes create a lasting effect. Scottish poet Robert Burns' declaration that his "luve's like a red, red rose" has linked the concepts of love and red rose in our minds forever.

Simile can also sometimes be used to show a comparison, though with the conclusion that these two things really are unalike or even at odds with each other. This can either be a negative simile, or an ironic simile, which communicates the opposite of what is expected at the beginning of the statement. For example, the famous feminist quote popularized by Gloria Steinem, "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle," ultimately concludes that a woman has no need for a man".

Simile can help to make new connections for the reader. One of literature's purposes is to help better explain the world around us, and the technique of simile is one of those ways in which we are able to see things in a new way. All types of analogies are cognitive processes of transferring meaning from one thing to another, and thus the use of simile in literature has real evoking effects. For this reason, and for aesthetic purposes, simile has been a popular literary technique for many hundreds of years.

Common Examples of Simile

There are many clichéd similes in the English language that we use regularly. Here are some examples:

Strong as an ox

Fit as a fiddle

Bright as the sun

1.3.6. Rhyme

Rhyme is a popular literary device in which the repetition of the same or similar

sounds occurs in two or more words, usually at the end of lines in poems or songs. In a rhyme in English, the vowel sounds in the stressed syllables match while the preceding consonant sound does not match. The consonants after the stressed syllables must match as well. For example, the words "gaining" and "straining" rhyme in English because they start with different consonant sounds, but the first stressed vowel is identical, as is the rest of the word. Rhyme has played a huge part in literature over many millennia of human existence. Indeed, rhyme has been found in many cultures and many eras. Rhyme also plays different parts in different cultures, holding almost mystical meaning in some cultures.

Types of Rhyme

There are many different ways to classify rhyme. Many people recognize "perfect rhymes" as the only real type of rhyme. For example, "mind" and "kind" are perfect rhymes, whereas "mind" and "line" are an imperfect match in sounds. Even within the classification of "perfect" rhymes, there are a few different types:

Single: This is a rhyme in which the stress is on the final syllable of the words ("mind" and "behind").

Double: This perfect rhyme has the stress on the second-to-last, syllable ("toasting" and "roasting").

Dactylic: This rhyme, relatively uncommon in English, has the stress on the third-from-last, syllable ("terrible" and "wearable").

Here are some other types of general rhymes that are not perfect:

Imperfect or near rhyme: In this type of rhyme, the same sounds occur in two words but in unstressed syllables ("thing" and "missing").

Identical rhymes: Homonyms in English don't satisfy the rules of perfect rhymes because while the vowels are matching, the preceding consonants also match and therefore the rhyme is considered inferior. For example, "way," "weigh," and "whey" are identical rhymes and are not considered to be good rhymes.

Eye rhyme: This is common in English because so many of our words are spelled in the same way, yet have different pronunciations. For example, "good" and food" look

like they should rhyme, but their vowel sounds are different.

Children's songs and poems often contain rhymes, as they make lines easier to remember and pleasant to listen to. It is used as a literacy skill with young children for them to hear phonemes. Authors often use rhyme to make their lines more memorable and to signal the ends of lines.

1.3.7. Blank Verse

Blank verse is a type of poetry written in a regular meter that does not contain rhyme. Blank verse is most commonly found in the form of iambic pentameter. Many famous English writers have used blank verse in their works, such as William Shakespeare, John Milton, and William Wordsworth. There is a strong tradition of using blank verse in English poetry; blank verse became popular in the 16th century when Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare began incorporating it into their works. If you read Shakespeare's plays carefully, you will soon begin to notice that much of the dialogue is written in unrhymed iambic pentameter, i.e., in blank verse. The famous work Paradise Lost by John Milton is also written in blank verse. Blank verse was also popular with Romantic English poets, as well as some contemporary American poets.

Blank verse allows an author to not be constricted by rhyme, which is limited in English. Yet it still creates a more poetic sound and sense of pattern due to the regular use of stressed and unstressed syllables. Meter is generally easier to use in English than rhyme since the majority of words are short (one or two syllables), unlike in Romance languages. Thus, it was in favor with English poets for nearly half a millennium. Free verse has replaced blank verse in popularity in the most recently written poetry, however.

Difference Between Blank Verse and Free Verse

Though blank verse and free verse sound like similar concepts, there are some notable differences. The definition of blank verse stipulates that, while there is no rhyme, the meter must be regular. Free verse, on the other hand, has no rhyme scheme and no pattern of meter. Free verse generally mimics natural speech, while blank verse still carries a musical quality due to its meter.

1.3.8. Meter

Meter is the rhythm of syllables in a line of verse or in a stanza of a poem. Depending on the language, this pattern may have to do with stressed and unstressed syllables, syllable weight, or number of syllables. Many older and more formal poems contain strict meter, which either continues throughout the entire poem or alternates in a specified rhythm. The study of meter forms as well as the use of meter in poetry is called prosody.

The earliest known example of meter is in a collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns called the Rigveda, which dates back to between 1700 and 1100 BC. There are many other examples of meter from the Iron Age in multiple cultures. All poetry from the medieval period was written in meter, regardless of the literary tradition, from Tang Dynasty Chinese poetry to Classical Persian poetry to the Bardic poetry of Europe. It is unknown why meter became so ubiquitous at this period in world history, but this fact certainly leads many literary scholars to determine that meter is indeed a fundamental element of poetry. Not all poetry contains meter, especially in more contemporary times. However, it contributes a rhythmic unity to the verse and highlights the difference between the elevated language of poetry and normal speech patterns.

Common Forms of Meter in English

Many forms of meter are broken into feet, which is a specific group of syllable types. In English, these feet are combinations of two to three stressed and unstressed syllables, which are then repeated to form a line of verse. In Classical Latin and Classical Greek, a metrical foot contains a combination of long and short syllables. Here are the most common metrical feet in English:

Iamb: Two syllables, the first of which is unstressed and the second of which is stressed. For example, comPUTE, disPEL, aGREE.

Trochee: Two syllables, the first of which is stressed and the second of which is unstressed. For example: ARgue, BISHop, DOCtor.

Spondee: Two syllables, both of which are stressed. For example: ICE CREAM, HOT LINE, CELL PHONE.

Dactyl: Three syllables, the first of which is stressed and the next two of which are unstressed. For example, ELephant, POSSible, TRINity.

Anapest: Three syllables, the first two of which are unstressed and the third of which is stressed. For example: of a KIND, souvenIR, underSTAND.

1.4 GLOSSARY

1. Ubiquitous- existing everywhere at the same time.
2. Palpability- obvious and noticeable.
3. Enunciating- to make a clear statement.
4. Clichéd- something that has become overly familiar; in use for a long time.
5. Hackneyed- not interesting because of being in use for a long time.
6. Rhetorical- concerned with the art of speaking or writing as a way to influence people.
7. Explicit- very clear and complete.
8. Analogy- a comparison of two things based on their being alike in some way.
9. Homonyms- one of two or more words spelled and pronounced alike but different in meaning.
10. Millennia- a period of thousand years counted from the beginning of the Christian era.
11. Aesthetic- relating to art or beauty, pleasing in appearance.
12. Cognitive- including conscious mental activities such as thinking, understanding, learning and remembering.

1.5. SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the difference between a blank verse and free verse?

Possible Answer: Both blank verse and free verse are similar concepts, yet there are some notable differences. Blank verse requires that, while

there is no rhyme, the meter must be regular. Free verse, on the other hand, has no rhyme scheme and no pattern of meter. Free verse generally mimics natural speech, while blank verse still carries a musical quality due to its meter.

Q2. Discuss all the types of Rhyme.

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

Q3. How is Alliteration different from Assonance?

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

Q4. Define Imagery.

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

1.6 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1.6.1. Multiple choice questions

i) Repetition of the same or similar consonant sounds at the beginning of words

a) Metaphor

b) Alliteration

c) Assonance

d) Simile

ii) A figure of speech wherein a comparison is made between two unlike quantities without the use of the words 'like' or 'as'

a) Oxymoron c)Metaphor

b) Free verse d) Farce

iii) The use of senses to create images

a) Dialogue c) Allusion

b) Imagery d) Symbol

iv) Unrhymed verse but with a consistent metrical pattern is known as

a) Free verse c) Hexameter

b) Eye rhyme d) Blank verse

KEY

i) Alliteration ii) Metaphor

iii) Imagery iv) Blank verse

1.6.2. Short Answer type Questions.

Q1. Define Alliteration.

Q2. Differentiate between a Simile and Metaphor.

Q3. What is a Blank Verse?

1.7 SUGGESTED READINGS.

1. Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory by J.A Cuddon.

2. A Glossary of Literary Terms by M.H. Abrams.

1.8. REFERENCES

1. Dictionary of LITERARY TERMS & LITERARY THEORY by J.A Cuddon.

2. A Glossary of Literary Terms by M.H. Abrams.

3. Internet source.

1.9. MODEL TEST PAPER

Q1. What is the difference between a blank verse and free verse?

Q2. How is Alliteration different from Assonance?

Q3. Define Metaphor.

Q4. Define Alliteration.

Q5. Differentiate between a Simile and Metaphor.

Q6. What is a Blank Verse?

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INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY TERMS

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Literary terms are words used in discussions, classification, criticism and analysis of poetry, novels, and picture books.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is:

- To introduce the learners to the literary terms.
- To help learners differentiate various forms of writing and literary devices.

2.3 LITERARY TERMS

2.3.1. Couplet

The definition of couplet comes from the French word couple, which means "a little pair."A couplet is a successive pair of lines in a poem. The pair of lines that comprise a couplet generally rhyme with each other and contain the same meter. Couplets are either closed, which is to say that both lines are end-stopped, or open, which is to say that there is enjambment involved and the meaning of the line runs on past the end of the line. The couplet is one of the main verse units in Western literature and is a form of great antiquity. Chaucer was one of the first Englishmen to use it, in *The Legend of Good Women* and for most of *The Canterbury Tales*.Couplets have been a part of the literary traditions of many different cultures. The couplets is an attractive form because it can contain so much meaning in a short pair of lines yet also lend itself to developing a longer whole. The first line often posits something that the second line answers.

Types of Couplets

Elegiac Couplet : This example of couplet was used primarily in ancient Greek poetry for themes on a smaller scale than the epic. Each couplet must make sense on its own, but also contribute to the larger meaning. An elegiac couplet is comprised of a hexameter line (i.e., six poetic feet) followed by a line in pentameter (i.e., five poetic feet). This creates a sense of rising action in the first line and falling action in the second. Ancient Greek elegy was always written with this type of couplet.

Heroic Couplet : A heroic couplet is fairly similar to the elegiac couplet in that it is generally closed and self-contained, and thus has meaning on its own. Heroic couplets came into popularity in the mid-14th century in English epic and narrative poetry. The meter of heroic couplets is usually iambic pentameter, though some poets took liberties with changing the meter at times to provide a sort of closure.

Closed couplets are also known as formal couplets, while open couplets are sometimes called run-on couplet.

The term couplet generally only refers to poetry, though it can be found in folk songs even.

2.3.2. Prologue

The prologue, Greek prologos (meaning: before word), is an opening of a story that establishes the setting and gives background details.Generally speaking, the main function of a prologue tells some earlier story and connects it to the main story. Similarly, it serves as a means to introduce characters of a story and throws light on their roles. In its modern sense, a prologue acts as a separate entity and is not considered part of the current story that a writer ventures to tell.

It is the opening section of a work, a kind of introduction which is part of the work and not prefatory. It was common in drama in the 17th and 18th c., when it was often in verse. One of the earliest prologue examples is Chaucer's *General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales.* His prologue was built on the conventional pattern. He used it to introduce all his characters or pilgrims in dramatic details before each of them told their story on their way to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Saint Thomas Beckett.As previously mentioned, the primary function of a prologue is to let the readers/audience be aware of the earlier part of the story and enable them to relate it to the main story. This literary device is also a means to present characters and establish their roles.

2.3.3. Epilogue

An epilogue or epilog taken from Greek 'epílogos' meaning conclusion or in addition is a piece of writing at the end of a work of literature, usually used to bring closure to the work. It is presented from the perspective of within the story. When the author steps in and speaks indirectly to the reader, which is more properly considered an afterword. An epilogue is the final chapter at the end of a story that often serves to reveal the fates of the characters. Some epilogues may feature scenes only tangentially related to the subject of the story. They can be used to hint at a sequel or wrap up all the loose ends. They can occur at a significant period of time after the main plot has ended. In some cases, the epilogue is used to allow the main character a chance to "speak freely".

An epilogue can continue in the same narrative style and perspective as the preceding story, although the form of an epilogue can occasionally be drastically different from the overall story. It can also be used as a sequel. The opposite is a prologue—a piece of

writing at the beginning of a work of literature or drama, usually used to open the story and capture interest.

2.3.4. Personification

Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing, an idea or an animal is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings. Personification is a figure of speech where human qualities are given to animals, objects or ideas. It is the opposite of a metaphor but is very similar. In arts, personification means representing a non-human thing as if it were human. Personification gives human traits and qualities, such as emotions, desires, sensations, gestures and speech, often by way of a metaphor.

Personification is much used in visual arts. Examples in writing are "the leaves waved in the wind", "the ocean heaved a sigh" or "the Sun smiled at us". In easy language personification is just giving an example of a living being for a non-living thing. "The wind shouted". Obviously the wind cannot shout, only people can. This is what is called personification.

Another commonly used personification is found in storybooks where animals are commonly attributed names or labels for recognition. This is called anthropomorphism. Organisms may also be used as embodiment or incarnations of a concept.

Another word for comparing a person with an object is Objectification.

For example, when we say, “The sky weeps” we are giving the sky the ability to cry, which is a human quality. Thus, we can say that the sky has been personified in the given sentence.

Common Examples of Personification

Look at my car. She is a beauty, isn’t it so?

The wind whispered through dry grass.

The fire swallowed the entire forest.

We see from the above examples of personification that this literary device helps us relate actions of inanimate objects to our own emotions.

The wind whispered through dry grass.

The fire swallowed the entire forest.

We see from the above examples of personification that this literary device helps us relate actions of inanimate objects to our own emotions.

2.3.5. Soliloquy

A soliloquy is a popular literary device often used in drama to reveal the innermost thoughts of a character. It is a great technique used to convey the progress of action of the play by means of expressing a character's thoughts about a certain character or past, present or upcoming event while talking to himself without acknowledging the presence of any other person.The word soliloquy is derived from Latin word "solo" which means "to himself" and "loquor" means "I speak" respectively. A soliloquy is often used as a means of character revelation or character manifestation to the reader or the audience of the play. Due to a lack of time and space, it was sometimes considered essential to present information about the plot and to expose the feelings and intentions of the characters. Dramatists made extensive use of soliloquies in their plays but it has become outdated, though some playwrights still use it in their plays. Soliloquy examples abound during the Elizabethan era.

Soliloquy and Monologue

Sometimes soliloquy is wrongly mixed up with monologue and aside. These two techniques are distinctly different from a soliloquy. Although, like soliloquy, a monologue is a speech, the purpose and presentation of both is different. In a monologue, a character usually makes a speech in the presence of other characters, while in a soliloquy, the character or speaker speaks to himself. By doing so, the character keeps these thoughts secret from the other characters of the play. An aside on the other hand, is a short comment by a character towards the audience for another character usually without his knowing about it.

Examples of Soliloquy from Literature

Shakespeare made extensive use of soliloquies in his plays. But before Shakespeare, we find considerable use of this significant dramatic technique in Christopher Marlow's

play *Doctor Faustus.* Modern plays do not have as much examples of soliloquy as the Renaissance era.

Example "Yet art thou still but Faustus and a man"

In the first soliloquy of *Doctor Faustus,* Marlowe has nicely summed up Faustus' life, motives, intentions and growth of his ideas that took place before the start of action. An extra-ordinary ambitious soul of Doctor Faustus is revealed here who was not satisfied with the existing branches of knowledge and needed something beyond the powers of man.

Soliloquies were frequently used in dramas but went out of fashion when drama shifted towards realism in the late 18th century.

2.3.6. Farce

In theatre, a farce is a comedy that aims at entertaining the audience through situations that are highly exaggerated, extravagant, and thus improbable. The word derives from the Latin Farcire,' to stuff'. The object of farce is to provoke mirth of the simplest and most basic kind: roars of laughter rather than smiles. It is associated with burlesque though it must be distinguished from burlesque with clowning, buffoonery, slapstick comedy. The basic elements of farce are exaggerated physical action, exaggeration of character and situation, absurd situations and improbable events and surprises in the form of unexpected appearances and disclosures. Farces are often highly incomprehensible plot-wise (due to the many plot twists and random events that occur), but viewers are encouraged not to try to follow the plot in order to avoid confusion. Farce is also characterized by physical humor, the use of deliberate absurdity or nonsense, and broadly stylized performances. Farces have been written for the stage and film. Furthermore, a farce is also often set in one particular location, where all events occur.

The absolute origins of farce are obscure and at its simplest it could be described as a form of prehistoric horseplay. In classical literature farcical elements are to be found in the plays of Aristophanes and Plautus. The first plays to be described as farces were French and belong to the late middle ages. These poked fun at the follies and vices of everyday life.

2.3.7. Satire

Satire is a genre of literature, and sometimes graphic and performing arts, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government or society itself, into improvement.Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society.A feature of satire is strong irony or sarcasm—"in satire, irony is militant"—but parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are all frequently used in satirical speech and writing. This "militant" irony or sarcasm often professes to approve of (or at least accept as natural) the very things the satirist wishes to attack.

Satire is a technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society by using humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. It intends to improve humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. A writer in a satire uses fictional characters, which stand for real people, to expose and condemn their corruption.A writer may point a satire toward a person, a country or even the entire world. Usually, a satire is a comical piece of writing which makes fun of an individual or a society to expose its stupidity and shortcomings. In addition, he hopes that those he criticizes will improve their characters by overcoming their weaknesses.

Satire is nowadays found in many artistic forms of expression, including literature, plays, commentary, television shows, and media such as lyrics.

2.3.8. Irony

Irony from Ancient Greek (eir?neía), meaning "dissimulation, feigned ignorance" in its broadest sense, is a rhetorical device, literary technique, or event in which what appears, on the surface, to be the case, differs radically from what is actually the case. Irony may be divided into categories such as verbal, dramatic, and situational.

Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. It may also be a situation that may end up in quite a different way than what is generally anticipated. In simple words, it is a difference between the appearance and the reality.

Types of Irony

On the grounds of the above definition, we distinguish two basic kinds of irony i.e.

a) Verbal irony **–** A verbal irony involves what one does not mean. When in response to a foolish idea, we say, "what a great idea!" it is a verbal irony.

b) Situational irony **–** A situational irony occurs when, for instance, a man is chuckling at the misfortune of the other even when the same misfortune, in complete unawareness, is befalling him. When you laugh at a person who slipped stepping on a banana peel and the next thing you know, you slipped too.

Difference between Dramatic Irony and Situational Irony

Dramatic irony is a kind of irony in a situation, which the writers frequently employ in their works. In situational irony, both the characters and the audience are fully unaware of the implications of the real situation. In dramatic irony, the characters are oblivious of the situation but the audience is not. For example, in "Romeo and Juliet", we know much before the characters that they are going to die.

In real life circumstances, irony may be comical, bitter or sometimes unbearably offensive.

Verbal, dramatic, and situational irony are often used for emphasis in the assertion of a truth. The ironic form of simile, used in sarcasm, and some forms of litotes can emphasize one's meaning by the deliberate use of language which states the opposite of the truth, denies the contrary of the truth, or drastically and obviously understates a factual connection.

Common Examples of Irony

The name of Britain's biggest dog was "Tiny".

The butter is as soft as a marble piece.

"Oh great! Now you have broken my new camera."

2.4. GLOSSARY

1. Enjambment- running over of a sentence from one couplet to another, continuation without pause.

2. Antiquity- matters relating to the life or culture of ancient times.
3. Venture- to start to do something new or different that usually involves risk.
4. Prefatory- included at the beginning of a book, speech, etc., as an introduction.
5. Anthropomorphism- an interpretation of what is not human or personal in terms of human or personal characteristics; humanization.
6. Embodiment- someone or something that is a perfect representative or example of a quality or idea.
7. Revelation- an act of making something known, an act of revealing something in a surprising way.
8. Exaggerated- to make/describe something beyond bounds or the truth.
9. Burlesque- a play, story, novel, etc., that makes a serious subject seem funny or ridiculous.
10. Buffoonery- a foolish or playful behavior.
11. Absurd- having no rational or orderly relationship to human life.
12. Obscure- difficult or impossible to know completely and with certainty.
13. Parody- a bad or unfair example of something.
14. Sarcasm- the use of words that mean the opposite of what you really want to say especially in order to insult someone, to show irritation, or to be funny.

2.5 SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS

Q1. Differentiate between verbal irony and situational irony.

Possible Answer: A verbal irony involves what one does not mean. When in response to a foolish idea, we say, "what a great idea!" it is a verbal irony. Whereas, a situational irony occurs when, for instance, a man is chuckling at the misfortune of the other even when the same misfortune, in complete unawareness, is befalling him. When you laugh at a person who slipped stepping on a banana peel and the next thing you know, you slipped too.

Q2. How is soliloquy different from monologue?

Ans.

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Q3. Discuss the various elements involved in Farce.

Ans.

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Q4. Discuss the major types of Couplet.

Ans.

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2.6. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

2.6.1 Multiple choice questions.

i) The result of an action which is the reverse of what we expect

a) Understatement c) Situational Irony

b) Postmodernism d) Oxymoron

ii) The contrast between the literal meaning of what is said and what is meant is

a) Analogy c) Paradox

b) Verbal Irony d) Juxtaposition

iii) When a character is alone on stage and speaks his or her thoughts aloud is

a) Free verse c) Soliloquy

b) Myth d) Metonymy

iv) "The wind was blowing so hard, the sun was scared to come out" is an example of

a) Synecdoche c) Satire

b) Personification d) Farce

KEY

i) Situational Irony

ii) Verbal Irony

iii) Soliloquy

iv) Personification

2.6.2 Short Answer type Questions

Q1. What is Personification?

Q2. What do you mean by Satire?

Q3. Define Irony.

Q4. Differentiate between Epilogue and Prologue.

2.7. SUGGESTED READING

1. Dictionary of LITERARY TERMS & LITERARY THEORY by J.A. Cuddon.

2. A Glossary of Literary Terms by M.H. Abrams.

2.8. REFERENCES

1. Dictionary of LITERARY TERMS & LITERARY THEORY by J.A. Cuddon.
2. A Glossary of Literary Terms by M.H. Abrams.
3. Web source.

2.9. MODEL TEST PAPER

Q1. How is soliloquy different from monologue?

Q2. What is Personification?

Q3. What do you mean by Satire?

Q4. Define Irony.

Q5. Differentiate between Epilogue and Prologue.

Q6. Define Farce.

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE : OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERARTURE

LITERATURE IN THE AGE OF CHAUCER

STRUCTURE

3.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the student will be able to enumerate:

a) the Age of Chaucer

b) Chaucer's life.

c) Chaucer's works

d) Chaucer's contemporaries

3.2. INTRODUCTION TO THE AGE OF CHAUCER

The social structure of England in the fourteenth century was feudal, that is to say power radiated from the king, through his nobles and through their subjects, with little of the King's power reaching the lower strata of the society. The King and his nobles owned the land, which was divided into agricultural estates, and these provided the men, money and the material. The society was organized into a hierarchical form, one's wealth and power being a matter of what position one occupied in the hierarchical ladder.

The plague or *Black Death* entered England in mid-century with dreadful consequences. It is said that half of the population of England was wiped out, and while this may be an exaggeration, it is not exaggeration to say that medieval man lived with constant fear of its ravages. One of the effects of plague was to inflate the prices and further depress the already grim living conditions of those at the bottom of the economic ladder. This initiated the peasant revolt (1381), in which the infuriated murdered a good many of those whom they regarded as their exploiters. The Hundred Years of War continued, with the French threatening to invade England. The Church was at the centre stage of everyday life be it social, political or religious. Church itself was divided at that time, one fraction having a Pope at Rome and the other at Avignon.

The fourteenth century is remarkable historically for the decline of feudalism, for the growth of the English national spirit during the wars with France, for the growth of the English national spirit during the wars with France, for the prominence of the House of Commons, and for the growing power of the working classes, who had earlier been in a quite deplorable condition. The age produced remarkable writers, of whom Geoffrey Chaucer is one of the greatest of English writers.

3.3. LIFE OF CHAUCER

For our convenience the life of Chaucer is divided into three periods. The first, of thirty years, includes his youth and early manhood, in which time he was influenced almost exclusively by French literary models. The second period, of fifteen years, covers Chaucer's active life as diplomat and man of affairs; and in this the Italian influence seems stronger than the French. The third, of fifteen years, generally known as the English period, is the time of Chaucer's richest development. He lives at home, observes life closely but kindly, and while the French influence is still strong, as shown in the Canterbury Tales, he seems to grow more independent of foreign models and is dominated chiefly by the vigorous life of his own English people.

a) First Period

Chaucer was born about in 1343 of a prosperous family and reared in London. His father, a wine-merchant, was able to find him a position as a page boy in the household of King Edward III'S daughter-in-law, Elizabeth of Ulster, and from this period on, Chaucer enjoyed the uninterrupted favors of the members of the court of successively, Edward, Richard II, and Henry IV, both as a man of affairs and as a poet. He served as a soldier in France, in the campaigns of the Hundred Years of War in 1359-1360 and was sent abroad on the least seven occasions between 1368 and 1387, either to France or Italy, on diplomatic missions. He was married to Philippa Roet of Flanders, who was lady-in-waiting to Queen Philippa and later to John of Gaunt's second wife Constance.

Chaucer's boyhood was spent in London, on Thames Street, which was the hub for commercial activities. Of his education, we know nothing, except that he was a great reader. At nineteen he was sent by the king on one of the many expeditions and saw chivalry and all pageantry of the medieval war at the height of their outward splendor. Taken prisoner at the unsuccessful siege of Rheims, he is said to have been ransomed by money out of the royal purse. A few years after returning to England, he became a squire of the royal household, the personal attendant and confidant of the king. It was during his first period that he married a maid of honor to the queen. This was probably Philippa Roet, sister of John of Gaunt, the famous Duke of Lancaster.

b) Second Period

In 1370, Chaucer was sent abroad on the first of these diplomatic missions that were to occupy the greater part of the next fifteen years. Two years later, he made his first official visit to Italy, to arrange a commercial treaty with Genoa, and from this time is noticeable a rapid development in his literary powers and development missions he filled various offices at home, chief of which was Comptroller of Customs at the port of London.

c) Third Period

In 1386, Chaucer was elected as a Member of Parliament from Kent, marking a beginning of his best literary works. Though exceedingly busy in public affairs and as receiver of customs, his heart was still with his books, from which only nature could win him. In the fourteenth century politics seems to have been, for honest men, a very uncertain business. The last period of his life, though outwardly most troubled, was the most fruitful of all. Chaucer died in 1400 and was buried with honour in Westminster Abbey.

3.4. WORKS OF CHAUCER

For the chronological convenience, works of Chaucer can be roughly divided into three periods, corresponding to the three periods of his life. It should be remembered, however, that it is impossible to fix the exact dates for most of his works. Moreover, it is somewhat difficult to read Chaucer largely due to obsolete and archaic diction. But these difficulties are more apparent than real. On the other hand, any modern reworking of the poet's works runs the risk of losing the charm and dry humor of the original.

a) First Period

The best known, though not the best, poem of the first period is the *Romaunt of the Rose.* It is a translation from the French, *Roman de la Rose*- a graceful but exceedingly tiresome allegory of the whole course of love. Chaucer translated this universal favourite, putting in some original English touches; but of the present *Romaunt,* only the first seventeen hundred lines are believed to be Chaucer's own work.

Perhaps the best poem of this period is the "Dethe of the Blanche the Duchesse", best known as the "Boke of the Duchesse", a poem of considerable dramatic and emotional power, written after the death of Blanche, the wife of Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt. Additional poems are "Compleynte to Pite", a graceful love poem: the "A B C", a prayer to the virgin, translated from the French of a Christian Monk, and a number of what Chaucer calls "ballads, roundels, and virelays." The latter were imitations of the prevailing French love ditties.

b) Second Period

The chief work of the second or Italian period (Italian writers, Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio being the major influences) is *Troilus and Criseyde,* a poem of eight thousand lines. The original story was a favorite of many authors during the Middle Ages, which Shakespeare makes use of in his *Troilus and Cressida.* The "Hous of Fame" (The House of Fame) is one of Chaucer's unfinished poems, having the rare combination of lofty thought and simple, homely language showing the influence of the great Italian master. In the poem the author is carried away in a dream by a great eagle from the brittle temple of Venus, in a sandy wilderness, up to the hall of fame. To this house come all rumors of earth, as the sparks fly upward.

The third great poem of the period is the *Legende of Goode Wimmen*. As he is resting in the fields among the daisies, he falls asleep and gay procession draws near. First come the love God, leading by the hand Alcestis, and model of all wifely virtues, whose emblem is the daisy; and behind them follow a troupe of glorious women, all of whom have been faithful in love. They gather about the poet; and God upbraids him for having translated the *Romance of the Rose,* and for his early poems reflecting on the vanity and fickleness of women. Chaucer promises, and as soon as he awakes sets himself to the task. Nine legends were written of which "Thisbe" is perhaps the best. It appears in all probability that Chaucer intended to make this his masterpiece, devoting many years to the stories of famous women who were true to love. But either because he wearied of his theme, or the plan of the *Canterbury Tales* was growing in his mind, he abandoned the task in the middle of his ninth legend. Perhaps, this is the reason why his prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* holds greater sway in the minds of his readers than any of the legends.

c) Third Period

Chaucer's masterpiece, the *Canterbury Tales,* one of the most famous and widely read works of literature, fills the third or English period of his life. The plan of the work is magnificent: to represent the wide sweep of English life by gathering a motley company together and letting each class of society tell its own favorite stories. Though the great work was never finished, Chaucer succeeded in his purpose so well that in the *Canterbury Tales* he has given us a picture of contemporary English life in all its facets be it its work and play, its deeds and dreams, its fun and sympathy and hearty joy of living. Such a rich variety of social documentation is rarely found in literary works.

3.5. CHAUCER'S CONTEMPORARIES

i. WILLIAM LANGLAND (1332-?..?)

He was born probably near Malvern, in Worcestershire, the son of a poor freeman, and in his early life lived in the fields as a shepherd. Later he went to London with his wife and children, getting a hungry living as clerk in the church. His real life meanwhile was that of a seer, a prophet after Isaiah's own heart, if we may judge by the prophecy which soon found a voice in *Piers Plowman.* In 1399, after the success of his great work, he was possibly writing another poem called *Richard the Redeless*, a protest against Richard II, but nothing can be said about the authorship of this poem with certainity, which was left unfinished by the assassination of the king. After 1399, Langland disappears utterly, and the date of death is unknown.

ii. JOHN WYCLIF (1324-1384)

Wyclif, as a man, is by far the most powerful English figure of the fourteenth century. His great work, which earned him his title of "father of English prose", is the translation of the Bible. Wyclif himself translated the gospels, and much more of the New Testament; the rest was finished by his followers, especially by Nicholas of Hereford. Though Wyclif's works are now unread, except by occasional scholars, he still occupies a very high place in the English literature.

iii. JOHN MANDEVILLE

About the year 1365, there appeared in England an extraordinary book called

the *Voyage and Travail of Sir John Maundeville,* written in excellent style in the Midland dialect, which was then becoming the literary language of England. The original work was probably in French, which was speedily translated into Latin, then into English and other languages; and wherever it appeared, it became extremely popular. It's marvelous stories of the western land is perfectly suited to the credulous spirit of the age. At the present times there are said to be more than three hundred copied manuscripts of "Mandeville" in various languages.

3.6. LET US SUM UP

The above chapter tried to look at Chaucer's life and his work. It makes an attempt to study Chaucer's work by broadly dividing it into three phases. In his early or French period, he translated "The Romance of the Rose" and wrote many minor poems; his middle or Italian period, of which the chief poems are "Troilus and Cressida" and "The Legend of Good Women"; his late or English period, in which he worked at his masterpiece, the famous *Canterbury Tales*. The contemporaries of Chaucer viz. William Langland, John Wyclif, and John Mandeville are also discussed here.

3.7. GLOSSARY

Feudal – pertaining to feudal system

Strata – social level

Estate – landed property

Hierarchy – system of persons or things arranged in a graded order

Plague – an epidemic disease

Inflate – increase

Depress – deject

Diplomat – ambassador

Prosperous – flourishing, well- off

Commercial – relating to commerce

Expeditions – journey

Chivalry- courteous behaviour

Confidant – trust worthy, loyal

Obsolete – no longer in use

Archaic – ancient, out of date

Allegory – a story which is symbolic

Brittle – likely to break

3.8. SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3.8.1 SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

a) Briefly discuss the Age of Chaucer.

Possible Answer: The fourteenth century is remarkable historically for the decline of feudalism, for the growth of the English national spirit during the wars with France, for the growth of the English national spirit during the wars with France, for the prominence of the House of Commons, and for the growing power of the working classes. The age produced remarkable writers, of whom Geoffrey Chaucer is one of the greatest of English writers.

b) What do you know about the life of Chaucer?

Possible Answer: For our convenience the life of Chaucer is divided into three periods. The first, of thirty years, includes his youth and early manhood, in which time he was influenced almost exclusively by French literary models. The second period, of fifteen years, covers Chaucer's active life as diplomat and man of affairs; and in this the Italian influence seems stronger than the French. The third, of fifteen years, generally known as the English period, is the time of Chaucer's richest development.

c) Discuss the works of Chaucer.

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d) Write a note on the contemporaries of Chaucer.

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3.8.2 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1) In which century was Chaucer born?

a) 12th b) 13th

c) 14th d) 15th

2) Chaucer's father and grandfather were both what?

a) Bakers b) Brewers

c) Butchers d) Vintners

3) What name is now given to the language in which Chaucer worked?

a) Early English b) Middle English

c) New English d) Old English

4) What is the title of the earliest of Chaucer's poems written sometime between 1369 and 1372?

a) The Book of the Duchess b) The Book of the Abbess

c) The Book of the Countess d) The Book of the Governess

5) What is the title of Chaucer's best known work?

a) The Canterbury Tales b) The Salisbury Tales

c) The Winchester Tales d) The York Tales

3.9. ANSWER KEY

1) c 2) d 3) b

4) a 5) a

3.10. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1) Discuss in detail the Age of Chaucer.

2) Write a detailed note on the life and works of Chaucer.

3.11. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. A Critical History of English Literature (Volume One)- David Daiches
2. English Literature: Its History and its Significance for the life of the English Speaking World – William J. Long
3. History of English Literature- Andrew Sanders
4. A History of English Literature – Legouis and Cazamian

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LITERATURE OF THE REVIVAL

STRUCTURE

4.1. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, the student will be able to:

a) know about the revival of Learning

b) Renaissance and Humanism

c) understand the impact of Renaissance on literature viz. Prose, Poetry and Drama.

4.2. THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

The Revival of Learning denotes, in its broadest sense, the gradual enlightenment of the human mind after the darkness of the Middle Ages. The names Renaissance and Humanism are often applied to the same movement. The term Renaissance, though used by many writers "to denote the whole transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world" is more correctly applied to the revival of art resulting from the discovery and imitation of classic models in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Humanism applies to the revival of classic literature and was so called by its leaders because they held that the study of classics was the best means of promoting the largest human interests. The term Revival of Learning is used as an umbrella term to cover the whole movement.

Renaissance etymologically means "rebirth" and transformed European culture from the mid 14th century in Italy to the mid 17th century in England. Strongly influenced by the rediscovery of the classical, Greek and Latin literature, it was greatly accelerated by the development of printing. Broadly speaking, the Renaissance implies that re-awakening of learning which came to Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Renaissance was not only English but a European phenomenon, and basically considered, it signalled a thorough substitution of the medieval habits of thought by new attitudes. The dawn of Renaissance came first to Italy and a little later to France. To England it came much later, roughly about the beginning of the sixteenth century. In Italy, the impact of Greek learning was felt after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople the Greek scholars fled and took refuge in Italy carrying with them a vast treasure of ancient Greek literature in manuscript. The study of this literature fired the soul and imagination of the Italy of that time and created a new kind of intellectual and aesthetic culture quite different from the Middle Ages.

Firstly, the Renaissance meant the death of the mediaeval scholasticism which had for long been keeping human thoughts in bondage. This school of thought got themselves entangled in useless controversies and tried to apply the principles of Aristotelian philosophy to the doctrines of Christianity, thus giving birth to vast literature. Secondly, it signaled a revolt against spiritual authority-the authority of the Pope. The Reformation though not a part of the revival of learning, was yet a companion movement in England. This defiance, of spiritual authority went hand in hand with that of intellectual

authority, Renaissance intellectuals distinguished themselves by their flagrant anti-authoritarianism.

Thirdly, the Renaissance implied a greater perception of beauty and polish in the Greek and Latin scholars. This beauty and this polish were sought by Renaissance men of letters to be incorporated in their native literature. Further, it meant the birth of a kind of imitative tendency implied in term "classicism". Lastly, the renaissance marked a change from the theocentric to the homocentric conception of the universe. Human values came to be recognized as permanent values, and they were sought to be enriched and illuminated by the heritage of antiquity. This marked the rise of humanism and also by implication, materialism.

4.3. THE IMPACT OF RENAISSANCE ON LITERATURE

a) Prose

The most important prose writers who exhibit the influence of the Renaissance on English prose are Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, John Lyly, and Philip Sydney. Erasmus was a Dutchman who, came to Oxford to learn Greek. His chief work was *The Praise of Folly* which is the English translation of his most important work written in England. Erasmus wrote this work in 1510. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* was the "true prologue to the Renaissance". It was the first book written by an Englishman which achieved European fame; but it was written in Latin (1516) and only later (1555) was translated into English. The word "utopia" is derived from the Greek word "ou topos" meaning no place. More's utopia is an imaginary island which is the habitat of ideal republic. By the picture of the ideal state is implied a kind of social criticism of contemporary island. More's indebtedness to Plato's *Republic* is quite obvious. However, More seems also to be indebted to the then recent discoveries of the explorers and navigators like Vasco da Gama-who were mostly of Spanish and Portuguese nationalities. In Utopia, More discredits medievalism in all its implications and exalts the ancient Greek culture.

Passing on to the prose writers of the Elizabethan age- the age of the flowering of the Renaissance- we find them markedly influenced both in their style and thought-content by the revival of antique classical learning. Sydney in *Arcadia*, Lyly in *Euphues,* and Hooker in *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* write the English which is away

from the language of common speech; and is either too heavily laden- as in case of Lyly and Sydney- with bits of classical finery, or modeled on Latin syntax. Further in his own career and his *Essays,* Bacon stands as a representative of the materialistic, Machiavellian facet of the Renaissance, particularly of the Renaissance Italy. He combines in himself the dispassionate pursuit of truth and the keen desire for material advance.

b) Poetry

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-42) and the Earl of Surrey (1517-47) were pioneers of the new poetry in England. After Chaucer the spirit of English poetry had slumbered for a century. The change in pronunciation in the fifteenth century had created a lot of confusion in prosody which in the practice of such important poets as Lydgate and Skeleton had been reduced to a mockery. Wyatt had travelled extensively in Italy and France and had come under the spell of Italian Renaissance. It must be remembered that the work of Wyatt and Surrey does not reflect the impact of the Rome of antiquity alone, but also that of modern Italy. So far as the versification is concerned, Wyatt and Surrey imported into England various new Italian metrical patterns. Moreover, they gave poetry a new sense of grace, dignity, delicacy, and harmony, which was found by them lacking in the works of Chaucer and the Chaucerian's alike. Further, they were highly influenced by the love poetry of Petrarch and they did their best to imitate it. Petrarch's love poetry is of the country kind, in which the pining lover is shown as a "servant" of his mistress with his heart tempest-tossed by her neglect and his mood varying according to her absence or presence.

It goes to the credit of Wyatt and Surrey to have introduced the Sonnet into the English literary scene. Their poems appeared in *Tottel's Miscellany* in 1557. They in particular brought the sonnet and blank verse, which were later to be practiced by a vast number of the best English poets. Though in his sonnets, Wyatt did not employ regular iambic pentameters yet he created a sense of discipline among the poets of his times who had forgotten the lesson and example of Chaucer and, like Skelton, were writing "ragged" and "jagged" lines which jarred so unpleasantly upon the ear. Wyatt wrote in all thirty-two sonnets, out of which seventeen are adaptations of Petrarch. Most of them (twenty-eight) have the rhyme scheme of Petrarch's sonnets; that is, each

has the octave *a b b a a b b a* and twenty-six out of these twenty eight have the *c d d c e e* sestet. Only in the last three he comes near what is called the Shakespearean formula, that is, three quatrains and a couplet. In the thirteenth sonnet, he exactly produced it; this sonnet rhymes a *b a b, a b a b, a b a b, c c*. Surrey wrote about fifteen or sixteen sonnets out of which ten use the Shakespearean formula which was to enjoy the greatest popularity among the sonneteers of the sixteenth century. Surrey's work is characterized by exquisite grace and tenderness which we find missing from that of Wyatt. Moreover, he is a better craftsman and gives greater harmony to his poetry. Surrey employed blank verse in his translation of the fourth book of *The Aeneid*, the work which was first translated into English verse by Gavin Douglas a generation earlier in heroic couplets.

c) Drama:

The revival of ancient classical learning scored its first clear impact on England drama in the middle of the sixteenth century. Previous to this impact there had been a pretty vigorous native tradition of drama, particularly comedy. This tradition had its origin in the liturgical drama and had progressed through the miracle and the mystery, and later the morality, to the interlude. John Heywood had written quite a few vigorous interludes, but they were altogether different in tone, spirit, and purpose from the Greek and Roman drama of antiquity. The first English regular tragedy *Gorbuduc* and comedy *Ralph Roister Doister* were very much imitations of the classical tragedy and comedy. *Gorbuduc* is slavish imitation of Senecan tragedy and has all its features without much of its life. Like Senecan tragedy it has revenge as the tragic motive, has most of its important incidents, narrated on the stage by messengers, has much of rhetoric and verbose declamation, has a ghost among its *dramatis personae,* and so forth. It is indeed a good instance of the "blood and thunder" kind of tragedy.

Later on, the "University Wits" struck a note of independence in their dramatic works. They refused to copy Roman drama as slavishly as the writers of *Gorbuduc* and *Roister Doister*. In their imagination, they were all fired by the new literature which showed them new dimensions of human capability. In this respect, Marlowe stands in the fore-front of the University Wits. Rightly has he been called "the true child of the Renaissance".

4.4. LET US SUM UP

In this lesson we have studied the Revival of Learning, what it was, and the significance of the terms Humanism and Renaissance. We have looked at the influence of Renaissance on different genres of literature viz. prose, drama and poetry. The important prose writers of the Renaissance and their works are Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, More's *Utopia,* Sydney's *Arcadia* and Lyly's *Eupheus*. Sir Thomas Wyatt and Earl of Surrey introduced sonnet to the English poetry.

4.5. GLOSSARY

Revival – restoration

Enlightenment–philosophical movement stressing the importance of reason and logic

Renaissance – revival of intellectual or artistic achievement

Humanism – a system of thought that focuses on humans and their values, capacities and worth

Transition – shift

Imitation – copy, mimicry

Classics – a literary work of ancient Greece or Rome

Medieval – belonging to Middle ages

Aesthetic - attractive or appealing

Bondage – one who is bound as a slave

Controversy – dispute, argument

Anti – authoritarianism – opposition to authority

Incorporate – combined into one body

Theocentric – centring on God as the prime concern

Homocentric – centring on humans

Materialism – concern for possessions or material wealth

4.6. SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS

4.6.1 SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q.1 Explain the term "Renaissance".

Possible Answer: Renaissance etymologically means "rebirth" and transformed European culture from the mid 14th century in Italy to the mid 17th century in England. Strongly influenced by the rediscovery of the classical, Greek and Latin literature, it was greatly accelerated by the development of printing. Broadly speaking, the Renaissance implies that re-awakening of learning which came to Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Renaissance was not only English but a European phenomenon, and basically considered, it signalled a thorough substitution of the medieval habits of thought by new attitudes. The dawn of Renaissance came first to Italy and a little later to France. To England it came much later, roughly about the beginning of the sixteenth century. In Italy, the impact of Greek learning was felt after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople the Greek scholars fled and took refuge in Italy carrying with them a vast treasure of ancient Greek literature in manuscript. The study of this literature fired the soul and imagination of the Italy of that time and created a new kind of intellectual and aesthetic culture quite different from the Middle Ages.

Q.2 What do you understand by Humanism?

Possible Answer: The names Renaissance and Humanism are often applied to the same movement. The term Renaissance, though used by many writers "to denote the whole transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world" is more correctly applied to the revival of art resulting from the discovery and imitation of classic models in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Humanism applies to the revival of classic literature and was so called by its leaders because they held that the study of classics was the best means of promoting the largest human interests. The term Revival of Learning is used as an umbrella term to cover the whole movement.

Q.3 Write a note on the important prose writers of the Renaissance.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.6.2. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Q4. Wyatt and Surrey's sonnets appeared where?

a) Tottel's Miscellany b) *Eupheus*

c) *Arcadia* d) *The Aeneid*

Q5. Which is famous work by Thomas More?

a) *Eupheus* b) *Arcadia*

c) *Utopia* d) *The Aeneid*

Q6. *Praise of Folly* is written by whom?

a) Sydney b) Lyly

c) Surrey d) Erasmus

Q7. Which is the first English regular tragedy?

a) Gorboduc *b) Ralph Roister Doister*

c) Doctor Faustus *d) Hamlet*

Q8. Which is the first English comedy?

a) *Gorboduc* *b) Ralph Roister Doister*

c) As You Like It *d) None of the Above*

Q9. What does antique classical learning refer to?

a) ancient Greek and Roman literature

b) Anglo-Saxon literature

c) Chaucer's work

d) None of the above

4.7. ANSWER KEY

A4. a A5. c A6. d

A7. a A8. b A9. a

4.8. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1) Discuss in detail the revival of learning.

2) Discuss the impact of Renaissance on English literature.

3) What is the contribution of Sir Thomas Wyatt and Earl of Surrey to English poetry?

4.9. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. **A Critical History of English Literature (Volume One)**- David Daiches

2. **English Literature: Its History and its Significance for the life of the English Speaking World** – William J. Long

3. **History of English Literature**- Andrew Sanders

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ORIGIN OF DRAMA

STRUCTURE

5.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the student will be able to enumerate:

a) Drama and the folk ritual

b) Drama within the Church

c) Miracle Plays

d) Mystery plays or Mystery Cycles

e) Morality Plays

f) Interludes

5.2. DRAMA AND THE FOLK RITUAL

Drama had its earliest beginnings in the community life of the village, the predominant form of settlement that took place in England in c.450, with the coming of the Anglo-Saxons. The villagers had to undertake the communal task of ploughing, sowing, harvesting and clearing the wasteland. This pattern of work and the survival of the community were determined by cycles of cultivation and change of seasons. And this in turn expressed itself in rituals that fed into mythologies. The rituals were performed as types of worship that both ensured the continuity of the cycles and acknowledged its significance. With the coming of Christianity in 597, these rituals were demythologized in accordance with Christian beliefs and at the same time their communal functions acquired new forms. The rituals retained a lot of their vigor through the Middle Ages developing itself into the folk play. What is interesting is that the Church always disapproved of the element of 'playing' in these folk customs. The church was intolerant of what they perceived as hidden dramatic elements in folk customs. This kind of censorship continued well into the Elizabethan period, with theatre being associated with the hellish art of feigning, license and misrule. The fact that it survived despite the continuous suppression speaks immensely for its vitality.

The native drama grew out of the activities of minstrels, strolling players, storytellers and entertainers who worked outside any formal tradition of theater. They were part of processions, pageants and tournaments, using the village green and town square as the playing area or open acting space. Most of their performances were ritualistic in nature, using for instance, the fertility myths to celebrate the spirit of fecundity and regeneration. Later, with the domination of the Christian myth the pagan ritual lost its primary function. As community activities these rituals did not require texts, so that many folk plays survived as mimetic actions alone. It was only much later that they were reinscribed into texts as rationalization for performances that may have taken place.

Recently, critics have challenged the theory that the history of drama marks an evolution from a primitive human activity that had to be polished and refined into the unique dramatic achievement of the Renaissance. Nothing could be further from truth, they insist. The religious drama of the medieval period had a distinct shape and content; it was also flourishing when the church and the authorities stopped it. As community drama, English folk plays were enacted by "amateurs" and performers like jugglers, acrobats, tumblers, rope-dancers and animal trainers. The ballad singers, storytellers and minstrels added to the imaginative quality of the performances with their songs and tales.

5.3. DRAMA WITHIN THE CHURCH

In Europe, the drama had a distinctly religious origin. There is little doubt that the church was at the centre of the medieval life. It catered to both the social and spiritual needs of people. But what is truly fascinating is the way that it harnessed drama for its own purpose. It found in the dramatic form an ideal vehicle for conveying its sermons. In fact, the rituals observed in the church had all the ingredients of drama. Notable amongst them was the Mass. It had colorful robes and vestment; a procession from the churchyard to the inner sanctuary led by the bishop and his attendants and often accompanied by the comic figure of the boy bishop. The central nave of the church had the pulpit and space for the choir, while the church could hold a compact congregation.

In many ways, the architecture of the building was like a natural theatre. It had choral singing and on special occasions as Christmas and Easter, the atmosphere was heightened by the use of candlelight, incense and music. By the tenth century words were added to the singing to give additional meaning. The first characters were drawn from the New Testament, and the object of the first plays was to make the church service more impressive or to emphasize the moral lessons by showing the reward of the good and the punishment of the evil doer. During the later days of the Roman Empire, the Church found the stage possessed by frightful plays. The debased drama was driven from the stage and plays of every kind were forbidden. Later the Church itself provided a substitute for the forbidden plays in the famous Mysteries and Miracles.

5.4. MYSTERY AND MIRACLE PLAYS

In France, the name *miracle* was given to any play representing the lives of saints, while *mystere* represented scenes from the life of Christ or stories from the Old

Testament associated with the coming of Messiah. In England this distinction was almost unknown, the name Miracle was used indiscriminately for all plays having their origin in the Bible or in the lives of the saints; and the name Mystery, to distinguish a certain class of plays, was not used until long after the religious drama had passed away.

Origin

As early as the fifth century living tableaux were introduced into sacred services. The plays originated as simple *tropes*, verbal embellishments of liturgical texts, and slowly became more elaborate. At an early period chants from the service of the day were added to the prose dialogue. As these liturgical dramas increased in popularity, vernacular forms emerged, as travelling companies of actors and theatrical productions organized by local communities became more common in the later Middle Ages. These primitive forms were later elaborated with dialogue and dramatic action. Eventually the dramas moved from church to the exterior - the churchyard and the public marketplace. These early performances were given in Latin, and were preceded by a vernacular prologue spoken by a herald who gave a synopsis of the events. The writers and directors of the earliest plays, were probably monks. Religious drama flourished from about the ninth century to the sixteenth.

Miracle plays, on the subject of miracles performed by saints, developed in the twelfth century in both England and on the continent. Typically, these plays focused on Virgin Mary and Saint Nicholas, both of whom had strong followings during the medieval period. Mary is often portrayed as helping those in need and danger- often at the last minute. Some of those she saved may have seemed unsavory sinners to a pious audience, both the point was that the saint saved all who truly wished to be saved.

In 1210, suspicious of the growing popularity of miracle plays, Pope Innocent III issued a papal edict forbidding clergy from acting on a public stage. This had the effect of transferring the organization of the dramas to town guilds, after which several changes followed. Once outside the church, the drama flourished, and soon became independent, although its themes continued to be religious and its services which connected with religious festivals. Although they quickly became public entertainers removed from the church building, and were popular as Corpus Christi entertainers throughout the fifteenth century, few miracle plays survive in English because King Henry VIII banned

them in the middle of the sixteenth century, during his reformation of the church. The craft guilds, professional organizations of the workers involve in the same trade – carpenters, wool merchants, and so on-soon began competing with each other in producing plays which could be performed during the feast of Corpus Christi.

Most of their plays derived from the biblical stories and the life of Christ. Because the Bible is silent on many details of the life of Christ, some plays invented new material and illuminated dark areas, thereby satisfying the intense curiosity medieval Christians had about events the Bible omitted. Vernacular texts replaced Latin, and non-Biblical passages were added along with comic scenes. Acting and characterization became more elaborate. These vernacular religious performances were, in some of the larger cities in England such as York, performed and produced by guilds, with each guild taking responsibility for a particular piece of scriptural history.

The mystery play developed, in some places, into a series of plays dealing with all the major events in the Christian calendar, from the Creation to the Day of Judgment. They were divided into two classes: the first given at Christmas, included all plays connected with the birth of Christ; the second at Easter, included the plays related to his death and triumph. By the begiining of the fourteenth century all these plays were in various localities united in single cycles beginning with the Creation and ending with the Final Judgement. The complete cycle was presented every spring beginning on Corpus Christi day.

By the end of the 15th century, the practice of acting these plays in cycles on festival days was established in several parts of Europe. Sometimes, each play was performed on a decorated pageant cart that moved about the city to allow different crowds to watch each play as well as provided actors with a dressing room as well as a stage. The entire cycle could take up to twenty hours to perform and could be spread over a number of days. Taken as a whole, these are referred to as Corpus Christi cycles. These cycles were often performed during the Feast of Corpus Christi and their overall design drew attention to Christ's life and his redemption for all of mankind. The plays were performed by a combination of professionals and amateurs and were written in highly elaborate stanza forms; they were often marked by the extravagance of the sets and "special effects", but could also be stark and intimate. The variety of theatrical and poetic styles, even in a single cycle of plays, could be remarkable.

Major Cycles of plays

There are four complete English biblical collections of plays; although these collections are sometimes referred to as "cycles," it is now believed that this term may attribute to these collections more coherence than they in fact possess. Probably every important town in England had its own cycle of plays for its own guilds to perform, but nearly all have been lost. At the present day only four cycles exist and these are:

1) the Chester cycle -25 plays

2) the York cycle – 48 plays

3) the Towneley or Wakefield cycle- 30 plays

4) the Coventry cycle- 42 plays

The Chester cycle has 25 plays, the Wakefield 30, the Coventry 42, and the York 48. The York plays are generally considered to be the best; but those of Wakefield show more humour and variety, and better worksmanship. The most famous plays of the Towneley collection are attributed to the Wakefield Master, an anonymous playwright who wrote in the fifteenth century. The Wakefield Master gets his name from the geographic location where he lived, the market-town of Wakefield in Yorkshire. He may have been a highly educated cleric there, or possibly a friar from a nearby monastery at Woodkirk, four miles north of Wakefield. It was once thought that this anonymous author wrote a series of 32 plays (each averaging about 384 lines) called the Towneley Cycle. The Master's contributions to this collection are still much debated, and some scholars believe he may have written fewer than ten of them.

The best known pageant in the Towneley manuscript is *The Second Shepherds' Pageant*, a burlesque of the Nativity featuring Mak the sheep stealer and his wife Gill, which more or less explicitly compares a stolen lamb to the Saviour of mankind. The *Harrowing of Hell*, derived from the apocryphal *Acts of Pilate*, was a popular part of the York and Wakefield cycles. The dramas of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods were developed out of mystery plays.

5.5. MORALITY PLAYS

Morality Plays were never a part of any cycle but developed independently as

moral tales in the fourteenth or early fifteenth century on the Continent and in England. They do not illustrate moments in the Bible, nor do they describe the life of Christ or the saints. Instead, they describe the lives of people facing the temptations of the world. The plays are careful to present a warning to the unwary that their souls are always in peril, that the Devil is on constant watch, and that people must behave properly if they are to be saved. The Morality generally ended in the triumph of the virtue, the devil leaping into hell-mouth with Vice on its back.

One feature of the morality plays is their reliance on the technique of allegory, a favorite medieval device. Allegory is the technique of giving abstract ideas or values a physical representation. In morality plays, abstractions such as goodness became characters in the drama. The use of allegory permitted the medieval dramatists to personify abstract values such as Sloth, Greed, Vanity, Strength, and Hope by making them characters and putting them on stage in action.

The dramatists specified symbols, clothing, and gestures appropriate to these abstract figures, thus helping the audience recognize the ideas, the characters represented. The use of allegory was an extremely durable technique that was already established in medieval paintings, printed books and books of emblem, in which, for example, sloth would be shown as a man reclining lazily on a bed or greed would be represented as overwhelmingly fat and vanity as a figure completely absorbed in a mirror. Using allegory to represent abstract qualities allowed the didactic playwrights to draw clear-cut lines of moral force: Satan was always bad; angels were always good. The allegories were clear, direct, and apparent to all who witnessed the plays.

The central objective in the morality play was the salvation of human beings, represented by an individual's struggle to avoid sin and damnation and achieve salvation in the otherworld. As in *Everyman,* (c. 1495), a late medieval play that is best known of the morality plays, the subjects were usually abstract battles between specific vices and certain virtues for the possession of human soul. In many ways the morality play was a dramatized sermon designed to teach a moral lesson. Marked by high seriousness, it was nevertheless entertaining and gave free scope to the imagination for new plots and incidents.

5.6. INTERLUDES

The Interludes signify the important transition from symbolism to realism. It appeared towards the end of the fifteenth century but it could not displace the morality which continued enjoying popularity, as we have pointed out above, till the end of sixteenth century. It dispensed with the allegorical figures of the morality play almost completely and affected a complete break with the religious type of drama, even though retaining some of its didactic character. It was purely secular and fairly realistic, though quite crude and somewhat grotesque.

5.7. LET US SUM UP

The above lesson tried to look at the origin of drama from the folk rituals and its origin within the Church. It makes an attempt to study in detail the Mystery and Miracle plays, Moralities and the Interludes.

5.8. GLOSSARY

Mythologies – collection of myths

Rituals – the body of ceremonies or rites

Minstrel – a medieval entertainer

Peagent – any magnificent or showy display

Fecundity – fertility

Regeneration – rebirth

Pagan – heathen

Mimetic – imitative

Pulpit – an elevated platform in Church

Congregation – an act of assembling

Messiah – here, Jesus Christ

Embellishment – decoration

Vernacular – native

Easter – a Christian feast commemorating the Ressurection of Jesus

Didactic – morally instructive

Salvation – redemption

Symbolism – a system of symbols or representations

Realism – an inclination toward literal truth and pragmatism

Grotesque – ludicrous, ugly, bizarre

5.9. SELF ASSEMENT QUESTIONS

5.9.1 SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q.1 Where does the Drama originated in England?

Possible Answer: In Europe, the drama had a distinctly religious origin. There is little doubt that the church was at the centre of the medieval life. It catered to both the social and spiritual needs of people. But what is truly fascinating is the way that it harnessed drama for its own purpose. It found in the dramatic form an ideal vehicle for conveying its sermons. In fact, the rituals observed in the church had all the ingredients of drama. Notable amongst them was the Mass. It had colorful robes and vestment; a procession from the churchyard to the inner sanctuary led by the bishop and his attendants and often accompanied by the comic figure of the boy bishop. The central nave of the church had the pulpit and space for the choir, while the church could hold a compact congregation.

Q.2 Name the important Mystery Cycles.

Possible Answer: There are four complete English biblical collections of plays; although these collections are sometimes referred to as "cycles," it is now believed that this term may attribute to these collections more coherence than they in fact possess. Probably every important town in England had its own cycle of plays for its own guilds to perform, but nearly all have been lost. At the present day only four cycles exist and these are:

1) the Chester cycle -25 plays

2) the York cycle – 48 plays

2) the Towneley or Wakefield cycle- 30 plays

3) the Coventry cycle- 42 plays

The Chester cycle has 25 plays, the Wakefield 30, the Coventry 42, and the York 48. The York plays are generally considered to be the best; but those of Wakefield show more humour and variety, and better worksmanship.

Q.3 What is a Miracle play?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q4. Explain what is a Mystery play?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.9.2 MCQS

1. Which of these is a Morality play?

   a) *Everyman* b) *Ralph Roister Doister*

   c) *Spanish tragedy* d) *Utopia*

2. Which technique is primarily used by a dramatist in a Morality play?

   a) Allegory b) Satire

   c) Farce d) None of the above

3. How many plays are attributed to Chester cycle?

a) 42 b) 30

c) 25 d) 48

4. The York cycle developed in which town?

a) Yorkshire b) Towneley

c) Coventry d) Chester

5. What do the Mystery plays represent?

a) the life of Christ b) revenge tragedies

c) rural life d) None of the above

5.10. ANSWER KEY

1) a 2) a 3) c

4) a 5) a

5.11. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1) Discuss in detail the origin of drama in England.

2) Write a detailed note on Mystery and Miracle plays.

5.12. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. **A Critical History of English Literature (Volume One)** - David Daiches

2. **English Literature: Its History and its Significance for the life of the English Speaking World** – William J. Long

3. **History of English Literature**- Andrew Sanders

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UNIVERSITY WITS

STRUCTURE

6.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying the unit, the student will be able to enumerate:

a) Theatre in the 16th century England

b) The University Wits and their contribution to drama.

6.2. THEATRE IN THE 16th CENTURY ENGLAND

The transition in theatres from the medieval to the Renaissance is more readily apparent in England than in Italy or France. As the rediscovered classics gradually found their way to England, English plays did begin to reflect their influence. Religious and political controversies and religious strife between Catholic and Protestant following the separation of England from the Catholic Church by Henry VII in 1534, were the forces shaping the mid 16th century English drama. However, when Elizabeth came to throne in 1588 she wanted no religious dissention and outlawed drama of a religious nature.

At the start of Elizabeth's reign noblemen might maintain a group of actors; otherwise actors were very much considered vagabonds. In 1559, Elizabeth decreed a license which was also required to perform plays. Thus acting became a profession, the English theatre directly under the control of the government, and the licensed acting companies still in the patronage of wealthy nobles. This essentially made acting more secure, with daily performances stimulating the building of permanent theatres and the assembling of larger companies.

6.3. UNIVERSITY WITS

By the last decade of the 16th century acting had achieved a satisfactory level of financial and social stability. Actors were paid a yearly fee by the court plus other expenses. Most troupes self-governed themselves by sharing risk and profit. Some members of troupes owned theatre buildings, and were as 'householders', and hired 'hirelings' on salary. Troupes were all male, men or young playing women's' roles, and members might specialize in particular types of roles.

Such large repertories needed a supply of new plays. Some of these new plays came from 'The University Wits', an informal, well-educated group of Scholars cum-men of letters. All of them were actively associated with the theatre and the plays written by them mark a pronounced stage of development over the drama which existed before them. There seems to have been some rivalry between this group and the newcomers Shakespeare and Jonson, who did not have University education. 'The University Wits' included-

1. John Lily
2. Robert Greene
3. George Peele
4. Thomas Lodge
5. Thomas Nashe
6. Thomas Kyd
7. Christopher Marlowe

They were termed as "The University Wits" because they had training at one or other of the two Universities – Oxford and Cambridge. Apart from academic training, they had numerous characteristics in common. They were members of learned societies and rather liberal in their views concerning God and Morality.

6.4. UNIVERSITY WITS: THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO DRAMA

1) Christopher Marlowe (1564-93)

Marlowe, from the Cambridge University is today the most critically acclaimed of all 'The University Wits'. His focus was on the protagonist, using episodic stories to illuminate complex motivations. Marlowe's contribution to English tragedy is very vital and manifold. He himself seems to be aware of having scored an advance over the previous drama. His plays are:

1. *Tamburlaine, the Great;*
2. *Doctor Faustus*
3. *The Jew of Malta*
4. *Edward, the Second, and*
5. *Parts of the Massacre at Paris* and *Dido Queen of Carthage.*

First of all, Marlowe exalted and varied the subject- matter of tragedy. For the Senecan motive of revenge he substituted the more interesting theme of ambition- ambition for power as in *Tamburlaine,* ambition for infinite knowledge as in *Doctor*

Faustus, and ambition for gold as in *The Jew of Malta.* Secondly, he put forward a new kind of the tragic hero. The medieval concept of tragedy was the fall of a great man. Marlowe revived the Aristotelian conception of the tragic hero in so far as he introduced a certain flaw or flaws in his character, mainly an over-weaning ambition.

Marlowe's establishment of blank verse is an effective and pliant medium of tragic utterance. His blank verse is immensely superior to the blank verse of *Gorboduc,* the first tragedy which employed this measure. He found it wooden and mechanical, and substituted the end-stopped lines of *Gorboduc* with run on lines forming verse paragraphs. With Marlowe, indeed begins a new era in the history of English Drama.

2) Thomas Kyd

His only play *The Spanish Tragedy* is modeled on Seneca's revenge tragedies which before Kyd had been initiated by some scholars. Of course there are murders and bloodshed, suicides and horrifying incidents like the biting off the man's tongue by himself, the ghost and many others Senecan features, yet *The Spanish Tragedy* breaks away from the Senecan tradition on many points. For example, there is much of the action on the stage itself. Moreover, though, after Seneca, it has for its *leitmotif* revenge (Heironimo's revenge for the murder of his son), yet there is external action.

Kyd's contribution to English tragedy is twofold. First, he gave a new kind of tragic hero who was neither a royal personage nor a superman, but an ordinary person. Secondly, he introduced the element of introspection in the hero. Along with the external conflict in the play, the reader is conscious of a kind of introspective self- analysis within Heironimo himself. In this respect Kyd was paving the way for Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

(3) Thomas Nashe(1588-1625)

(4) Thomas Lodge(1567-1601)

Their dramatic work is inconsiderable. Lodge who was, according to Gosson," little better than a vagrant, looser than liberty, lighter than vanity itself," He has left only one play, *The Wounds of Civil War.* Both Nashe and Lodge are much more important for their fiction than dramatic art.

(5) George Peele (1558-97)

The plays of Peele extant today are:

(i) *The Arrangement of Paris* (a pastoral play)

(ii) *The Battle of Alcazar* (a romantic tragedy)

(iii) *The Famous Chronicle of King Edward, the first (*a chronicle history)

(iv) *The Love of King David and Fair Bathsheba (*a kind of mystery play, for it has a bibilical theme)

(v) *The Old Wives Tale* (a romantic satire on the current dramatic taste)

The list shows Peele's versatility as a dramatist. However, his plays are not marked by any technical brilliance. What is of interest to us is his excellence as a poet.

(6) Robert Greene (1558-92)

Greene wrote some five plays in all;

(i) *The Comical History of Alphonsus king of Aragon*

(ii) *A Looking Glass for London and England*

(iii) *The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.*

(iv) *The History of Orlando Furioso*

(v) *The Scottish History of James, the Fourth*

Out of the most important and interesting are *Friar Bacon* and *Friar Bungay.* Greene contributed substantially towards the establishment of romantic comedy.

(7) John Lyly

Lyly is better known for his prose romance *Euphues* than his dramatic productions. It must be remembered that he himself was a courtier and wrote for the discerning courtiers. He had no intention to charm the eyes and ears of the masses or to win their acclamation. His plays are rather of the nature of masques which were very popular with the queen and the court. He gave comedy a touch of sophistication and intellectual

tone lacking in the native comedy which was predominantly of the nature of rough-and-tumble farce. Lily wrote eight plays in all out of which *Compaspe, Endimion,* and *Gallathea* are the best known.

In his plays, Lyly used a mixture of verse and prose. This mixing of the two is suggestive of his mixing of the world of reality and the world of romance. Lyly found a suitable blank verse for comedy as Marlowe did for tragedy. Whereas Marlowe's blank verse is characterized by consuming intensity and mouth filling bombast, Lyly's is by its lightness of touch suitable for comedy.

6.5. LET US SUM UP

The above lesson tried to explore the theatre in the 16th century England. It also makes an attempt to study the University Wits viz. Christopher Marlowe Thomas Kyd, Thomas Nashe, Thomas Lodge, Robert Greene, George Peele, John Lyly and their contribution to the 16th century English literature.

6.6. GLOSSARY

Apparent – readily visible

Strife – conflict

Dissention – difference of opinion

Outlawed – habitual criminal

Vital – important

Manifold – many

Revenge – vindictiveness

Ambition – strong desire to achieve something

Effective – productive

Pliant – flexible

Introspective – self-examining

Vagrant – a wanderer

Vanity – excessive pride

Extant – extinct

Versatility – capable of doing many things

Discerning – showing good judgement and understanding

6.7. SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS

6.7.1 SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q.1 Briefly discuss Theatre in the 16th Century England.

Possible Answer: The transition in theatres from the medieval to the Renaissance is more readily apparent in England than in Italy or France. As the rediscovered classics gradually found their way to England, English plays did begin to reflect their influence. When Elizabeth came to throne in 1588 she wanted no religious dissention and outlawed drama of a religious nature. At the start of Elizabeth's reign noblemen might maintain a group of actors; otherwise actors were very much considered vagabonds. In 1559, Elizabeth decreed a license which was also required to perform plays. Thus acting became a profession, the English theatre directly under the control of the government, and the licensed acting companies still in the patronage of wealthy nobles. This essentially made acting more secure, with daily performances stimulating the building of permanent theatres and the assembling of larger companies.

Q.2 Briefly discuss the University Wits.

Possible Answer: University Wits were actively associated with the theatre and the plays written by them mark a pronounced stage of development over the drama which existed before them. There seems to have been some rivalry between this group and the newcomers Shakespeare and Jonson, who did not have University education. "The University Wits" included:

1. John Lily 2. Robert Greene

3. George Peele
4. Thomas Lodge
5. Thomas Nashe
6. Thomas Kyd
7. Christopher Marlowe

They were termed as "The University Wits" because they had training at one or other of the two Universities – Oxford and Cambridge. Apart from academic training, they had numerous characteristics in common.

Q3. Discuss briefly Thomas Kyd's contribution to English Tragedy.

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6.7.2 MCQs

1) *The Jew of Malta* is written by whom?

a) Christopher Marlowe b) Thomas Kyd

c) George Peele d) Robert Greene

2) Which of these is a famous play by Christopher Marlowe?

a) *The Spanish Tragedy* *b) Doctor Faustus*

c) *The Arrangement of Paris* *d) The Battle of Alcazar*

3) *The Spanish Tragedy* is written by whom?

a) Christopher Marlowe b) Thomas Kyd

c) George Peele d) Robert Greene

4) The famous prose romance *Eupheus* is written by whom?

a) John Lyly b) Thomas Nashe

c) Thomas Lodge d) George Peele

3) Which of these plays is written by Robert Greene?

a) *The History of Orlando Furioso*

b) The Spanish Tragedy

c) Doctor Faustus

d) The Battle of Alcazer

6.7. ANSWER KEY

1. Christopher Marlowe
2. Doctor Faustus
3. Thomas Kyd
4. John Lyly
5. *The History of Orlando Furioso*.

6.9. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

Q) Discuss in detail the Contribution of University Wits to the English Drama?

6.10. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. **A Critical History of English Literature (Volume One)** - David Daiches
2. **English Literature: Its History and its Significance for the life of the English Speaking World** – William J. Long
3. **History of English Literature**- Andrew Sanders

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UNIT-III : POETRY **COURSE NO. EL-101**

LESSON NO. 7 **Title : Old & Middle English Literature**

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGE OF CHAUCER

STRUCTURE

7.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the student will be able to enumerate:

a) the age of Chaucer

b) Chaucer's life

c) Chaucer's works

7.2. INTRODUCTION TO THE AGE OF CHAUCER

The social structure of England (and all Europe) in the fourteenth century was feudal, that is to say power radiated from the king, through his nobles, and through their subjects, with little kingly power reaching the lower echelons of society. The king and his nobles owned the land, which was divided into great agricultural estates, and these provided the men, material, and money which supported the crown and its wars. Society was organized in a hierarchical form, one's wealth and power being a matter of what position one occupied on the hierarchical ladder. This ladder extended from the king, through the great noblemen-landlords (like Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster), down through lesser landlords and their various executive officers with, at the bottom, the serfs who worked the land for their masters. It is perhaps important to note that while we may regard this system as unjust and oppressive, the medieval people would conceive of no other. Each level of society had its rights and privileges, and each had its duties and obligations. Despite the occasional abuse they regarded the system as right and proper.

Three groups of Chaucer's pilgrims may be isolated to suggest how this system worked. The first represent agricultural feudalism (the first and basic kind) founded on land ownership and service. The Knight, who is highest on the scale, is a landowner, and has therefore served in the wars for his king, and he will be followed in this by his son, the Squire. The Knight's Yeoman is a servant, whose only duty is to the Knight. The Franklin also holds land, perhaps "in fee" from some noble, but more probably in his own right. His service is the direction of his farm, his obligation to the noble or king being doubtless in the form of the yearly harvest, and men in time of need. The Miller does not himself own land but has been given the right to mill all grain on as estate; the Reeve manages an estate. They are both servants, but of an exalted kind, and make shrewd and profitable use of their power, as we shall see. The lowest in the hierarchy is the Plowman, who simply tills the land.

England was changing in the fourteenth century, and one of the most important changes was the growth of a new, urban society (mainly in London) where the feudal structure was somewhat modified. Neither the Doctor nor the Sergeant of the Law owned the land, although they were both men of substance. The Doctor (Chaucer tells

us) made money out of the plague, and the Lawyer made money out of almost everything. They were the beginning of a new class, today called professional men. The Manciple and the Merchant even the Wife of Bath (who is a clothmaker) also represent the urbanization process. They were not directly commanded by anyone, and in time they became the mercantile middle class who overthrew the monarchy and the last vestiges of feudalism in the civil war of the seventeenth century. It is also significant that the Haberdasher, the Carpenter, the Weaver, and the Dyer are presented together, in that they are all members of one of the great parish guilds. It was through these craft and parish guild associations that the new urban artisans achieved the power that they lacked through not belonging to the land-hierarchy.

There is yet a third group, constituting a kind of feudal system of its own, and representing one of the most powerful elements of medieval society- the church. Nine of Chaucer's thirty pilgrims belong to the clergy, and it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the Roman Catholic Church to the lives of the people of Eastern Europe in the fourteenth century. They might disregard its teaching (as some of the pilgrims do) or complain of its abuses (as Chaucer does) but from baptism, through confirmation and marriage, to the funeral rites, it was intimately connected with their lives. It was a visibly potent force throughout England, from the great cathedrals-such as Canterbury-and the religious houses, down to the humble parish churches.

Despite the worldly aspects of life that so often appear in *The Canterbury Tales* we should not forget that the people Chaucer gathers together are pilgrims, and that occasion for their gathering is the spring pilgrimage to the shrine of "the holy blisful martir," St. Thomas Becket, at Canterbury. We can gauge the importance of the church in men's lives by noting how many varieties of belief or simulated belief Chaucer presents. They run all the way from the dedicated holiness of the Parson, through the superficial observances of the Prioress, to the outright hypocrisy if the Summoner and Pardoner. Chaucer, looking about him, sees fit to define a large proportion of his characters by where they stand with regard to the church.

It is sometimes suggested that the medieval world was a happier, simpler, and less troubled time than our own. In some ways this is true-certainly Chaucer's pilgrims are free from many of our modern anxieties-yet the fourteenth century had its own troubles,

and it is an oversimplification to regard it as a time of innocent good humour. In fact it is the overall good humour of Chaucer's treatment that has fostered this view, and while he is basically optimistic, he would be unlikely to accept it.

The plague, or *Black Death* (to which Chaucer occasionally alludes) entered England in mid-century with dreadful consequences. It is said that half the population was wiped out, and while this may be an exaggeration, it is not exaggeration to say that medieval man lived with constant fear of its ravages. One of the effects of the plague was to inflate the prices and further depress the already grim living conditions of those at the bottom of the economic ladder. This in turn produced the insurrection known as the Peasants' Revolt (1381), in which the infuriated mob murdered a good many of those whom they regarded as their exploiters. Chaucer-as a justice of the peace and a member of parliament-might be expected to be bitter about this unprecedented attack on the social order. It may be a measure of his magnanimity that only a few years after the rebellion his portrait of the Plowman in the *Prologue* for its praise of the peasant virtues.

The Hundred Years War continued, with the French threatening to invade England; this is one of the reasons for the war-like nature of Chaucer's Shipman, whose merchant ship was obliged to be a fighting vessel, and it is also accounts for the Merchant's anxiety about trade if the shipping route between Middleburg in the Netherlands and Orwell in England is broken. The church itself was divided at the time, one faction having a pope at Rome and the other at Avignon, with some of Europe (including England) supporting the first and some (including Scotland) the second. The confusion resulting from this situation was probably in part the cause of the clerical abuses that produced so much complaint (some of it in the Canterbury Tales) during the period.

If we set these disruptions alongside the achievements of art and literature, the security of a stable society, and the calm that comes from faith (the qualities usually presented as typical of the Middle Ages), we shall probably be somewhere near the truth. At any rate it was a time of transition and great variety: an appropriate time for the creation of a work as carried and multicoloured as *The Canterbury Tales*.

7.3. INTRODUCTION TO GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Geoffrey Chaucer has often been called the father of the English poetry. Chaucer, one of the greatest English writers, made his living as a civil servant and composed

poetry as an avocation. His career, however, was such as to contribute to his literary growth. He was born about 1343 of a prosperous family and reared in London. For our convenience the life of Chaucer can be divided into three periods. The first, of thirty years, includes his youth and early manhood, in which time he was influenced almost exclusively by the French literary models. The second period, of fifteen years, covers Chaucer's active life as a diplomat and man of affairs; and in this the Italian influence seems stronger than the French. The third, of fifteen years, generally knows as the English period, is the time of Chaucer's richest development. He lives at home, observes closely but kindly, while the French influence is still strong, as shown in the *Canterbury Tales*, he seems to grow more independent of foreign models and is dominated chiefly by the vigorous life of his own English people.

(i) His Life

For our convenience the life of Chaucer is divided into three periods. The first, of thirty years, includes his youth and early manhood, in which time he was influenced almost exclusively by French literary models. The second period, of fifteen years, covers Chaucer's active life as diplomat and man of affairs; and in this the Italian influence seems stronger than the French. The third, of fifteen years, generally known as the English period, is the time of Chaucer's richest development. He lives at home, observes life closely but kindly, and while the French influence is still strong, as shown in the Canterbury Tales, he seems to grow more independent of foreign models and is dominated chiefly by the vigorous life of his own English people.

a) First Period

Chaucer was born about in 1343 of a prosperous family and reared in London. His father, a wine-merchant, was able to find him a position as a page boy in the household of King Edward III'S daughter-in-law, Elizabeth of Ulster, and from this period on, Chaucer enjoyed the uninterrupted favors of the members of the court of successively, Edward, Richard II, and Henry IV, both as a man of affairs and as a poet. He served as a soldier in France, in the campaigns of the Hundred Years of War in 1359-1360 and was sent abroad on the least seven occasions between 1368 and 1387, either to France or Italy, on diplomatic missions. He was married to Philippa Roet of Flanders, who was lady-in-waiting to Queen Philippa and later to John of

Gaunt's second wife Constance.

Chaucer's boyhood was spent in London, on Thames Street, which was the hub for commercial activities. Of his education, we know nothing, except that he was a great reader. At nineteen he was sent by the king on one of the many expeditions and saw chivalry and all pageantry of the medieval war at the height of their outward splendor. Taken prisoner at the unsuccessful siege of Rheims, he is said to have been ransomed by money out of the royal purse. A few years after returning to England, he became a squire of the royal household the personal attendant and confidant of the king. It was during his first period that he married a maid of honor to the queen. This was probably Philippa Roet, sister of John of Gaunt, the famous Duke of Lancaster.

b) Second Period

In 1370, Chaucer was sent abroad on the first of these diplomatic missions that were to occupy the greater part of the next fifteen years. Two years later, he made his first official visit to Italy, to arrange a commercial treaty with Genoa, and from this time is noticeable a rapid development in his literary powers and development missions he filled various offices at home, chief of which was Comptroller of Customs at the port of London.

c) Third Period

In 1386, Chaucer was elected as a Member of Parliament from Kent, marking a beginning of his best literary works. Though exceedingly busy in public affairs and as receiver of customs, his heart was still with his books, from which only nature could win him. In the fourteenth century politics seems to have been, for honest men, a very uncertain business. The last period of his life, though outwardly most troubled, was the most fruitful of all. Chaucer died in 1400 and was buried with honour in Westminster Abbey.

(ii) His Works

The works of Chaucer are roughly divided into three periods, corresponding to the three periods of his life. It should be remembered, however, that is it impossible to fix exact dates for most of his works. Some of his *Canterbury Tales* were written earlier than the English period, and were only grouped with the others in his final arrangement.

The maturation of Chaucer's genius can be illustrated by four works. In *The Book of the Duchess* the poet dreams that he shares the grief of a lonely young knight, who proves to be John of Gaunt mourning his newly lost first wife. The conception is original and the expression of sympathy is gracefully tender, but the framework of the dream-vision and the knight's description of his love are strongly influenced by French models.

The best known, though not the best, poem of the first period is the *Romaunt of the Rose*, a translation from the French *Roman de la Rose*, the most popular poem of the Middle Ages,- a graceful but exceedingly tiresome allegory of the whole course of love. The Rose growing in its mystic garden is typical of the lady Beauty. Gathering the Rose represents the lover's attempt to win his lady's favour; and the different feelings aroused- Love, Hate, Envy, Jealousy, Idleness, Sweet Looks- are the allegorical persons of the poet's drama. Chaucer translated this universal favourite, putting in some original English touches; but of the present *Romaunt* only the first seventeen hundred lines are believed to be Chaucer's own work.

Perhaps the best poem of this period is the "Deth of Blanche the Duchesse," better known as the "Boke of the Duchesse," a poem of considerable dramatic and emotional power, written after the death of Blanche, wife of Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt. Additional poems are the "Compleynte to Pite," a graceful love poem; the "A B C," a prayer to the Virgin, translated from the French of a Cistercian monk, its verses beginning with the successive letters of the alphabet; and a number of what Chaucer calls "ballads, roundels, and virelays," with which, says his friend Gower, "the land was filled." The latter were imitations of the prevailing French love ditties.

The chief work of the second or Italian period is *Troilus* and *Criseyde*, a poem of eight thousand lines. The original story was a favourite of many authors during the Middle Ages, and Shakespeare makes use of it in his *Troilus* and *Cressida*. The immediate source of Chaucer's poem is Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, "the love-smitten one"; but he uses his material very freely, to reflect the ideals of his own age and society, and so gives to the whole story a dramatic force and beauty which it had never known before.

The "House of Fame" is one of Chaucer's unfinished poems, having the rare combination of lofty thought and simple, homely language, showing the influence of the

great Italian master. In the poem the author is carried away in a dream by a great eagle from the brittle temple of Venus, in a sandy wilderness, up to the hall of fame. The self-confident and domineering eagle was suggested by Chaucer by his reading Dante's *Faradiso* but here plays a novel comic role in a work which tends to parody the artificiality of medieval courtly love conventions. To this house come all rumors of earth, as the sparks fly upward. The house stands on a rock of ice. Many of these have disappeared as the ice melted; but the older names are clear as when first written. For many of his ideas Chaucer is indebted to Dante, Ovid, and Virgil; but the unusual conception and the splendid workmanship are all his own.'

The third great poem of the period is the *Legende of Goode Wimmen*. As he is resting in the fields among the daisies, he falls asleep and a gay procession draws near. First comes the love God, leading by the hand Alcestis, model of all wifely virtues, whose emblem is the daisy; and behind them follow a troup of glorious women, all of whom have been faithful in love. They gather about the poet; the God upbraids him for having translated the *Romance of the Rose*, and for his early poems reflecting on the vanity and fickleness of women. Alcestis intercedes for him, and offers pardon if he will atone for his errors by writing a "glorious legend of good women." Chaucer promises, and as soon as he awakes sets himself to the task. Nine legends were written, of which "Thisbe" is perhaps the best. It is probable that Chaucer intended to make this his masterpiece, devoting many years to stories of famous women who were true to love; but either because he wearied of his theme, or because the plan of the *Canterbury Tales* was growing in his mind, he abandoned the task in the middle of his ninth legend,- fortunately, perhaps, for the reader will find the Prologue more interesting than any of the legends.

Chaucer's masterpiece, the *Canterbury Tales*, one of the most famous works in all literature, fills the third or English period of his life. The plan of the work is magnificent: to represent the wide sweep of English life by gathering a motley company together and letting each class of society tell its own favourite stories. Though the great work was never finished, Chaucer succeeded in his purpose so well that in the *Canterbury Tales* he has given us a picture of contemporary English life, its work and play, its deeds and dreams, its fun and sympathy and hearty joy of living, such as no other single work of literature has ever equalled.

CHAUCER'S POETRY: ITS FORM

There are three principal meters to be found in Chaucer's verse. In the *Canterbury Tales*, he uses lines of ten syllables and five accents each, and the lines run in couplets:

His eyes twinkled in the heed aright
As doon the sterres in the frosty night

The same musical measure, arranged in seven-line stanzas, but with a different rime, called the Rime Royal, is found in its most perfect form in *Troilus*.

O blisful light, of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde hevene faire!

The third meter is the eight-syllable line with four accents, the lines riming in couplets, as in the "Boke of the Duchesse":

Thereto she coude so wel pleye
Whan that hir liste, that I dar seye

Besides these principal meters, Chaucer in his short poems, used many other poetical forms modeled after the French. Chief among them are the difficult but exquisite rondel, "Now welcom Somer with thy sonne softe", which closes the "Parliament of Fowls", and the ballad "Flee fro the prees". Chaucer's poetry is extremely musical and must be judged by the ear rather than by the eye. To the modern reader the lines appear broken and uneven; but if one reads them over a few times, he soon catches the perfect swing of the measure, and finds that he is in the hands of a master whose ear is delicately sensitive to the smallest accent. He is the first to show the poetic possibilities of language. He discovered the music in English speech and had a remarkable influence in fixing the Midland dialect as the literary language of England.

7.4. LET US SUM UP

This topic covers briefly the socio-political structure of Medieval England during the age of Chaucer and the professional changes that followed along-with the representation of the social hierarchies as depicted through the pilgrims. Chaucer's life has been discussed in detail and his literary works have been divided in three periods on the basis

of their publication or the year in which they were written in.

7.5. SELF-ASSESMENT QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1. Describe the social structure in England during the fourteenth century.

Possible Answer: The social structure of England (and all Europe) in the fourteenth century was feudal, that is to say power radiated from the king, through his nobles, and through their subjects, with little kingly power reaching the lower echelons of society. The king and his nobles owned the land, which was divided into great agricultural estates, and these provided the men, material, and money which supported the crown and its wars. Society was organized in a hierarchical form, one's wealth and power being a matter of what position one occupied on the hierarchical ladder. This ladder extended from the king, through the great noblemen-landlords (like Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster), down through lesser landlords and their various executive officers with, at the bottom, the serfs who worked the land for their masters. It is perhaps important to note that while we may regard this system as unjust and oppressive, the medieval people would conceive of no other. Each level of society had its rights and privileges, and each had its duties and obligations.

Q2. Describe the consequences of the *Black Death*.

Possible Answer: The plague, or *Black Death* (to which Chaucer occasionally alludes) entered England in mid-century with dreadful consequences. It is said that half the population was wiped out, and while this may be an exaggeration, it is not exaggeration to say that medieval man lived with constant fear of its ravages. One of the effects of the plague was to inflate the prices and further depress the already grim living conditions of those at the bottom of the economic ladder. This in turn produced the insurrection knows as the Peasants' Revolt (1381), in which the infuriated mob murdered a good many of those whom they regarded as their exploiters. Chaucer-as a justice of the peace and a member of parliament-might be expected to be bitter about this unprecedented attack on the social order. It may be a measure of his magnanimity that only a few years after the rebellion his portrait of the Plowman in the *Prologue* for its praise of the peasant virtues.

Q3. How did Chaucer contribute in the *Hundred Years' War*?

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Q4. Why is Chaucer known as the father of English poetry?

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Q5. Briefly discuss three important works of Chaucer.

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MCQs

1) In which century was Chaucer born?

   a) 12th b) 13th

   c) 14th d) 15th

2) Chaucer's father and grandfather were both what?

   a) Bakers b) Brewers

   c) Butchers d) Vintners

3) What name is now given to the language in which Chaucer worked?

a) Early English b) Middle English

c) New English d) Old English

4) What is the title of the earliest of Chaucer's poems written sometime between 1369 and 1372?

a) The Book of the Duchess

b) The Book of the Abbess

c) The Book of the Countess

d) The Book of the Governess

5) What is the title of Chaucer's best known work?

a) The Canterbury Tales

b) The Salisbury Tales

c) The Winchester Tales

d) The York Tales

7.6. ANSWER KEY

1) c

2) d

3) b

4) a

5) a

7.7. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Discuss in detail the age of Chaucer.

2. Write a detailed note on the Life and works of Geoffrey Chaucer.

7.8. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. A Critical History of English Literature (Volume One)- David Daiches
2. English Literature: Its History and its Significance for the life of the English Speaking World – William J. Long
3. *Chaucer and His World* – F. E. Halliday
4. The Canterbury Tales: A Selection of Critical Essays – Edited by J.J.Anderson
5. A Critical History of English Poetry – Greierson and Smith

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

STRUCTURE

8.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the student will be able to:

a) gain an insight into the Prologue and its background.

b) get acquainted with the pilgrims in the Prologue

8.2. INTRODUCTION TO THE *CANTERBURY TALES*

Chaucer's master-piece, *The Canterbury Tales* is one of the most famous works in all literature. The scheme of the work is magnificent: to represent the wide sweep of English life by gathering a motley company together and letting each class of society tell its own favourite stories. Though the great work was never finished, Chaucer succeeded in his purpose so well that in the *Canterbury Tales* he has given us a picture of the contemporary English life, its work and play, its deeds and dreams, its fun and sympathy and hearty joy of living, such as no other single work of literature has ever equalled.

In *The Canterbury Tales*, a masterpiece even greater than *Troilus* though uncompleted, a richly assorted group of pilgrims entertain themselves by telling stories on the way from London to Canterbury. Through his descriptions in the General Prologue and dramatizations in the links connecting the tales he portrays in detail seven members, of the feudal order, thirteen people associated with religious life and fourteen towns people-the chivalrous Knight, the aristocratic Prioress, the fraudulent Pardoner, the impoverished Cannon's Yeoman, the amorous Wife of Bath, the reticent civil servant who is Chaucer himself, and the rest who have gained an independent identity as real as that of Falstaff, Tom Jones, or Becky Sharp. And the tales which Chaucer has supplied match the tellers in their rich variety- the Knight's courtly romance, the Miller's racy fabliau, the second Nuns pious saints life, the Nun's Priest's mock-heroic fable, the Pardoner's hypocritical sermon, and the Parson's sincere one.

8.3. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROLOGUE

The narrator opens the General Prologue with a description of the return of spring. He describes the April rains, the burgeoning flowers and leaves, and the chirping birds. Around this time of year, the narrator says, people begin to feel the desire to go on a pilgrimage. Many devout English pilgrims set off to visit shrines in distant holy lands, but even more choose to travel to Canterbury to visit the relics of Saint Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, where they thank the martyr for having helped them when they were in need. The narrator tells us that he prepared to go on such a pilgrimage, staying at a tavern in Southward called the Tabard Inn, a great company of

twenty-nine travellers entered. The travellers were a diverse group who, like the narrator, were on their way to Canterbury. They happily agreed to let him join them. Before continuing the tale, the narrator declares his intent to list and describe each of the members of the group.

A pilgrimage is a religious journey undertaken for penance and grace. As pilgrimages went, Canterbury was not a very difficult destination for an English person to reach. It was, therefore, very popular in the fourteenth-century England, as the narrator mentions. Pilgrims travelled to visit the remains of Saint Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered in 1170 by knights of King Henry II. Soon after his death, he became the most popular saint in England. The pilgrimage in *The Canterbury Tales* should not be thought of as an entirely solemn occasion, because it also offered the pilgrims an opportunity to abandon work and take a vacation.

The poet makes us acquainted with the various characters of his drama. Until Chaucer's day popular literature had been busy chiefly with the gods and heroes of a golden age; it had been essentially romantic, and so had never attempted to study men and women as they are, or to describe them so that the reader recognizes them, not as ideal heroes, but as his own neighbours. Chaucer not only attempted this new realistic task, but accomplished it so well that his characters were instantly recognized as true to life, and they have since become the permanent possession of our literature. Chaucer is the first English writer to bring the atmosphere of romantic interest about men and women and the daily work of one's own world,- which is the aim of nearly all modern literature.

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

audience, whom the narrator explicitly addresses as "you" in lines 34 and 38.

He spends considerable time characterizing the group members according to their social positions. The pilgrims represent a diverse cross section of fourteenth-century English society. Medieval social theory divided society into three broad classes, called "estates": the military, the clergy, and the laity. (The nobility, not represented in the General Prologue, traditionally derives its title and privileges from military duties and service, so it is considered part of the military estate). In the portraits that we will see in the rest of the General Prologue, the Knight and the Squire represent the military estate. The clergy is represented by the Prioress (and her nun and three priests), the Monk, the Friar, and the Parson. The other characters, from the wealthy Franklin to the poor Plowman, are the members of the laity. These lay characters can be further subdivided into landowners (the Franklin), professionals (the Clerk, the Man of Law, the Guildsmen, the Physician, and the Shipman), labourers (the Cook and the Plowman), stewards (the Millers, the Manciple, and the Reeve), and church officers (the Summoner and the Pardoner). As we will see, Chaucer's descriptions of the various characters and their social roles reveal the influence of the medieval genre of the estates satire. Chaucer is a model for all those who would put out human life into writing.

8.4. PILGRIMS IN THE PROLOGUE

The Narrator- The narrator makes it quite clear that he is also a character in his book. Although he is called Chaucer, we should be wary of accepting his words and opinions as Chaucer's own. In the General Prologue, the narrator presents himself as a gregarious and naïve character. Later on, the Host accuses him of being silent and sullen. Because the narrator writes down his impressions of the pilgrims from memory, whom he does and does not like, and what he chooses and chooses not to remember about the characters, tells us as much about the narrator's own prejudices as it does about the characters themselves.

The Knight- The first pilgrim Chaucer describes in the General Prologue, and the teller of the first tale. The Knight represents the ideal of a medieval Christian man-at-arms. He has participated in no less than fifteen of the great crusades of his ear. Brave, experienced, and prudent, the narrator greatly admires him.

The Wife of Bath- Bath is an English town on the Avon River, not the name of this woman's husband. Though she is seamstress by occupation, she seems to be a professional wife. She has been married five times and had many other affairs in her youth, making her well practiced in the art of love. She presents herself as someone who loves marriage and sex, but, from what we see of her, she also takes pleasure in rich attire, talking, and arguing. She is deaf in one year and has a gap between her front teeth, which was considered attractive in Chaucer's time. She has travelled on pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times and elsewhere in Europe as well.

The Pardoner- Pardoners granted papal indulgences-reprieves from penance in exchange for charitable donations to the Church. Many pardoners, including this one, collected profits for themselves. In fact, Chaucer's Pardoner excels in fraud, carrying a bag full of take relics-for example, he claims to have the veil of the Virgin Mary. The Pardoner has long, greasy, yellow hair and is beardless. These characteristics were associated with shiftiness and gender ambiguity in Chaucer's time. The Pardoner also has a gift for singing and preaching whenever he finds himself inside a church.

The Miller- Stout and brawny, the Miller has a wart on his nose and a big mouth, both literally and figuratively. He threatens the Host's notion of propriety when he drunkenly insists on telling the second tale. Indeed, the Miller seems to enjoy overturning all conventions: he ruins the Host's carefully planned storytelling order; he rips doors off hinges; and he tells a tale that is somewhat blasphemous, ridiculing religious clerks, scholarly clerks, carpenters, and women.

The Prioress- Described as modest and quiet, this Prioress (a nun who is head of her convent) aspires to have exquisite taste. Her table manners are dainty, she knows French (though not the French of the court), she dresses well, and she is charitable and compassionate.

The Monk- Most monks of the Middle Ages lived in monasteries according to the *Rule of Saint Benedict*, which demanded that they devote their lives to "work and prayer." This Monk cares little for the Rule; his devotion is to hunting and eating. He is large, loud, and well clad in hunting boots and furs.

The Friar- Roaming priests with no ties to a monastery, friars were a great object of criticism in Chaucer's time. Always reading to befriend young women or rich men

who might need his services, the friar actively administers the sacraments in his town, especially those of marriage and confession. However, Chaucer's worldly Friar has taken to accepting bribes.

The Summoner- The Summoner brings persons accused of violating Church law to ecclesiastical court. This Summoner is a lecherous man whose face is scarred by leprosy. He gets drunk frequently, is irritable, and is not particularly qualified for his position. He spouts the few words of Latin he knows in an attempt to sound educated.

The Host- The leader of the group, the Host is large, loud, and merry, although he possesses a quick temper. He mediates among the pilgrims and facilitates the flow of the tales. His title of "host" may be a pun, suggesting both an innkeeper and the Eucharist, or Holy Host.

The Parson- The only devout churchman in the company, the Parson lives in poverty, but is rich in holy thoughts and deeds. The pastor of a sizable town, he preaches the Gospel and makes sure to practice what he preaches. He is everything that the Monk, the Friar, and the Pardoner are not.

The Squire- The Knight's son and apprentice. The Squire is curly-haired, youthfully handsome, and loves dancing and courting.

The Clerk-The Clerk is a poor student of philosophy. Having spent his money on books and learning rather than on fine clothes, he is threadbare and wan. He speaks little, but when he does, his words are wise and full of moral virtue.

The Man of Law- A successful lawyer commissioned by the king. He upholds justice in matters large and small and knows every statue of England's law by heart.

The Manciple- A manciple was in charge of getting provisions for a college or court. Despite his lack of education, the Manciple is smarter than the thirty lawyers he feeds.

The Merchant- The Merchant trades in furs and other cloths, mostly from Flanders. He is part of a powerful and wealthy class in Chaucer's society.

The Shipman- Brown-skinned from years of sailing, the Shipman has seen every bay and river in England, and exotic ports in Spain and Carthage as well. He is a bit

of rascal, known for stealing wine while the ship's captain sleeps.

The Physician- The Physician is one of the best in his profession, for he knows the cause of every malady and can cure most of them. Though the Physician keeps himself in perfect physical health, the narrator calls into question the Physician's spiritual health: he rarely consults the Bible and has an unhealthy love of financial gain.

The Reeve- A reeve was similar to a steward of a manor, and this reeve performs his job shrewdly- his lord never loses so much as a ram to the other employees, and the vassals under his command are kept in line. However, he steals from his master.

The Plowman- The Plowman is the Parson's brother and is equally good-hearted. A member of the peasant class, he pays his tithes to the Church and leads a good Christian life.

The Guildsmen- Listed together, the five Guildsmen appear as a unit. English guilds were a contribution of labour unions and social fraternities: craftsmen of similar occupations joined together to increase their bargaining power and live communally. All five Guildsmen are clad in the livery of their brotherhood.

The Cook- The Cook words for the Guildsmen. Chaucer gives little detail about him, although he mentions a crusty sore on the Cooks' leg.

The Yeoman- The servant who accompanies the Knight and the Squire. The narrator mentions that his dress and weapons suggest he may be forester.

The Second Nun- The Second Nun is not described in the General Prologues, but she tells a saint's life for her tale.

The Nun's Priest- Like the Second Nun, the Nun's Priest is not described in the General Prologue. His story of Chanticleer, however, is well crafted and suggests that he is a witty, self-effacing preacher.

8. 5. LET US SUM UP

The Canterbury Tales is one of Chaucer's most magnificent and important literary works produced during the fourteenth century. It occupies an important position in English literature as it throws light on the contemporary English conditions. As ex-

plained in *The Prologue*, the pilgrimage begins during the spring season and the special purpose for the pilgrimage. The writer acquaints us with the various pilgrims in the story and explains how each character plays an important symbolical significance.

8.6. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the significance of the *Canterbury Tales*?

Possible Answer: Chaucer's master-piece, *The Canterbury Tales* is one of the most famous works in all literature. The scheme of the work is magnificent: to represent the wide sweep of English life by gathering a motley company together and letting each class of society tell its own favourite stories. Though the great work was never finished, Chaucer succeeded in his purpose so well that in the *Canterbury Tales* he has given us a picture of the contemporary English life, its work and play, its deeds and dreams, its fun and sympathy and hearty joy of living, such as no other single work of literature has ever equalled.

Q2. Where are pilgrims going on a pilgrimage?

Possible Answer: Many devout English pilgrims set off to visit shrines in distant holy lands, but even more choose to travel to Canterbury to visit the relics of Saint Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, where they thank the martyr for having helped them when they were in need. The narrator tells us that he prepared to go on such a pilgrimage, staying at a tavern in Southward called the Tabard Inn, a great company of twenty-nine travellers entered. The travellers were a diverse group who, like the narrator, were on their way to Canterbury. They happily agreed to let him join them. Before continuing the tale, the narrator declares his intent to list and describe each of the members of the group.

Q3. What is the purpose of the pilgrimage to the Canterbury?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q4. Which characters in the *Prologue* represent the clergy?

_____

_____

_____

Q5. Briefly discuss any five pilgrims from the prologue.

_____

_____

_____

_____

MCQs

1) What is the title of Chaucer's best-known work?

a) *The Canterbury Tales* b) *The Salesbury*

c) *The Winchester* d) *The York*

2) In the *Canterbury Tales* what is the name of the inn where the pilgrims meet before their journey?

a) *The Tabard* b) The Tablot

c) The Trevoli d) The Tolbooth

3) In the *Canterbury Tales* a group of pilgrims travel from Southwark to the shrine of which Saint?

a) Saint Thomas Beckett b) Saint Louis

c) Saint Martin d) Saint Cardinal

4) The Wife of Bath belongs to which place?

a) Canterbury b) Flanders

c) Italy d) Bath

5) Who is the knight's son?

a) The pardoner b) the Squire

c) The merchant d) the reeve

8.7. ANSWER KEY

1) a

2) a

3) a

4) d

5) b

8.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on Chaucer's art of characterisation in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*.
2. Discuss how Chaucer's group of pilgrims constitute a picture of the society of his times.

8.9. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. A Critical History of English Literature (Volume One)- David Daiches
2. English Literature: Its History and its Significance for the life of the English Speaking World – William J. Long
3. *Chaucer and His World* – F. E. Halliday
4. The Canterbury Tales: A Selection of Critical Essays – Edited by J.J.Anderson
5. A Critical History of English Poetry – Greierson and Smith

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WIFE OF BATH AND THE MONK

STRUCTURE

9.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the student will be able to understand:

a) the character of Wife of Bath in the Prologue

b) the charcter of the Monk in the Prologue

9.2. CHARACTER SKETCH OF WIFE OF BATH

The Wife of Bath is one of Chaucer's most famous characters. He makes her a vivid presence here in the Prologue, and enlarges the portrait later in The Canterbury Tales in her own prologue to her won tale. Bath is an English town on the Avon River,

not the name of this woman's husband. Though she is a seamstress by occupation, she seems to be a professional wife. She has been married five times and had many other affairs in her youth, making her well practiced in the art of love. She presents herself as someone who loves marriage and sex, but, from what we see of her, she also takes pleasure in rich attire, talking, and arguing. She is deaf in one ear and has a gap between her front teeth, which was considered attractive in Chaucer's time. She has travelled on pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times and elsewhere in Europe as well.

The Wife's great talent is for cloth-making, and we get Chaucer's tongue-in-cheek touch again when he asserts her superiority over the cloth-makers "of Ypres and of Gaunt," an opinion that we suspect came straight from the Wife herself. There follows an illuminating little touch concerning her character. No woman in the parish, Chaucer says, ought to precede the Wife to the "offrynge" in church. And if any did "certeyn so wrooth was she/ That she was out alle charitee." We can well imagine it, and so the tone is set for the development of this boisterous, egotistical, but fundamentally very likeable character later in the Tales.

Two points are made about the Wife: her amorous nature and her habit of going on pilgrimages. But the striking thing about the line is the number of mates the Wife has had. In part the reason is economic-the Wife is a woman of property and the possessor of a commercially valuable skill. The Middle Ages were more romantic in their literature than in life, and just as a dowerless woman found it difficult to get married, so one with money found it easy. But the main reasons for the many marriages is simply that the Wife enjoyed the company of men. Here we are told that she is "somdel deef," but later in the Tales we discover that this is because her fifth husband once became so infuriated with her that he beat her about the head and impaired her hearing.

There is no real inconsistency in a woman of the Wife's worldly nature going on a series of pilgrimages to holy shrines. By the fourteenth century the pilgrimage had become for some a social excursion as well as a religious act, a fact reflected in some of Chaucer's other less-than-devout pilgrims. Some of the contemporary writers complain of married women going on pilgrimages, and it may well have been a device for escaping the restrictions imposed by a husband. Jerusalem was, of course, the principal destination for pilgrimages, and it may well have been a device for escaping the restric-

tions imposed by a husband. The Wife has been three times, where she would have been shown the white stone on which the True Cross stood, and near which the first crusaders were buried. She has also been to Rome, where the major pilgrim attractions were St. Peter's (a visit there procuring many years of pardon), and St. Paul's Cathedral, where the stone on which St. Paul was beheaded was said to cure the sick and maimed who touched it.

One of the two female storytellers (the other is the Prioress), the Wife has a lot of experience under her belt. She has travelled all over the world on pilgrimages, so Canterbury is a jaunt compared to other perilous journeys she has endured. Not only has she seen many lands, she has lived with five husbands. The Wife of Bath says that her first three husbands were "good" because they were rich and old. She could order them around, use sex to get what she wanted, and trick them into believing lies. The Wife of Bath says comparatively little about her fourth husband. She loved him, but he was a reveler who had a mistress. She had fun singing and dancing with him, but tried her best to make him jealous. She fell in love with her fifth husband, Jankyn, while she was still married to her fourth. The Wife of Bath's fifth husband, Jankyn, was a twenty-year-old former student, with whom the Wife was madly in love. His stories of wicked wives frustrated her so much that one night she ripped a page out of his book, only to receive a deafening smack on her ear in return.

She is worldly in both sense of the word she has seen the world and has experience in the ways of the world, that is, in love and sex. Rich and tasteful, the Wife's clothes veer a bit toward extravagance: her face is wreathed in heavy cloth, her stockings are a fine scarlet colour, and the leather on her shoes is soft, fresh, and brand new-all of which demonstrate how wealthy she has become. Scarlet was a particularly costly dye, since it was made from individual red beetles found only in some parts of the world. The fact that she hails from Bath, a major English cloth-making town in the Middle Ages, is reflected both in her talent as a seamstress and her stylish garments. Bath at this time was fighting for a place among the great European exporters of cloth, which were mostly in the Netherlands and Belgium. So the fact that the Wife's sewing surpasses that of the cloth makers of "Ipres and of Gaunt" (Ypres and Ghent) speaks well of Bath's (and England's) attempt to outdo its overseas competitors.

Although she is argumentative and enjoys talking, the Wife is intelligent in a commonsense, rather than intellectual, way. Though her experiences with her husbands, she has learned how to provide herself in a world where women had little independence or power. The chief manner in which she has gained control over her husbands has been in her control over their use of her body. The Wife uses her body as a bargaining tool, withholding sexual pleasure until her husbands give her what she demands.

9.3. CHARACTER SKETCH OF THE MONK

In Chaucer's representation of the Monk there is an element of irony and satire. The Monk is satirically portrayed. He contemptuously ignores the vows he has taken to uphold the monastic discipline laid down by St. Mauraus and St. Benedict. His greatest pleasure is in hunting the hare, which was thought to be wicked, especially for the clergyman. He neither labours with his hands nor pores over a book in the cloister. The monk does not fast or deny himself costly garments. Instead he loves a fat swan the best of any roast. Thus, Chaucer's Monk is a lively representative of his class. Moreover, Chaucer gives the portrait of Monk individuality. The Monk has large, prominent eyes and a glistening ruddy face; he is bald and stout. He is pompous and his actions display resentment against the world.

Chaucer's Monk was an outrider who loved hunting. Hunting was, indeed, this monk's favourite pastime, and he did not hide his irritation with those who objected to it. Thus, after outlining in detail the Monk's extremely irreligious activities, Chaucer tells us that "Now certainly he was a fair prelaat." Two fundamental rules for the conduct of the monks in the Middle Ages were the obligation to work and to remain within their cloister. St. Benedict's Rule (mentioned as applying to the Monk's order at 173) is clear about this: "Idleness is an enemy of the soul. Because of this brethren ought to be occupied in manual labour…The monastery ought to be so constructed as to contain within it all necessaries…so that there be no occasion for monks to wander abroad since this is no wise expedient for their souls".

Chaucer's readers would of course know of this rule, and they would probably also be familiar with St. Augustine's insistence on physical labour: "the blessed Apostle Paul willed the servants of the God to work corporal works which should have as their end a great spiritual reward, for this purpose that they should need food and clothing

of no man, but with their own hands procure these for themselves…" Chaucer notes the special exasperation that the Monk reserves for Augustine's admonition to labour. Why should we "swynken with his handes and laboure/ As Austen bit?...Lat Austen have his swynk to him reserved."

The worldiness and fine living of the Monk are greatly emphasised. His face shone as if he had been anointed. He was fat and in very good shape, like his horse. Thus, Chaucer goes on to indicate the lavish nature of the rest of the Monk's costume. His sleeves were lined with gray fur of the finest quality. He wore supple boots. In order to fasten his hood under his chin, he had an intricate pin of wrought gold. In Chaucer's words "the pin 'of gold yroght' which fastened his hood, the soft unwrinkled ("couple") boots, and the well-cared-for horse ("in great estaat")." He had a large number of valuable horses in his stable. When he rode, the jingling of the bridle of his horse could be heard at a distance. The passage concludes with one of the chief, and most expensive delicacies of the days: roast swan.

9.4. LET US SUM UP

This lesson dealt with the characters of the Wife of Bath and the Monk. Chaucer has done a very realistic portrayal of these characters.

9.5. GLOSSARY

Difficult words from General prologue

Shores - showers

Soote -sweet

Droghte -drought

Swich - such

Licour -liquor

Faour - flower

Holt- grove

Eeke -too

Sonne - sun

Ronne - run

Corages - hearts

Thane - than

Strondes - strands, shores

Ferne - distant

Halwes - shrines

Kowhe - known

Sondry - various

Londes - lands

Seke - seek

Seeke - sick

Bifil - it so happened

Hostelry - an inn

Compaignye - company

Aventure - chance

Fustian - course cloth

Weret - wore

Gypon - doublet

Habergon - coat of male

Viage - voyage

Lovyera - lover

Bachelor - aspirant for knighthood

Lokkes - locks

Cruller - curly

Evene - average

Delyvere - agile

Chyvachie - chavalry

Meede - meadow

Floytynge - fluting

Reede - red

Koude - could

Endite - compose

Servysable - serviceable

Biforn - before

Namo - no other

Liste - preferred

Bar - bore

Arwes - arrows

Drouped - drooped

Bracer - guard

Bokeler - bockler

Sheene - shone

Seint - saint

Cleped - named

Fetisly - gracefully

Scole - school

Mete - meat

Muchel - much

Lest - pleasure

Ferthyng - trace

Raughte - reached

Peyned - she took pains

Estatlich - stately

Digne - worthy

Wastel - made of fine flour

Yerde - stick

Tretys - well-shaped

Undergrowe - under-sized

Fetys - neat

Amor - love

Vincit - conquers

Omnia - all

Deyntee - valuable

Rood -rode

Eek -also

Streit - strict

Ilke - same

Heeld - followed

Space -meanwhile

Thilke - that same

Prikasour - huntsman

Purfiled - trimmed

Poynt - condition

Forpyned - tormented

Solempne - stately; important

Daliaunce - conversation

frankeleyns- rich farmers

yeve- give

wiste- knew

pituance- payment

yaf- gave

avaunt-assert

smerte-suffer

moote-must

yeddengyes- songs

flour-de-lys- lily

honeste- worthy

avance- profit

poraille- poor folk

vataille-food

wydwe- widow

ferthyng- farthing

whelpy- puppy

semycope- half-cape

wantownesse- affectation

motteleye- multi-coloured garments; motel

Flaundryssh- Flemish

wight- person

chevyssaunce- usury

sothe- truly

with-alle- moreover

courtepy- cloak

benefice- paid job in a church

levere- rather

fithele- fiddle

sautrie- harp

scoleye- study

war- careful

assise- country court

patente- letter of authority

pleyn- fully

caas- cases

doomes- judgements

falle- had taken place

pleyn- fully

rote-memory

hoomly- homely

medlee- motely

ceinte- girdle

barres- stripes

somdel- somewhat

scathe-unfortunate

haunt- practice

weyeden- wade

moyste- soft

hewe- hue; colour

strem- stream

muchel- much

gatetothed- gap- toothed

amblere- ambling horse

targe- shield

carpe- chatter

pacient- patient

cursen- curse

suffisaunce- sufficient

reyn- rain

meschief- difficulty

ensanple- example

shiten- befouled

discreet- wise

spiced- nice

9.5. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

9.5.1 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the Wife of Bath's greatest talent?

Possible Answer: The Wife's great talent is for cloth-making, and we get Chaucer's tongue-in-cheek touch again when he asserts her superiority over the cloth-makers "of Ypres and of Gaunt," an opinion that we suspect came straight from the Wife herself. There follows an illuminating little touch concerning her character. No woman in the parish, Chaucer says, ought to precede the Wife to the "offrynge" in church. And if any did "certeyn so wrooth was she/ That she was out alle charitee." We can well imagine it, and so the tone is set for the development of this boisterous, egotistical, but fundamentally very likeable character later in the Tales. Two points are made about the Wife: her amorous nature and her habit of going on pilgrimages. But the striking thing about the line is the number of mates the Wife has had. In part the reason is economic-the Wife is a woman of property and the possessor of a commercially valuable skill.

Q2. What is the favourite past-time of the Monk?

Possible Answer: In Chaucer's representation of the Monk there is an element of irony and satire. The Monk is satirically portrayed. He contemptuously ignores the vows he has taken to uphold the monastic discipline laid down by St. Mauraus and St. Benedict. His greatest pleasure is in hunting the hare, which was thought to be wicked, especially for the clergyman. He neither labours with his hands nor pores over a book in the cloister. The monk does not fast or deny himself costly garments. Instead he loves a fat swan the best of any roast. Thus, Chaucer's Monk is a lively representative of his class. Moreover, Chaucer gives the portrait of Monk individuality. The Monk has large, prominent eyes and a glistening ruddy face; he is bald and stout. He is pompous and his actions display resentment against the world. Chaucer's Monk was an outrider who

loved hunting. Hunting was, indeed, this monk's favourite pastime, and he did not hide his irritation with those who objected to it.

Q3. Write a character sketch of the Wife of Bath.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q4. What were the fundamental rules regarding the conduct of the monks?

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9.5.2 MCQs

1. How many husbands does the Wife of Bath has?

   a) seven b) five

   c) three d) none

2. Which character in Prologue takes excessive pride in hunting and eating?

   a) The monk b) Friar

   c) The Manciple d) the squire

3. The Wife of Bath by occupation is a:

   a) Weaver b) Traveller

   c) Seamstress d) Preacher

4. The Wife of bath has also been to which place:

   a) Italy b) Switzerland

   c) Norway d) Scotland

5. Apart from the Wife of bath, who is the second storyteller?

a) Squire b) Prioress

b) the Cook c) The Narrator

6. ANSWER KEY

1) b

2) a

3) c

4) a

5) b

9.7. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTION

Q) Discuss in detail the character of the Wife Of Bath?

Q) Discuss in detail the character of the Monk?

9.8. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Chaucer and His World – F. E. Halliday

2. The Canterbury Tales: A Selection of Critical Essays – Edited by J.J.Anderson

3. A Critical History of English Poetry – Greierson and Smith

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PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

STRUCTURE

10.1. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to make the students familiar with Examination Oriented questions.

10.2. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss in detail Chaucer's Art or Technique of Characterization.

Ans. Chaucer outlines his thirty pilgrims in "The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales". He is the first great painter of characters in English Literature. He has painted the whole of English nation during the fourteen the century, ranging from knightly class to the order of Clergymen. The Character sketches are brief, yet lucid and comprehensive. Both the in and out of the characters are depicted in such a superb way that the entire personality seems moving before the reader's eyes. It is infect Chaucer's unique rich and original art of characterization that has enabled him to delineate memorable portraits. For the purpose he employs several techniques of characterization, some of whom were popular among the contemporaries, while the others are purely his own.

Similarly, the medieval poets usually described their character through their physiognomy, to expose their inner spiritual health. Chaucer has successfully employed this technique in the case of the Summoner. His. "Fire red cherubim face", "Pimples", "Narrow eyes"

and "scabby black brows" reflect his inner spiritual corruption. Description through physical features is also employed in the case of The Wife of the Bath and The Prioress. Closely connected with this is Chaucer's technique of character portrait through dress. It also help the audience in understanding, recognizing and differentiating the pilgrims. The Prioress and the Wife of Bath's fashionable dresses reveal their materialism and amorous nature. Admittedly, Chaucer varies his presentation from the full length portraits to the thumb nail sketch.

Chaucer's most superb technique is his presentation of Characters as individuals and types. The Characters are not only representatives of their respective classes and professions but also at the same time they possess individual traits. For example, the Friar is a typical representative of his class in the 14th century; he is corrupt, hypocritical, greedy and callous. But his good voice, his twinkling eyes, his white neck and above all his name "Brother Hubert" all have individualistic touches. The Old Knight, stands for heroism and manliness that good knight would always show on the battlefield. But he has been individualized by his prudence and his weakness of behavior. The Prioress is the type of a woman who is an epicure but she is portrayed as an individual, with her meticulous care in eating and her courtly manners as well as care in eating and her courtly manners as well as her tenderness of heart. The Monk is the type of Monks of those-times interested not in religion and the study of holy books, but in hunting. But Chaucer's Monk is an individual with bald head and rolling eyes, glowing like the fire under a cauldron. The Oxford Church is the type of good scholars, not interested in worldly glory, but in the advancement of knowledge and learning. But Chaucer's Oxford Clerk comes as a figure of individual, by his learning, his hollow-cheeks, grave look and his threadbare cloak. In short Chaucer's characters are types as well as individuals.

Chaucer's characters are real and universal because no one is like them, and they are real and universal because they are so like us. His people are always on move. Never do they become shadowy or lifeless. They shout and swear, laugh and weep, interrupt the story teller, pass compliments and in general behave themselves, as we might expect them to be.

Another portrait delineations technique which Chaucer uses is to define the characters to a great or lesser extent by the job or profession, they do. The deferent

pilgrims represent different professions. The War-like Elements is represented by the Knight, The Square, and Yeoman. The Ploughman, The Miller, the Reeve, and The Franklin typify agriculture. The Sargeant of Law, the Doctor, The Oxford Clerk represent liberal professions. The Wife of Bath, The weaver, The Dyer and The Tapicer, embody industry and trade, the Merchant and the Shipman personate commerce. The poor Village person and the Summoner represent the secular clergy, while the monastic order are represented by the Monk, The Prioress and the Pardoner.

Chaucer also presents a vivid picture of his characters by their vices and presents the fourteenth century in "The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales". Firstly, the prevalent corruption of the Church is mirrored in most of his ecclesiastical figures, like The Friar, The Monk, The Pardoner. Secondly, the greed of doctors is typified in his Doctor of Physic, who loves gold. Thirdly his Sargeant of Law is as shrewd hard-boiled as other members of his profession. Fourthly, the dishonesty of the Reeve and the Miller is also typical. Finally, their traditional enmity is reflected between the Reeve and the Miller. This technique enriches his art of characterization.

Irony and Satire are undoubtedly Chaucer's most prominent techniques of characterization. Chaucer treats noble fellows with sympathy and love but his treatment of knaves, rogues and rascals either humorous or ironical or satirical. For example, Chaucer call the Wife of Bath "worthy woman" and then in the very next line ironically qualifies the word "worthy" by commenting

"She was worthy woman all her lyve
Husbands at church door she had five"

But it remains to be noted that though he depicts most of his characters ironically and humorously yet tolerance and sympathy never lose Chaucer's attention. The characters whom he detests and censures are the two corrupts church offices, the Summoner and The Pardoner . It is in case of these two characters that Chaucer employs satire as a technique of characterization. The goodness of the "Gentle rascal" becomes clear when Chaucer comments that just for a quart of wine he would allow a sinner to keep on committing sins.

Chaucer utilizes the technique of contrast in drawing the portraits of the pilgrims. The good and the bad rub shoulders together. We have paragon of virtue in the

characters of the Parson and The Ploughman, we have monsters of vice in the characters of the Reeve, The Miller and the Summoner. The knight, is foil to his son, the lusty Squire; the Oxford Clerk, is the very opposite of the merrymaking Monk. In this way Chaucer distinguishes the characters through the exhibition of dissimilar qualities.

Chaucer's art of characterization is free from personal bias. He portrays his characters, objectively, impartially and disinterestedly. He depicts what he sees personally. He has the seeing eye, the memory, the judgment to select and the capacity to expound. Lastly, two conclusions may be drawn from the above discussion of Chaucer's art of Characterization. His world of man is varied and wide. In the words of Dryden, "There is God's plenty" and secondly, it is through the depiction of his characters, Chaucer has managed to give an expression to his vision of life which is both joyous and realistic.

Q2. Write a detailed note on Chaucer's humour.

Ans. Humour means that quality of action, speech, and writing which creates amusement. The true form of humour is that which makes one laugh only for the sake of pleasure and enjoyment. It does not hurt one's feelings nor it pinches or agonizes. Chaucer is a great humorist because he loves mankind in spite of its follies and weaknesses. Even while he gently unmasks the roguery of the knaves, he feels grateful to them as they give him pleasure. There is no malice, spite or animosity in his attitude. His attitude is that of benevolence and tolerance. Even his satire is in the form of tender shafts of irony, which neither hurt nor destroys.

Chaucer may be regarded as the first great English humorist because no English literary work before his, reveals humour in the modern sense. His humour does not simply raise a smile but also relieve us from seriousness and gloom. He is a great master of humour and all his writing abound with its rich variety. Masefield Calls him "a great Renaissance gentleman mocking the Middle Ages"

Chaucer possess all the characteristics of a great humorist. Firstly, he has catholicity and tolerance of spirit which save it from slipping into satire. Secondly, Chaucer has the faculty of humour which is fed by keen and penetrating observation Finally, Chaucer has a healthy interest in this world and in life.

Chaucer's is an essentially English humour, as we see is qualities in the works

of great English humorists like Shakespeare and Fielding. It is not the "wit" of the Frenchman. His humour is chiefly concerned with the people and happenings of everyday life as we see in "The Canterbury Tales". Some of the facts are quite trivial in themselves but become amusing because of the way in which they are told.

Chaucer's humour is without any sting, he is always sympathetic, except in his handling the Monk and the Friar. He makes us appreciate a character even when laughing at it. His humour is not of satirical kind. As compared to the Langland, who attacks the Church with keen and telling thrust, Chaucer exposes the corruption of the Church with good humoured laugh. Moreover, Chaucer makes more fun of the individual than of the institution. The genial sympathy saves the Chaucer not only from bitterness, but also from bias. Satire is born of indignation. Therefore, he is an objective humourist, a better realist than an angry satirist.

Chaucer is essentially the poet of man and is intensely interested in his affairs. Chaucer's humour leads him to be the poet of man and humanity. He has large humanity and good-humoured tolerance for man. He has no disdain for fools and no disgust for rascals. While gently unmasking the roguery of rogues, he is grateful to them for the pleasure they give. He loves to dwell on their funny traits, looks at their pranks and tricks with amused delight –all these make him a great humourist.

Chaucer's humour is many sided. Humour can be used in a broad as well as limited sense. In the narrow sense, it means a gentle mirth. In the broader sense, it stands for boisterous humour, intellectual humour (wit) and bitter humour (satire). Chaucer's works reflect all these different types of humour. E.Alber has beautiful expressed the many-sided humour of Chaucer: "In the literature of his time, when so few poets seem to have any perception of the fun in life, the humour of Chaucer is invigorating and delightful" For example, his humour is kind as in the case of the Clerk of Oxford, broad and semi-farcical as in the Wife of the Bath, pointedly satirical as in the Pardoner and the Summoner

Chaucer's humour is natural and spontaneous. It is because of his peculiar way of looking at things, as the bent of his mind is essentially humorous. His humour is not the result of deliberate, calculated effort, but it is spontaneous expression of his inner self. Therefore, it has unmistakable marks of ease, spontaneity, naturalness and

effortlessness. In the words of Walter Raleigh "his joy is chronic and irrepressible". The Canterbury Tales radiates with the natural joy that Chaucer felt in writing it.

In the whole company of the prologue to the Canterbury Tales there are those that are good and those others that are bad, the later more in number than former. But Chaucer's attitude to them is neither that of unruffled and quiet objectivity nor of partnership. Guided by his sense of humour, Chaucer observes everything and records each detail with smiling eyes, slightly emphasizing one aspect here or another there, in order to evoke in the reader that psychological state which makes him laugh without any malice. To quote Legouis : "He is entirely patient with, ney he accepts with a smile the imperfection of humanity".

Tolerance, indulgence and capacity for enjoying life are the mainsprings of Chaucer's humour. The result is that the portraits he draws become true to life, interesting and enjoyable as life always is, to those whose hearts have not been dried up by the apparently dull and boring routine of life. Humour for the sake of humour; humour is the medium of Chaucer artistic expressions. Chaucer is never a serious satirist. His aim is primarily to entertain his readers. His aim is never to be a moralist or a preacher. He observes his age sympathetically and humorously. Chaucer does not specifically and directly criticize any institution of his age. He is a poet who explores the theme of the individual's relation to society.

Chaucer's humour is the outcome of a generous sympathy and broad-mindedness. These excellences are imitated by the greatest English humorist like Shakespeare and Fielding. Critics may be divided in opinion as to Chaucer's right to be called the father of English poetry, but there can be no question that he is first great English humorist.

Q3. Show how Chaucer's pilgrims are portrayed in the Prologue at once as types and as individuals.

Ans. Chaucer's most superb technique is his presentation of Characters as individuals and types. The Characters are not only representatives of their respective classes and professions but also at the same time they possess individual traits. For example, the Friar is a typical representative of his class in the 14th century; he is corrupt, hypocritical, greedy and callous. But his good voice, his twinkling eyes, his white neck and above all his name "Brother Hubert" all have individualistic touches. The Old Knight, stands

for heroism and manliness that good knight would always show on the battlefield. But he has been individualized by his prudence and his weakness of behavior. The Prioress is the type of a woman who is an epicure but she is portrayed as an individual, with her meticulous care in eating and her courtly manners as well as care in eating and her courtly manners as well as her tenderness of heart.

The Monk is the type of Monks of those-times interested not in religion and the study of holy books, but in hunting. But Chaucer's Monk is an individual with bald head and rolling eyes, glowing like the fire under a cauldron. The Oxford Church is the type of good scholars, not interested in worldly glory, but in the advancement of knowledge and learning. But Chaucer's Oxford Clerk comes as a figure of individual, by his learning, his hollow-cheeks, grave look and his threadbare cloak. In short Chaucer's characters are types as well as individuals. In Chaucer's representation of the Monk there is an element of irony and satire. The Monk is satirically portrayed. He contemptuously ignores the vows he has taken to uphold the monastic discipline laid down by St. Mauraus and St. Benedict. His greatest pleasure is in hunting the hare, which was thought to be wicked, especially for the clergyman. He neither labours with his hands nor pores over a book in the cloister. The monk does not fast or deny himself costly garments. Instead he loves a fat swan the best of any roast. Thus, Chaucer's Monk is a lively representative of his class. Moreover, Chaucer gives the portrait of Monk individuality. The Monk has large, prominent eyes and a glistening ruddy face; he is bald and stout. He is pompous and his actions display resentment against the world.

Thus, the characters in Chaucer's Prologue are both types and individuals, and there lies Chaucer's greatness as a creator of characters. Chaucer's characters are both types and characters.

Q4. Discuss in detail the significance of pilgrimage in Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

Ans. The narrator opens the General Prologue with a description of the return of spring. He describes the April rains, the burgeoning flowers and leaves, and the chirping birds. Around this time of year, the narrator says, people begin to feel the desire to go on a pilgrimage. Many devout English pilgrims set off to visit shrines in distant holy

lands, but even more choose to travel to Canterbury to visit the relics of Saint Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, where they thank the martyr for having helped them when they were in need. The narrator tells us that he prepared to go on such a pilgrimage, staying at a tavern in Southward called the Tabard Inn, a great company of twenty-nine travellers entered. The travellers were a diverse group who, like the narrator, were on their way to Canterbury. They happily agreed to let him join them. Before continuing the tale, the narrator declares his intent to list and describe each of the members of the group.

A pilgrimage is a religious journey undertaken for penance and grace. As pilgrimages went, Canterbury was not a very difficult destination for an English person to reach. It was, therefore, very popular in the fourteenth-century England, as the narrator mentions. Pilgrims travelled to visit the remains of Saint Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered in 1170 by knights of King Henry II. Soon after his death, he became the most popular saint in England. The pilgrimage in The Canterbury Tales should not be thought of as an entirely solemn occasion, because it also offered the pilgrims an opportunity to abandon work and take a vacation.

Q5. "Chaucer gives us a microcosm of English Society in the prologue itself." Elucidate this statement.

Ans. The pilgrims in the Prologue throw a lot of light on the social structure of England in the fourteenth century. Until Chaucer's day popular literature had been busy chiefly with the gods and heroes of a golden age; it had been essentially romantic, and so had never attempted to study men and women as they are, or to describe them so that the reader recognizes them, not as ideal heroes, but as his own neighbours. Chaucer not only attempted this new realistic task, but accomplished it so well that his characters were instantly recognized as true to life, and they have since become the permanent possession of our literature. Chaucer is the first English writer to bring the atmosphere of romantic interest about men and women and the daily work of one's own world,which is the aim of nearly all modern literature.

He spends considerable time characterizing the group members according to their social positions. The pilgrims represent a diverse cross section of fourteenth-century English society. Medieval social theory divided society into three broad classes,

called "estates": the military, the clergy, and the laity. (The nobility, not represented in the General Prologue, traditionally derives its title and privileges from military duties and service, so it is considered part of the military estate). In the portraits that we will see in the rest of the General Prologue, the Knight and the Squire represent the military estate. The clergy is represented by the Prioress (and her nun and three priests), the Monk, the Friar, and the Parson. The other characters, from the wealthy Franklin to the poor Plowman, are the members of the laity. These lay characters can be further subdivided into landowners (the Franklin), professionals (the Clerk, the Man of Law, the Guildsmen, the Physician, and the Shipman), labourers (the Cook and the Plowman), stewards (the Millers, the Manciple, and the Reeve), and church officers (the Summoner and the Pardoner). As we will see, Chaucer's descriptions of the various characters and their social roles reveal the influence of the medieval genre of the estates satire. Chaucer is a model for all those who would put out human life into writing.

Q6. Delineate the character-sketch of the Wife of Bath.

Ans. The Wife of Bath is one of Chaucer's most famous characters. He makes her a vivid presence here in the Prologue, and enlarges the portrait later in The Canterbury Tales in her own prologue to her won tale. Bath is an English town on the Avon River, not the name of this woman's husband. Though she is a seamstress by occupation, she seems to be a professional wife. She has been married five times and had many other affairs in her youth, making her well practiced in the art of love. She presents herself as someone who loves marriage and sex, but, from what we see of her, she also takes pleasure in rich attire, talking, and arguing. She is deaf in one ear and has a gap between her front teeth, which was considered attractive in Chaucer's time. She has travelled on pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times and elsewhere in Europe as well.

The Wife's great talent is for cloth-making, and we get Chaucer's tongue-in-cheek touch again when he asserts her superiority over the cloth-makers "of Ypres and of Gaunt," an opinion that we suspect came straight from the Wife herself. There follows an illuminating little touch concerning her character. No woman in the parish, Chaucer says, ought to precede the Wife to the "offrynge" in church. And if any did "certeyn so wrooth was she/ That she was out alle charitee." We can well imagine it, and so the tone is set for the development of this boisterous, egotistical, but fundamentally very

likeable character later in the Tales.

One of the two female storytellers (the other is the Prioress), the Wife has a lot of experience under her belt. She has travelled all over the world on pilgrimages, so Canterbury is a jaunt compared to other perilous journeys she has endured. Not only has she seen many lands, she has lived with five husbands. The Wife of Bath says that her first three husbands were "good" because they were rich and old. She could order them around, use sex to get what she wanted, and trick them into believing lies. The Wife of Bath says comparatively little about her fourth husband. She loved him, but he was a reveler who had a mistress. She had fun singing and dancing with him, but tried her best to make him jealous. She fell in love with her fifth husband, Jankyn, while she was still married to her fourth. The Wife of Bath's fifth husband, Jankyn, was a twenty-year-old former student, with whom the Wife was madly in love. His stories of wicked wives frustrated her so much that one night she ripped a page out of his book, only to receive a deafening smack on her ear in return.

She is worldly in both sense of the word she has seen the world and has experience in the ways of the world, that is, in love and sex. Rich and tasteful, the Wife's clothes veer a bit toward extravagance: her face is wreathed in heavy cloth, her stockings are a fine scarlet colour, and the leather on her shoes is soft, fresh, and brand new- all of which demonstrate how wealthy she has become. Scarlet was a particularly costly dye, since it was made from individual red beetles found only in some parts of the world. The fact that she hails from Bath, a major English cloth-making town in the Middle Ages, is reflected both in her talent as a seamstress and her stylish garments.

Although she is argumentative and enjoys talking, the Wife is intelligent in a commonsense, rather than intellectual, way. Though her experiences with her husbands, she has learned how to provide herself in a world where women had little independence or power. The chief manner in which she has gained control over her husbands has been in her control over their use of her body. The Wife user her body as a bargaining tool, withholding sexual pleasure until her husbands give her what she demands.

Q7. Critically analyse the character of the Monk in Chaucer's Prologue.

Ans. In Chaucer's representation of the Monk there is an element of irony and satire. The Monk is satirically portrayed. He contemptuously ignores the vows he has taken

to uphold the monastic discipline laid down by St. Mauraus and St. Benedict. His greatest pleasure is in hunting the hare, which was thought to be wicked, especially for the clergyman. Hunting was, indeed, this monk's favourite pastime, and he did not hide his irritation with those who objected to it. He neither labours with his hands nor pores over a book in the cloister. The monk does not fast or deny himself costly garments. Instead he loves a fat swan the best of any roast. Thus, Chaucer's Monk is a lively representative of his class. Moreover, Chaucer gives the portrait of Monk individuality. The Monk has large, prominent eyes and a glistening ruddy face; he is bald and stout. He is pompous and his actions display resentment against the world.

His face shone as if he had been anointed. He was fat and in very good shape, like his horse. Thus, Chaucer goes on to indicate the lavish nature of the rest of the Monk's costume. His sleeves were lined with gray fur of the finest quality. He wore supple boots. In order to fasten his hood under his chin, he had an intricate pin of wrought gold. He had a large number of valuable horses in his stable. When he rode, the jingling of the bridle of his horse could be heard at a distance. Hence, the worldiness and fine living of the Monk are greatly emphasised.

10.3. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the salient features of Chaucer's art of characterisation in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales?
2. "Chaucer's group of pilgrims constitute a picture of the society of his times." Discuss.
3. Bring out the humorous elements in the Prologue.
4. Discuss in detail the character of Chaucer's Wife of Bath.

○

SONNET

STRUCTURE

11.0 Objectives

In this unit we shall discuss the definition of a sonnet. After reading this unit you will be able to

a) Define a sonnet

b) Know the origin of sonnet

c) Know the types of sonnet

d) Differentiate between the types of sonnet

11.1 Sonnet:

The term sonnet is derived from the Italian word sonetto (from Old Provençal sonet a little poem, from son song, from Latin sonus a sound). By the thirteenth century it signified a poem of fourteen lines that follows a strict rhyme scheme and specific structure. Conventions associated with the sonnet have evolved over its history. Writers of sonnets are sometimes called "sonneteers". A sonnet is fundamentally a dialectical construct which allows the poet to examine the nature and ramifications of two usually contrastive ideas, emotions, states of mind, beliefs, actions, events, images, etc., by juxtaposing the two against each other, and possibly resolving or just revealing the tensions created and operative between the two.

11.2 Historical details of Sonnet:

The sonnet was created by Giacomo da Lentini, head of the Sicilian School (Italy) under Emperor Frederick II. Guittoned'Arezzo rediscovered it and brought it to Tuscany where he adapted it to his language when he founded the Neo-Sicilian School (1235–1294). He wrote almost 250 sonnets. Other Italian poets of the time, including Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and Guido Cavalcanti (c. 1250–1300), wrote sonnets, but the most famous early sonneteer was Petrarca (known in English as Petrarch). Other fine examples were written by Michelangelo.

11.3 Types of sonnet

There are two basic types of Sonnet depending on their rhyming scheme. These are Italian sonnet and English sonnet.

1) The Italian sonnet : The Italian Sonnet is also called as Petrarchan sonnet. It is named after the famous Italian Sonneteer Petrarch. The Italian sonnet is divided into two sections by two different groups of rhyming sounds. The first 8 lines are called the *octave* and rhymes: *abbaabba*

The remaining 6 lines are called the *sestet* and can have either two or three rhyming sounds, arranged in a variety of ways:

cdcdcd, cddcdc, cdecde, cdeced, cdcedc

The exact pattern of sestet Rhymes (unlike the octave pattern) is flexible. In strict

practice, the one thing that is to be avoided in the sestet is ending with a couplet (dd or ee), as this was never permitted in Italy, and Petrarch himself (supposedly) never used a couplet ending; in actual practice, sestets are sometimes ended with couplets.

The structure of a typical Italian sonnet of the time included two parts that together formed a compact form of "argument". First, the octave (two quatrains), forms the "proposition", which describes a "problem", or "question", followed by a sestet (two tercets), which proposes a "resolution". Typically, the ninth line initiates what is called the "turn", or "volta", which signals the move from proposition to resolution. Even in sonnets that don't strictly follow the problem/resolution structure, the ninth line still often marks a "turn" by signaling a change in the tone, mood, or stance of the poem.

In English, both English type (Shakespearean) sonnets and Italian type (Petrarchan) sonnets are traditionally written in iambic pentameter lines.

The first known sonnets in English, written by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, used this Italian scheme, as did sonnets by later English poets including John Milton, Thomas Gray, William Wordsworth and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Early twentieth-century American poet Edna St. Vincent Millay also wrote most of her sonnets using the Italian form.

The example of Milton's *On His Blindness* gives a sense of the Italian rhyming scheme:

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-labor, 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)**

2) The English sonnet : The English sonnet is also known as Shakespearean sonnet after its foremost practitioner comprises three quatrains and a final couplet, rhyming *ababcdcdefefgg.* When English sonnets were introduced by Thomas Wyatt in the early 16th century, his sonnets and those of his contemporary the Earl of Surrey were chiefly translations from the Italian of Petrarch and the French of Ronsard and others. While Wyatt introduced the sonnet into English, it was Surrey who gave it a rhyming meter, and a structural division into quatrains of a kind that now characterize the typical English sonnet. Having previously circulated in manuscripts only, both poets' sonnets were first published in Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonnetts,* better known as Tottel's Miscellany (1557).

It was, however, Sir Philip Sidney's sequence *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) that started the English vogue for sonnet sequences. The next two decades saw sonnet sequences by William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel, Fulke Greville, William Drummond of Hawthornden, and many others. This literature is often attributed to the Elizabethan Age and known as Elizabethan sonnets. These sonnets were all essentially inspired by the Petrarchan tradition, and generally treat of the poet's love for some woman, with the exception of Shakespeare's sequence of 154 sonnets.

There are two variants of English Sonnets. These are:

a) Spenserian sonnet : The Spenserian sonnet, invented by Edmund Spenser as an outgrowth of the stanza pattern he used in *The Faerie Queene* (a b a b b c b c c), has the pattern :

ababbcbccdcdee

Here, the "abab" pattern sets up distinct four-line groups, each of which develops a specific idea;however, the overlapping a, b, c, and d rhymes form the first 12 lines into a single unit with a separated finalcouplet. The three quatrains then develop three distinct but closely related ideas, with a different idea (or commentary) in the couplet. Interestingly,Spenser often begins L9 ofhis sonnets with "But" or "Yet," indicating a *volta* exactly where it would occur in the Italian sonnet;however, if one looks closely, one often finds that the "turn" here really isn't one at all, that the actual turn occurs where the rhyme pattern changes, with the couplet, thus giving a 12 and 2 line pattern very different from the Italian 8 and 6 line pattern (actual *volta* marked by italics and is bold):

"Sonnet LIV"

Of this World's theatre in which we stay,**(a)**

My love like the Spectator idly sits,**(b)**

Beholding me, that all the pageants play,**(a)**

Disguising diversely my troubled wits.**(b)**

Sometimes I joy when glad occasion fits,**(b)**

And mask in mirth like to a Comedy;**(c)**

Soon after when my joy to sorrow flits,**(b)**

I wail and make my woes a Tragedy.**(c)**

Yet she, beholding me with constant eye,**(c)**

Delights not in my mirth nor rues my smart;**(d)**

But when I laugh, she mocks: and when I cry**(c)**

She laughs and hardens evermore her heart.**(d)**

What then can move her? If nor mirth nor moan,**(e)**

She is no woman, but a senseless stone.**(e)**

b) Shakespearean sonnet : The English sonnet has the simplest and most flexible pattern of all sonnets, consisting of 3 quatrains of alternating rhyme and a couplet:

Ababcdcdefefgg

As in the Spenserian, each quatrain develops aspecific idea, but one closely related to the ideas in the other quatrains.

Not only is the English sonnet the easiest in terms of its rhyme scheme, calling for only pairs of rhyming words rather than groups of 4, but it is the most flexible in terms of the placement of the *volta*. Shakespeare often places the "turn", as in the Italian, at L9:

"Sonnet XXIX"

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,**(a)**

I all alone beweep my outcast state,**(b)**

And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,**(a)**

And look upon myself and curse my fate,**(b)**

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,**(c)**

Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,**(d)**

Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,**(c)**

With what I most enjoy contented least,**(d)**

Yet in these thoughts my self almost despising,**(e)**

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,**(f)**

(Like to the lark at break of day arising**(e)**

From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate,**(f)**

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings,**(g)**

That then I scorn to change my state with kings.**(g)**

Equally, Shakespeare can delay the *volta* tothe final couplet, as in this sonnet where each quatrain develops a metaphor describing theaging of the speaker, while the couplet then states the consequence—"You better love me now because soon I won't be here":

"Sonnet LXXIII"

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,

When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang

Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day,

As after sunset fadeth in the west,

Which by and by black night doth take away,

Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

As the deathbed, whereon it must expire,

Consumed by that which it was nourished by.

This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,

To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

There are, of course, some sonnets that don't fit any clear recognizable pattern but still certainly function as sonnets. We keep those type of sonnets in the category of Indefinables. Shelley's "Ozymandias"belongs to this category. It's rhyming pattern of *ababacdcedefef* is unique; clearly, however, there is a *volta* in L9 exactly as in anItalian sonnet:

"Ozymandias"

I met a traveller from an antique land**(a)**

Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone**(b)**

Stand in the desert ... Near them, on the sand,**(a)**

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,**(b)**

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command**(a)**

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read**(c)**

Which yet survive, (stamped on these lifeless things,)**(d)**

The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:**(c)**

And on the pedestal these words appear:**(e)**

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:**(d)**

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"**(e)**

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay**(f)**

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare**(e)**

The lone and level sands stretch far away.**(f)**

11.4 Self-Assessment Questions:

Multiple Choice Questions

1) A Couplet _____

a) Always using alliteration b) Always consisting of two lines

c) Always uses a hyperbole d) Always consists of three lines

2) Shakespearean rhyming scheme is

a) Ababcdcdefefgg b) Ababbcbccdcdee

c) Abbccddeeffghh d) Abba cddceffegg

3) Spenserian rhyming scheme is

a) Ababcdcdefefgg b) Ababbcbccdcdee

c) Abbccddeeffghh d) Abba cddceffegg

4) Who introduced sonnet to England

a) William Shakespeare b) Edmund Spenser

c) Wyatt and Surrey d) Sir Philip Sidney

5) The sonnets were imported from _____ to England.

a) Greece b) Italy

c) France d) India

11.5 Glossary

Thou – you

Tuscany – A region in Italy.

Volta – A turning point in a poem

Dialectical – logically reasoned through the exchange of opposite ideas.

Juxtapose – The close placement of two ideas to imply a link that may not exist.

Pageant – A spectacular ceremony

Wit – The ability to think quickly especially under short term constraints

11.6 Examination Oriented Questions:

1) Discuss the concept of Sonnet with example?

2) Write down the origin and development of the sonnet form.

3) Write down the difference between the Italian form of sonnet and the English form of sonnet.

4) Write down the difference between the Shakespearean and Spenserian form of sonnets.

5) Wyatt and Surrey imported the sonnet form to England. Did they imitate the same form of sonnet or amend it with their own English style? Discuss.

11.7 Questions with possible answer

1. Define Sonnet.

Possible Answer : A sonnet is a poetic form that has fourteen lines. It originated in Italy in the thirteenth century, and though it has generally kept some of the original rules, such as the number of lines and having a specific rhyme scheme and meter, the conventions of sonnets have changed over the centuries to some degree. There are two primary branches of the sonnet form—the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet and the English or Shakespearean sonnet.

2. Define Spenserian sonnet?

Possible Answer : The English poet Edmund Spenser, who lived and wrote during the Elizabethan age, used a slightly different rhyme scheme in his sonnets: ABAB BCBC CDCD EE. This provides a tighter connection between the different stanzas and is called Spenserian sonnet.

11.8 Suggested reading :

1) *The Art of Sonnet* by Stephen Burt David Mikics. Harvard University Press. 2010

2) *The Penguin Book of the Sonnet:500 years of the Classical Tradition in English* by Philip Levin. Penguin Books. 2001.

3) *The Cambridge Companion to the Sonnet* Edited by A.D. Cousins and Peter Howarth. Cambridge University Press. 2011.

4) *Daily Sonnets* by Laynie Brownie. Counterpath press. 2007.

5) *The sonnet; its Origin, structure and place in poetry with original translations from the sonnet of Dante, Petrarch, etc.* by Charles Tomlinson. University of California London, 1874.

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SONNET

STRUCTURE

12.0 Objectives

In this unit we shall discuss a sonnet "Whoso List to Hunt" by Sir Thomas Wyatt. After reading this unit you will be able

a) To know about the poet

b) To know the historical background

c) To understand the sonnet

d) To interpret the sonnet

12.1 Historical background:

Sir Thomas Wyatt lived in the age when spirit of renaissance was dawning in England. The movement renaissance was not merely literary. It signified an overall change in culture and civilization marking an end to the civilization and culture of the Middle ages. The dawn of new ideas in science and education, politics and religion, philosophy and literature, marked the arrival of renaissance. Although, the renaissance movement began in Europe around the middle of the fourteenth century, in England it got foothold only in the early sixteenth century and flowered during the middle and later quarters of the century giving rise to unparalleled production of lasting drama and poetry, prose and fiction. The intense conflict between the medieval witchcraft and the new experimental science, between the medieval orthodox Catholicism and the rise of puritan reformism, between the medieval blind faith and ancient skeptical rationalism, between the medieval feudalism and the rising capitalism, between the medieval theocratism and the renaissance monarchism, between the medieval romance tradition and the revival of classical humanism, led to the tremendous rise of all-round creativity during the renaissance. The very term renaissance signifies upsurge, revival or rebirth and it was the revival of classical learning, arts and literature which marked the beginning of this movement.

The renaissance in Europe also saw the development of a parallel movement in religion called reformation, which, too, made its impact on the literature of the period. It is important to consider reformation as a part of the renaissance movement because the renaissance was not pagan or irreligious; rather it was a combination of humanism

and Christianity. Calvin and Luther may have steered the ship of Protestantism against the Roman Catholicism on the continent, in the England of Queen Elizabeth, that is, during the period of the peak English renaissance, the battle of reformation was fought between William Tyndale, the protestant and Sir Thomas Moore, the catholic.

12.2 About the Poet

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) was a 16th century English sonneteer. He and his friend Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey are credited with introducing of sonnet form of poetry to English literature. He was born at Allington Castle, near Maidstone in Kent, though his family was originally from Yorkshire. His mother was Anne Skinner and his father, Henry Wyatt, had been one of Henry VII's Privy Councillors, and remained a trusted adviser when Henry VIII came to the throne in 1509. In his turn, Thomas Wyatt followed his father to court after his education at St John's College, Cambridge. He was an English ambassador under Henry VIII's reign. He also travelled to Spain, France and Italy for the diplomatic missions. From Italy he imported the sonnet form of poetry. Wyatt was over six feet tall, reportedly both handsome and physically strong. In 1520, Wyatt married Elizabeth Brooke, (1503–1550), the daughter of Thomas Brooke. A year later, the couple had a son. In 1535 Wyatt was knighted and appointed High Sheriff of Kent for 1536.In May 1536 Wyatt was imprisoned in the Tower of London for allegedly committing adultery with Anne Boleyn (Wife of Henry VIII). He was released from the Tower later that year, thanks to his friendship or his father's friendship with Thomas Cromwell, and he returned to his duties.On 11 December 1542 at the age of 39 he died, the reason being serious illness.

12.3 Wyatt's poetry and influence:

Wyatt's professed object was to experiment with the English tongue, to civilise it, to raise its powers to those of its neighbours. A significant amount of his literary output consists of translations and imitations of sonnets by the Italian poet Petrarch; he also wrote sonnets of his own. He took subject matter from Petrarch's sonnets, but his rhyme schemes make a significant departure. Petrarch's sonnets consist of an "octave", rhyming *abbaabba*, followed, after a turn (volta) in the sense, by a "sestet" with various rhyme schemes. Wyatt employs the Petrarchan octave, but his most common sestet scheme is *cddcee*. This marks the beginnings of an exclusively "English" contribution to

sonnet structure that is three quatrains and a closing couplet.Although Wyatt's poems circulated among many of the members of Henry's court, they did not appear in print until his death. In 1557, ninety-six of his songs appeared in *Songs and Sonnetts (Tottel's Miscellany).* The remainder of Wyatt's poems, satires, and lyrics would remain in manuscript and slowly come into print during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries**.** His love lyrics, many based loosely on the Petrarchan sonnet, deal with courtly love and ill treatment at the hands of his lovers. Among his most famous poems are "Whoso List to Hunt," "They Flee From Me," "What No, Perdie," "Lux, My Fair Falcon," and "Blame Not My Lute." Wyatt also wrote three satires, which adopted the Italian terzarima into English, and a number of penitential psalms.

12.4 Critical assessment of the poet

Critical opinions of his work have varied widely. Thomas Warton, the 18th-century critic, considered Wyatt "confessedly an inferior" to his contemporary Henry Howard, and that Wyatt's "genius was of the moral and didactic species and be deemed the first polished English satirist". The 20th century saw an awakening in his popularity and a surge in critical attention. C. S. Lewis called him "the father of the Drab Age" (i.e. the unornate), from what Lewis calls the "golden" age of the 16th century, while others see his love poetry, with its complex use of literary conceits, as anticipating that of the metaphysical poets in the next century. More recently, the critic Patricia Thomson describes Wyatt as "the Father of English Poetry"

12.5 Introduction to the sonnet:

"Whoso List to Hunt" is one of the earliest sonnets in all of English literature and one of thirty sonnets written by Sir Thomas Wyatt. Wyatt (1503-1542) probably wrote 'Whoso List to Hunt' some time during the 1530s, and the poem was published in the 1550s after his death."Whoso List to Hunt" is held to be Wyatt's imitation of "Rime 190," written by Petrarch, a fourteenth-century Italian poet and scholar.Wyatt introduced the sonnet, a fourteen-line poem with a fixed format and rhyme scheme, to England. The Petrarchan sonnet is a fourteen-line poem in which the first eight lines, the octave, present a problem, which is resolved by the final six lines, the sestet. Wyatt altered the Petrarchan formula, ending the sestet with two lines, a couplet, that rhyme. As such, he set a precedent for later poets, many of whom further altered the sonnet formula. Also,

in focusing on a hunting allegory in "Whoso List to Hunt," Wyatt demonstrated that sonnets could explore more than unrequited love, on which Petrarch had focused. Wyatt's poem is frequently found in literature anthologies, as well as in several editions of his own poetry, including *Sir Thomas Wyatt: Collected Poems* (1975), edited by JoostDaalder.

The sonnet is also about hunting a doe upon which the hunter spies around her neck a diamond encrusted collar pertaining to Caesar's ownership.At the time of writing (approx 1525 when Wyatt separated from his wife), King Henry VIII was married to his first wife Catherine of Aragon, but after meeting Anne Boleyn at a masquerade ball in March 1522, Henry like Wyatt became enamoured with her. Henry later married Boleyn after declaring his union with Catherine invalid. Consequently, Wyatt, who was in an unhappy marriage, had to give up any thoughts of winning Boleyn for himself. His sonnet is believed to be an expression of his frustration at this turn of events. The poem tells of a deer hunt in which several riders are chasing a hind (female deer). The deer hunt and the hind are both metaphors, the hunt representing young men pursuing an alluring woman at the king's court and the hind representing the woman herself, presumably Boleyn.

12.6 Analysis of the sonnet:

Wyatt uses the sonnet form, which he introduced to England from the work of Petrarch. The Petrarchan sonnet typically has 14 lines. The first 8 lines, or octet, introduces a problem or issue for contemplation and the remaining six lines, or sestet, offers a resolution or an opinion. Wyatt uses iambic pentameter. This means that there are five pairs of syllables, each with the stress on the second syllable. It is the most common rhythm used in traditional poetry and was used by Shakespeare in his sonnets, poems and plays. Iambic pentameter, though a regular rhythm, was thought to be closest to ordinary speech patterns, so it is an attempt to imitate but also elevate the sounds of everyday conversation.

By opening the poem with a question, the narrator challenges the reader. There is an invitation in his words, and the use of an exclamation mark at the end of the first line implies excitement at the idea. As hunting was a popular pastime in the court of Henry VIII, this suggests a poem along the lines of Henry VIII's own most famous lyric,

'Pastime With Good Company'. However, problem within the octet is revealed in line 2 as the poet tells us that he is no longer part of the hunt. An exclamation mark is used in line 2, again to emphasize emotion, but this time frustration and regret. This is a passionate yet contradictory introduction.

Line 3 makes use of assonance to reveal the poet's earlier hunting efforts as 'vain travail' which has tired him out to the point of physical pain. We can see that the poem is an extended metaphor for the end of a relationship. Wyatt makes use of enjambment (breaking a phrase over more than one line of verse) and caesura (concluding a phrase within the first half of a line of verse) across lines six and seven to highlight the discord represented by the end of the relationship as he subverts and challenges his own chosen structure.

In line 8, the poet uses the concluding line of the octet to stress the futility of his former quest. He uses the metaphor of catching the wind in a net to emphasize the pointlessness of his chase.

The final sestet begins with line 9 reiterating the appeal to those who wish to join the hunt, but he continues in to line 10 to explain that the pursuit will be in vain for them too. Again there is an exclamation mark to indicate an intensity of feeling.

Line 11 continues the extended metaphor as an explanation of why his hunt of this 'hind', and that of others who pursue her, is so pointless. She has a bejeweled collar, indicating she already has an owner. Her collar is adorned with the Latin phrase 'Noli Me tangere' meaning 'touch me not'. This expression refers to a phrase spoken by Jesus to Mary Magdalene in the Bible. The design also includes the name of her owner – 'for Caesar's I am.' If we identify the poem as referring to Anne Boleyn, then her new owner would be King Henry VIII; the pair was married around the time when this poem was composed and Wyatt could no longer compete for her affections. By describing Henry using the allusion of Caesar, Wyatt bestows on his monarch the qualities of a reputation of greatness and incisive rule.

Caesar was, like Henry, a leader early in late teens, a handsome and strong young man and was significant in the political and aesthetic changes and developments of his realm. Both were literate, charismatic and influential. However, other less favourable parallels can be drawn. Both Caesar and Henry VIII incurred huge debt during their

respective offices. There were many subjects who were held captive, sometimes executed, on charges of treason. Caesar faced questions regarding his sexuality and his unsuitable choices of women. Wyatt may also be alluding to these less appealing aspects of Caesar in his comparison if we see the passion in the poem to be borne of frustration and anger.

12.7 Themes

Unattainable Love

The poem can stand as a metaphor for the frustration a person experiences after circumstances prevent him or her from achieving a goal. This is a timeless theme that occurs frequently in literature. The speaker chases a woman whom he cannot—and must not—catch, for she is a prize of the ruler of the land. If the speaker continues to pursue her, he will incur the wrath of the ruler and probably lose his head. In real life, King Henry VIII accused Wyatt of committing adultery with his wife, Ann Boleyn (apparently the hind in the poem), and imprisoned him in the Tower of London in 1536. The charges against him were dismissed. Ironically, it was Ann Boleyn who lost her head in the same year as Wyatt's imprisonment after she fell out of favor with the king.

Divine Right of Kings

The doctrine of the "divine right of kings" held that kings were God's representatives on earth and that all of the king's subjects were, in fact, his property. The final lines of the sonnet, when it is revealed that the hind's collar declares her to be the property of Caesar alone, allude to this doctrine. The royal ruler supposedly had the right to possess this female, regardless of her wishes or the desires of any other suitors. While he courted Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII gave her many gifts, which established that he was serious about her. These gifts also served to warn other suitors that the object of the King's desire was not available to other men. Although Anne Boleyn did not wear a collar inscribed with the King's name, she wore jewels and other gifts that he supplied. As king, Henry VIII would have believed in his divine right to possess his subjects, and he would not have been shy about seizing whomever he desired. There comes a time when the wisest course in a struggle to achieve a goal is to cease striving. Such is the case with the author of "Whoso List to Hunt," Thomas Wyatt. Wyatt well knows that defying the headstrong Henry can only result in an appointment with an executioner.

Consequently, he yields to the king. Wyatt's poem is an allegory that explains the futility of opposing an irresistible force.

Courtly Love

Traditionally, early English sonnets focused on romantic and idealized love, as did the Petrarchan sonnets that inspired the English to adopt the format. The love sonnet often celebrated the woman's beauty, comparing in great detail the features of her face and body to forms in nature. For example, a poet might compare a woman's cheeks to roses in bloom. In "Whoso List to Hunt," Wyatt deviates from the typical love sonnet and casts the woman as a deer, who is pursued in an evidently ardent fashion. In being not an inanimate object of the suitor's affection but a wild animal in flight, the female has more personality than the typical subject of a courtly love poem. While she does not speak, she holds a sort of dialogue with the narrator through her actions and through the display of her collar. Thus, Wyatt shifts the perspective on courtly love to focus on the ideas of masculine.

Obsession

In Wyatt's sonnet, the hunter can be said to be obsessed with possessing his prey. He describes himself as "wearied" twice, in lines 3 and 5. In line 7, he refers to himself as "fainting" as he continues to follow the hind, even as she flees him. The pursuit is dangerous, as the deer is labelled as royal property, but the hunter follows anyway. When a desire is so intense that it cannot be ignored, even when danger is present, it might be labelled an obsession; mere reasoning is not enough to rid the obsessed lover of his desire.

Sexism

The object of the hunt in Wyatt's sonnet is a hind, a female deer, which is held to represent the person of Anne Boleyn. The deer is hunted as prey and wears a collar that proclaims her ruler's ownership over her. This portrayal of a woman as a forest animal to be hunted and possessed reflects the low esteem with which women were often viewed in Elizabethan society. In this allegory, courtship and wooing have no role in the relationship between hunters and hunted, and the female cannot escape the fact that she is a royal possession.

12.8 Style:

Allegory

In literature, an allegory is an extended metaphor in which objects and events hold symbolic meanings outside of the literal meanings made explicit in the narrative. In Wyatt's sonnet, the hunter's pursuit of the hind can be held to represent Wyatt's pursuit of Anne Boleyn, and the hind's being the property of Caesar can represent the "ownership" of Anne Boleyn by King Henry VIII. All of the accompanying descriptions of the hunt and the hunter's emotions, then, can be applied to this actual romantic situation.

Petrarchan sonnet

The Petrarchan sonnet, also known as the Italian sonnet, consists of two separate sections. The first part is the octave, an eight-line stanza, wherein a problem or issue is put forth. The second part is the sestet, wherein some resolution to the problem is provided. In "Whoso List to Hunt," the octave describes the futile pursuit of the hind, while the sestet explains why the hunter cannot capture his prey: she is the property of her royal master, and to capture her would endanger both the hind and the hunter. More specifically, Wyatt's sestet consists of a quatrain (four lines) and a couplet (two lines), as can be seen in examining the rhyme scheme. Petrarch divided his sonnets into octaves of *abbaabba* and sestets of various rhyme schemes, usually *cdecde* or *cdcdcd*. Wyatt's rhyme scheme is slightly different: *abbaabba, cddc, ee*. Within such structures, certain rhymes may be somewhat irregular, particularly in that certain words may have been pronounced differently in Elizabethan times. In Wyatt's sonnet, *wind*, as in "breeze," with a short *i* sound, is held to rhyme with the long *i* of *hind, behind*, and *mind*. Similarly, in the last couplet, the long *a* of *tame* is held to rhyme with the short *a* of *am*. In reading that couplet aloud, one might distort the sounds of either or both of those words in order to approximate a rhyme. In ending with a couplet, Wyatt puts emphasis on both of the last two lines; in contrast, the Petrarchan form places more emphasis on the last line of the octave and the last line of the sestet.

Meter

The most common meter of the Elizabethan period was pentameter, wherein a line of verse contains five measures, or feet. If each foot contains two syllables—such

as with an iamb, where the second syllable is stressed—each line will contain a total of ten syllables. The resulting rhythm can heighten the reader's aesthetic appreciation of and emotional response to the poem. Wyatt's use of iambic pentameter was irregular; in fact, when some of his poems were included in *Tottel's Miscellany*, the printer revised and smoothed out the meter. In "Whoso List to Hunt," lines 1, 4, 6, and 8 contain eleven syllables, and line 14 contains only nine syllables; the remaining lines all contain the expected ten syllables. Lines 2 and 3 reveal the predominant iambic-pentameter pattern :

....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

But **AS**..|..for **ME**,..|..hé **LAS**,..|..I **may**..|..no **more**.

.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

The **VAIN**..|..tra **VAIL**..|..hath **WEAR**..|..ied **ME**..|..so **SORE**

12.9 Summary of the sonnet:

In line 1 of "Whoso List to Hunt," the narrator states that for those who wish to hunt, he knows the location of a particular hind, a female deer. The narrator himself is trying to abandon the hunt, acknowledging the futility of his labour that this hind is beyond his reach. Indeed, he is "wearied" from the "vain travail," the useless work of the hunt; he has begun to realize the worthlessness of this pointless task that has irritated him to the point of sickness. He laments in the fourth line that he is the last of the pursuers, the one "that farthest cometh behind." In the second stanza, the narrator states that he cannot take his "wearied mind … from the deer." She keeps fetching her attention and simultaneously slips away from him and deserts him in his continuous chase. She continues to flee from him and he follows her fainting. Nevertheless, he is ultimately forced to indeed abandon the chase, as she is too fast and all that he can catch is the wind that rises after she passes. He is in a pensive mood after being spurned by her as the task of engaging her is as inconsequential as trying to hold wind in a net. In sum, the first eight lines, the octave, state the problem of the writer's wasted hunt. In the closing sestet, the invitation initially offered by the narrator to whoever wishes to hunt this particular hind is partly rescinded. In the following line, the narrator states that he will remove any doubt about the wisdom of doing so. Just as his hunt was in vain, so would be those of other hunters. He warns them that the female dear wears in

diamond lettering a collar around her neck that clarifies that she is not to be touched or possessed by any hunter for she belongs to the royal of the land .The concluding couplet notes that the collar reads *"Noli me tangere,"* or "Touch me not" in Latin. Thus, the first part of the warning is "Touch me not, for Caesar's I am." According to legend, long after the ancient Roman emperor Caesar's death, white stags were found wearing collars on which were inscribed the words *"Noli me tangere; Caesaris sum,"* or "Touch me not; I am Caesar's." The first part of that phrase, *"Noli me tangere,"* is also a quotation from the Vulgate Bible, from John 20:17, when Christ tells Mary Magdalene, "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father." In the final line, the warning on the collar continues; the deer herself declares that while she appears tame, holding her is dangerous, as she is wild.

Wyatt is not talking about actual hunting. He is talking about the trials and tribulations in the course of love, ardency of love, courtship and the like. He realises that he should not touch the dear otherwise he will get killed. This love poem expresses the frustration of an earnest lover, the pangs of separation that he puts up with after his beloved has become the royal property and the love affair that has remained unrequited.

12.10 Glossary:

12.10.1 Figures of Speech

Examples of figures of speech in the poem are the following:

Line 1:...Metaphor: comparison of a woman to a hind (female deer)

Line 1:...Alliteration: **Wh**oso list to **h**unt, I know where is an **h**ind

Line 3:...Alliteration: **s**o **s**ore

Line 5:...Alliteration: Yet **m**ay I by no **m**eans **m**y wearied **m**ind

Line 8:...Metaphor: comparison of the task of catching and winning the woman to catching wind with a net.

Line 14:.Paradox: And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

12.10.2 Difficult words and their meanings/Allusions:

Whose – whosoever, whoever

List – desires, wishes

Hunt – chase to catch or capture

An hind – female deer and metaphor for Ann Boleyn

Helas– alas in French

Vain travail – futile labour, useless labour or efforts

Wearied – greatly tired

Sore – painful, aching, causing distress

I am of them – I am at the back of the hunting party

Farthest – at the greatest distance

By no means – certainly

My wearied – dear – He can't draw his thoughts away from this dear lady.

Fleeth – run fast

Afore – before

Leave off – to give up, to abandon

Since – wind – to get a hold of this hind is like trying to hold the wind in a net

Graven – engraved

In letters plain – in clear words

Fair neck – beautiful neck

Noli me tangere – Latin, "Do not touch me"

Ceaser – a Roman emperor

Wild for to hold , though… tame – it's a paradox. (though I seem easy to control, I am wild for the hunter to control me)

12.11 Self-assessment questions:

Multiple Choice Questions:

1) In "Whoso List to Hunt," the speaker's stated reason for stopping his pursuit is

   a) Disgust b) Jealousy

   c) Boredom d) Exhaustion

2) The image of futility Wyatt uses in "Whoso List to Hunt" is

   a) Chasing a deer b) Engraving a necklace

   c) Catching the wind in a net d) Returning to Ceaser what is his

3) "And wild for to hold, though I seem tame."

   a) Satire b) Antithesis

   c) Caricature d) Understatement

4) In Wyatt's "Whoso List to Hunt" the word "list" means

   a) Hates b) Wants

   c) Travels d) Pretends

5) In the sestet of "Whoso List to Hunt" the speaker addresses _____

   a) Ceaser b) The wind

   c) The deer d) A Lover

12.12 Examination oriented questions:

1) Discuss the themes of the sonnet "Whoso List to Hunt" by Sir Thomas Wyatt.

2) What is an allegory? How can you say that "whoso list to hunt" is an allegory by Sir Thomas Wyatt.

3) "Whoso list to hunt" is essentially a love poem. Do you agree?

12.13 Questions with possible answers.

1. Give the short introduction of Thomas Wyatt's whoso list of hunt.

Possible Answer : Sir Thomas Wyatt's 'Whoso List to Hunt' is one of the earliest sonnets in all of English literature. What follows is the poem, followed by a brief introduction to, and analysis of, the poem's language and imagery – as well as its surprising connections to King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Wyatt (1503-1542) probably wrote 'Whoso List to Hunt' some time during the 1530s, and the poem was published in the 1550s after his death. This sonnet is a loose translation of a poem by the fourteenth-century Italian poet Petrarch, who had been the first major poet to use the form (though Petrarch did not in fact invent the sonnet; we've discussed the origins of the sonnet here). Petrarch left such a mark on the sonnet that one of the most famous sonnet forms is still often referred to as the 'Petrarchan sonnet'. Such a poem is fourteen lines long and is divided into two 'chunks' (to use a not very technical term), an eight-line section (called an 'octave') and a six-line section (a 'sestet').

However, Wyatt alters Petrarch's original in a number of key ways, including the rhyme scheme for that sestet (Petrarch's original sonnet did not end with a couplet). The poem might be summarised thus: the speaker addresses the world, claiming that if anyone should choose ('list') to go hunting, the speaker knows of a hind (female deer), but the speaker must count himself out of the chase.

2. What is the historical and biographical content in "whoso list to hunt" by Wyatt?

Possible Answer : "Whoso List to Hunt" is held to be Wyatt's imitation of "Rime 190," written by Petrarch, a fourteenth-century Italian poet and scholar. In "Whoso List to Hunt," Wyatt describes a hunt wherein a deer is pursued and ultimately owned by the royal who owns the land. Scholars generally believe that the poem is an allegory referring to Anne Boleyn's courtship by King Henry VIII, such that when Wyatt speaks of the deer as royal property not to be hunted by others, he is acknowledging that

Anne has become the property of the King alone. Wyatt was said to have been interested in Anne—and may have been her lover—but would have withdrawn as a suitor after the King made clear his wish to claim her.

12.14 Suggested reading:

1) Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction in Renaissance England by Christopher Warley. Cambridge University press. 2005

2) Sir Thomas Wyatt: Poems. Faber and Faber publications. 2008.

3) Laura: Uncovering Gender and Genre in Wyatt, Donne and Marvell by Barbara L. Estrin. Duke University press. 1994.

4) Masculinity and the Hunt: Wyatt to Spenser by Catharine Bates. Oxford University Press. 2013

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SONNET

STRUCTURE

13.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall discuss sonnet 63 of *Astrophil and Stella* i.e., *O Grammar rules,* O now your virtues show written by Phillip Sidney. After reading this unit you will be able

a) To comprehend the historical background of Renaissance period

b) To identify with the poet

c) To understand and analyze the sonnet

d) To construe the sonnet

13.1 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Unleashing new ideas and new social, political and economic forces and displacing the spiritual and communal values of the Middle Ages, Renaissance came to England in the 16th Century. It emerged under the influence of humanism whose pioneers included Sir Thomas More, John Colet, Roger Ascham, and Sir Thomas Elyot. They aimed at struggles over the purposes of education and curriculum reform. But the focus of education shifted from training for the Church to the general acquisition of "literature," in the sense both of literacy and of cultural knowledge. Although, England during sixteenth century had only Catholicism as the religion but the Protestant Reformation, with its emphasis on the authority of scripture and salvation by faith alone, came to England as a result of Henry VIII's insistence on divorcing his wife, Catherine of Aragon, against the wishes of the Pope. Henry declared himself supreme head of the Church of England and those who refused his supreme power, like Thomas More, were held guilty of treason and executed. Henry's son Edward VI was more firmly Protestant, whilst Mary I was a Catholic. Elizabeth I, though a Protestant, was cautiously conservative.

Being a female monarch in a male world, Elizabeth ruled England through the combination of skillful political strategy and authoritative command. Leading artists during her reign included the poet Edmund Spenser, the miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard, the well known dramatist, William Shakespeare, the university wits and many more when England faced an invasion from Catholic Spain in 1588, Elizabeth appeared in person before her troops wearing a white gown and a silver breastplate; the incident testifies to her self-consciously theatrical command of the grand public occasion as well as her strategic appropriation of masculine qualities. By the 1590s, virtually everyone was aware that Elizabeth's life was nearing an end, and there was great anxiety surrounding the succession to the throne.

Aesthetically, Elizabethan literature encompasses delight in order and pattern

conjoined with a profound interest in the mind and heart. In his *Defense of Poesy*, Sir Philip Sidney argued that poetry's magical power to create perfect worlds was also a moral power, encouraging readers to virtue. The major literary modes of the Elizabethan period included pastoral, as exemplified in Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*, and heroic/epic, as in Spenser's *Faerie Queene.*

A permanent, free standing public theater in England dates only from 1567. There was, however, a rich and vital theatrical tradition, including interludes and mystery and morality plays. Around 1590, an extraordinary change came over English drama, pioneered by Marlowe's mastery of unrhymed iambic pentameter, or blank verse. The theaters had many enemies; moralists warned that they were nests of sedition, and Puritans charged that theatrical transvestism excited illicit sexual desires, both heterosexual and homosexual. Nonetheless, the playing companies had powerful allies, including Queen Elizabeth, and continuing popular support.

13.2 ABOUT THE POET

Regarded as the consummate Renaissance man, Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) was a prominent and highly influential literary figure, scholar, sonneteer and courtier of the Elizabethan period.His major works comprise *Astrophel and Stella*, *The Defence of Poesy* , and *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*.His *Astrophel and Stella* is revered as the finest Elizabethan sonnet cycle. His compassion for protestant made him advise Elizabeth I in a private letter (1579) against marrying the Duke of Anjou, Roman Catholic heir to the French throne.

Born in Kent to aristocratic parents—Sir Henry Sidney, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, and Mary Dudley, sister of the Earl of Leicester—Sidney received the financial, social, and educational privileges of the English nobility and was trained as a statesman. His schooling at the Shrewsbury School gifted him a lifelong friend, Fulke Greville, who is a renowned scholar and is known as Sidney's biographer. Due to an outbreak of plague, Sidney left the Christ's Church three years later without taking a degree. Sidney continued his education with a "Grand Tour" of continental Europe, learning about politics, languages, music, astronomy, geography, and the military. During this time he became acquainted with some of the most prominent European statesmen, scholars, and artists; he also became friends with the humanist scholar Hubert Languet, with whom

he spent a winter in Germany. Sidney's correspondence with Languet is a valuable source of information about Sidney's life and career. Languet's censure of Catholicism and his espousal of Protestantism, as well as his attempts to encourage Queen Elizabeth I to further this cause in England, are believed to have strongly influenced Sidney's religious and political convictions. After further travels, including through Hungary, Italy, and Poland,Sidney returned to England in 1575, where he promptly established himself as one of the Queen's courtiers. Although he pursued literary interests, associating with such prominent writers as Greville, Edward Dyer, and Edmund Spenser, Sidney's chief ambition was to embark on a career in public service. Aside from acquiring some minor appointments, he was never given an opportunity to prove himself as a statesman. Critics speculate that his diplomatic career was deliberately discouraged by Elizabeth, whose policy of caution in handling domestic and religious matters conflicted with Sidney's ardent support of Protestantism. In 1578 Sidney wrote and performed in, along with the Queen herself, an "entertainment," or pageant, entitled The Lady of May. He also began writing the first version of Arcadia. After writing a letter towards the end of 1579 which urged the Queen not to enter into a planned marriage with the Roman Catholic Duke of Anjou, heir to the French throne, Sidney found himself in strained relations with Elizabeth. Denied court duties, Sidney lived at the estate of his sister Mary Sidney Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, and occupied himself with writing: probably in 1580 he completed the *Old Arcadia*, and began *The Defence of Poesie*; he began *Astrophel and Stella* around 1581. Also in 1581 Sidney took part in a performance for the Queen of the "entertainment" The Four Foster Children of Desire, which scholars believe was at least partially written by Sidney. In 1583 Sidney was knighted so that he might complete an assignment for the Queen. Sidney began a major revision of the Arcadia in 1584 and in the following year began work on a verse translation of the psalms, which was later finished by his sister. In 1585 he was appointed governor of Flushing, an area comprising present-day Belgium and the Netherlands, where the English were involved in the Dutch revolt against Spain. In 1586 he participated in a raid on a Spanish convoy at Zutphen in the Netherlands. Struck on the leg by a musket ball, Sidney developed gangrene and died a few weeks later, just one month short of his thirty-second birthday. His death was marked with a lavish, ceremonial state funeral at St. Paul's cathedral in London.

Almost all his major works were published posthumously. Although Sidney died before completing the *Arcadia* and requested on his deathbed that his manuscripts be burned, an edition, now referred to as the *New Arcadia*, was published in 1590 containing the revised chapters. Drawing on elements of Italian pastoral romance and Greek prose epic, the plot of the Arcadia concerns two princes who embark on a quest for love in the land of Arcadia, fall in love with two daughters of the Arcadian king, and eventually, after a series of mistaken identities and misunderstandings, marry the princesses. Elaborately plotted with a non-chronological structure, interspersed with poetry, and characterized by extensive alliteration, similes, paradoxes, and rhetorical devices, the *Arcadia* is artificial, extravagant, and difficult to read by modern standards. A printing of a composite *Arcadia* was made in 1593, comprising Books I-III of the *New Arcadia* and Books III-V of the *Old Arcadia*.

His love for Penelope, the twelve year old daughter of the Earl of Essex, resulted in his compilation of a series of sonnets addressed to the lady "Stella"- Sidney's name for Penelope. Most of "Stella" poems were not published but were, however, circulated in the form of manuscript. In these sonnets dedicated to Penelope, he calls himself "Astrophel". It is a sequence of 108 sonnets celebrating a hopeless love affair and appeared in printed form in the year 1591. It tells the story of Astrophel (also called Astrophil), his passion for Stella, her conditioned acceptance of his advances and, finally, his plea to be released from his obligation to her.

A preface by Thomas Nashe introduced it as 'the tragicomedy of love, performed by starlight, the argument, cruel chastity, the prolonged hope, the epilogue despair'. The sequence of 108 sonnets and 11 songs has as its heroine Stella (Star). Punning use of the word 'rich' in sonnets 24, 35 and 37 invites the reader to identify her with Penelope Devreux, who became Lady Rich on her marriage in 1581. She is courted by Astrophil (Star lover). He makes a confined list of 16th century poetic conventions and styles in sonnet no.6. He debates the claims and will and wit, reason and passion.

An Apologie for Poetrie was published by Henry Olney without authorization early in 1595. William Ponsonby, who had registered *The Defence of Poesie* late in 1594, gained all of Olney's copies. *The Defence of Poesie* responds to Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse*(1579), which charges that modern poetry exerts an immoral

influence on society by presenting lies as truths and instilling unnatural desires in its readers. Sidney answered Gosson's invective by asserting that the poet provides a product of his imagination which does not pretend to literal fact and therefore cannot present lies. Sidney declares that the purpose of poetry is to instruct and delight.

13.3 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE POET

Memoirs of Sidney began almost at once upon his death. Spenser wrote an elegy entitled "Astrophel" and Edmund Molyneux wrote of him in Holinshed's Chronicles, published in 1587. Greville'shagiographie biography even made use of spurious stories to further Sidney's reputation. Various critics contend that the creativity and concern for literary detail intrinsic to Sidney's prose style in the *New Arcadia* were valuable innovations which encouraged experimentation and greater attention to craftsmanship among Renaissance writers.*Astrophel and Stella* popularized the sonnet sequence form and inspired many other poets. In a seminal study of Sidney's poetry, Theodore Spencer cited his "direct and forceful simplicity, his eloquent rhetoric, his emotional depth and truth, [and] his control of movement, both within the single line and throughout the poem as a whole" as innovations to poetic form which exerted a profound impact on subsequent poets. C. S. Lewis wrote that *Astrophel and Stella* "towers above everything that had been done in poetry … since Chaucer died," and that "the fourth [sonnet] alone, with its hurried and (as it were) whispered metre, its inimitable refrain, its perfect selection of images, is enough to raise Sidney above all his contemporaries." More recently Ronald Levao has asserted that despite evidence of faulty logic, the *Defence of Poesie* is "one of the most daring documents of Renaissance criticism." Although he has been widely respected and read for centuries, Sidney's popularity has suffered a setback in modern times, leading Duncan-Jones to observe that Sidney is "the least-read of the major Elizabethans."

13.3.1 Sir Philip Sidney: The Real Renaissance Man and the Sonnet Tradition

Sir Philip Sidney as one of the most important Renaissance poets of England, Because of his famous essay, "The Defense of Poesy," Sidney is also perhaps one of the ten or so most famous authors in British history. Importantly, Sidney is the one poet we will study who was of nobility. He was a knight in Queen Elizabeth's court. An adventurous and thrill-seeking knight, he became famous for his involvement in battles

and espionage. All of his life he sought heroic action, wanting to be in the thick of things, which made Queen Elizabeth cautious about him. So Sidney was a very well connected courtier, who knew about life of the court and such experiences as courtly love first-hand. Having access to University education, he also was very passionate about literature and learning, and encouraged such famous authors as Spenser.

Although the sonnet as a poetic form evolved in thirteenth and fourteenth century Italy with poets like Petrarch, it became most famous as the dominant poetic tradition in sixteenth century Renaissance England. Poets like Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare wrote well-crafted sonnets. But their sonnets were not just separate poems written here and there. They wrote their sonnets in cycles, a lifetime of sonnets combining to form a long narrative. Sonnet cycles were very long: Sidney's has more than 100 sonnets. Shakespeare's is 147 sonnets long.

The sonnet is a very crafted and difficult structure. Generally, sonnets are all fourteen lines long, each line in imabic pentameter, and each poet using a particular rhyme scheme that remains consistent through the whole sonnet cycle. The ability to write so many excellent sonnets within such a strenuous structure made the sonnet cycle one of the major Renaissance triumphs. They were seen and admired with the same awe and respect as a symphony, or a cathedral. And it was even more admired in England as an example of their greatness, fostering cultural pride that begins to grow during this time when England is trying to edge forward as a super-power in the world.

Sidney's sonnet *Astrophil and Stella*, chronicles the poet, a knight named Astrophil, in the middle of an affair of courtly love with a Lady already taken, Stella. We hear the poet's thoughts and see his experience as he suffers miserably in his futile attempt to win Stella's love, a love he desires but a love he also knows he could never realize. So we get all of the mental arguments the Astrophil makes with himself, where he tries to justify his love, or when he tries to bend the love he feels for Stella into something virtuous. In the end, we get a portrait of a poet in deep anguish, struggling with unrequited love like someone being slowly roasted over coals. Readers have debated for centuries as to whether the portrait of Astrophil is meant to be taken seriously, and that we should have pity for him, or if the portrait is ludicrous, and we are supposed to laugh at him and judge his emotions and actions.

13.4 INTRODUCTION TO THE SONNET:

The sonnet uses allegorical pseudonyms Astrophel (star-lover) with a pun on his own name Philip and Stella (star) who is meant to be a substitute for a married lady at court, Penelope Rich with whom Sidney was hopelessly in love. Written in Petrarchan rhymes that interlock, creating couplets embedded in quantrains (pattern- ABBA, ABBA), its Volta (a turn in a sonnet) is marked by an impromptu (unplanned) couplet introducing a new rhyme cc before reverting back to the Petrarchan quatrain i.e. ***deed***.

Here the lover attempts to use grammar rules and wordplay to convince his beloved Stella to accept his proposal. But she continues to reject his wishes. Stella's rejection of Astrophel's amorous advances saddens him. But her negative statement twice allows him to use grammar rules to his advantage. Thus, the lover claims that Stella's negative exclamation is actually an invitation. Astrophel has asked Stella for the thing desired which she ever denies and she answered "No" "No". The lover (Astrophel) pounces upon her negative assertion and asserts that she really has granted his request.

Structurally, this is an Italian sonnet. The octave describes Astrophel's humble petition of his powerful desire and Stella's reaction. The sestet begins with Astrophel invoking his muse to sing praises and appealing to heaven not to envy him in his triumph Heaven and Grammar both should, he asserts, recognize and confirm with him that, by repeating her "no" Stella has' by all rules and "yes" to his desire.

13.5 PARAPHRASE OF THE SONNET:

Lines 1-8

The sonnet opens with an address to Grammar. The lover, Astrophel requests Grammar to project his virtues and rules and make his young Dove (Stella) understand the rules of Grammar with the effort of her own practical wisdom. Without looking face to face at her, casting his eyes low with a tinge of humility and seriousness, fortitude and vigor, he desires to get her love. In spite of his strong desires, she rejects his advances and continues to deny him. Like the skies which get brighter with the light of Venus, he expresses a flash of joy in his heart by the use of "no" twice by his beloved.

Lines 9-14

Requesting the Muse,Goddess of poetry, the poet invites her to sing the song of praise or triumph. At the same moment, he urges Heaven not to feel envious of his achievement or victory; and uses Grammar for achieving what he desires. According to Latin grammatical rules, a double negative results in the meaning of the sentence as an affirmative. He believes and is sure that Stella's negative exclamation i.e., the use of "no" twice in her statement is actually a provocation, an invitation to him to make love to her. By making the use of Grammar, he wishes to possess his beloved. Employing the tricks and tools of grammatical rules, he cancels the pessimistic approach of a negative asserting that the double negative is basically a positive. The repetition is merely to put an emphasis so that the lover doesn't lose hope and keeps trying.

13.6 SUMMARY OF THE SONNET:

The sonnet "O Grammar rules, O now your virtue shows" is an Italian sonnet composed of fourteen lines. Here, Astrophel, the lover urges the Grammar to assist his beloved, Stella comprehend the grammatical rules with her own endeavor and intellectuality. In other words, he wants Grammar to use his powers and wisdom in helping Astrophel win his beloved, Stella.

Although he has been making attempts to win her but they all go in vain as she continues to reject his advances of romantic love. With all his intense and earnest efforts, he time and again makes requests to his beloved to accept his advances but she resists and reflects her unwillingness for the same. In spite of her unfavorable reaction, he never gives up and continues the hunt. This shows his adamant and stubborn behavior as he still awaits her to surrender and agree to his proposal.

Once she feels so irritated by his lustful behavior that she strongly reject his amorous advances with "no, no". The lover, Astrophel uses grammar to his advantage . According to Latin grammar rules , a double negative translates into an affirmation. Thus Stella's negative exclamation is taken as an invitation by Astrophel who is using all tricks and tools at his disposal to convince Stella to acquiesce to his desires. He feels happy that his beloved's no, no has made an affirmative invitation to him.

13.7 GLOSSARY:

Grammar rules- Grammar rules the poem speaks are the Latin rules, the chief cause of children's headaches in the Grammar schools.

Virtues- Good qualities

Awful- A feeling of fear combined with fear or wonder.

Young Dove- The poet's beloved Stella.

Percepts Wise- Practical Wisdom.

Her grant to me- to help him win his beloved.

Heart most high- rising excitement, with seriousness, determination and energy

Eyes most low- with all his humility.

I crav'd the thing- I asked for something earnestly, expressed a strong desire for something.

Which ever she denies- she continues to reject his advances.

She lightning love, displaying- the skies with the light of the Venus (second planet of the solar system) gets brighter. In the same way, the poet experiences a flash of joy in his heart by the use of "no" twice by his beloved.

Muse- Goddess of Poetry

Paen- song of praise or triumph

High triumphing- glorious victory or success

Confirm- establish the truth

Nay- no

Two negative affirm- a double negative translates into an affirmative.

13.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. Which Italian poet greatly influenced Sidney's sonnets?

a. Giacomo da Lentini b. Giovanni Boccaccio

c. Francesco Petrarch d. Dante

2. 'O Grammar rules, O now your virtue shows is a sonnet from _____.

a. Astrophel and Stella b. Amorreti

c. Tottel's Miscellany d. None of the above.

3. The sonnet 'O Grammar rules, O now your virtue shows' by Sir Philip Sidney explores Astrophel's despair over the unrequited love, his attempts to woo Stella and to rationalize in his mind the virtue of his _____ love.

a. Selfish b. Futile

c. Selfless d. Deep and passionate

4. Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and stella*is an English sonnet sequence composed in _____

a. 1580 b. 1560

c. 1570 d. 1555

5. Sie Philip Sidney in his sequence *Astrophel and Stella* talks about his love for Stella and defines her as the _____ of his life.

a. Moon b. Light

c. Star d. Guide

13.9 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Sidney personify grammar in this poem? How is grammar figured – what kind of "person" does it seem to be? How does Sidney use grammar in connection with Stella?

2. Give the central idea/theme of the sonnet 'O Grammar rules, O now your virtue shows'.

3. What do the words lo and paean mean? Are they one syllable or two - syllable words?

4. Explain: *For late with heartmost high, with eyes most low;*

I crav'd the thing which ever she denies:

13.10 QUESTIONS WITH POSSIBLE ANSWERS.

1. Why does Astrophel attempts to use grammar rules?

Possible Answer : Astrophel attempts to use grammar rules and wordplay to convince his beloved Stella to acquiesce (to accept reluctantly but without protest) to his desires. He has a violent and passionate love for Stella but Stella has outrightly rejected his advances. The lover is attempting to justify his lustful behavior. Stella's denial and rejection of his amorous advances would not enable him to gain his desire and it would count as a rape if she does despite her wishes. But the sexual encounter would not be a rape if Stella gives affirmative response (even if by misapplied grammatical rules).

2. Explain; *Heavens envy not at my high triumphing.*

Possible Answer : In this line the lover appeals to heaven to not to envy in his triumph or success, he has succeeded in making his beloved Stella agree to love him since her use of "no" twice amounts to affirmation as per one rule of Latin grammar.

13.11 Suggested reading:

1. *The Broadview Anthology of Sixteenth-Century Poetry and Prose*edited by Marie Loughlin, Sandra Bell, Patricia Brace.Broadview press. 2012.

2. *The miscellaneous works of Sir Philip Sidney, knt: with a life the author and illustrative notes*by William Gray. D.A. Talboys. 1829.

3. *Sixteenth Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology* by Gordon Braden. John Woley and Sons. 2008,

4. *Sir Philip Sidney: Selected Prose and Poetry*. University of Wisconsin press. 1983.

DOCTOR FAUSTUS: CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

STRUCTURE

14.1 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the students with

a) the Age of Christopher Marlowe

b) Marlowe's life and

c) Marlowe's works.

14.2. INTRODUCTION TO THE AGE OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

The Elizabethan Period was the age of the Renaissance, of new ideas and new

thinking. The introduction of the printing press during the Renaissance, one of the greatest tools in increasing knowledge and learning, was responsible for the interest in the different sciences and inventions- and the supernatural. The new ideas, information and increased knowledge about science, technology and astrology led to a renewed interest in the supernatural including witches, witchcraft and ghosts which led to belief in superstitions and the supernatural.

Christopher Marlowe was a great Elizabethan playwright. He was born in the same year as William Shakespeare during the reign of Elizabeth I. He was born in a small town called Canterbury which probably had a population of over 4,000. To us it would seem no more than a village but by Elizabethan standards, it was a respectable size. The main industries of Canterbury were weaving wool and working leather. In the 16th century England the Renaissance became the cultural movement that revived interest in classical art and literature reached England. During the lifetime of Marlowe, the theater in England flourished.

However England was deeply divided in the 16th century. Elizabeth I (1558-1603) introduced a moderate Protestantism. Yet a small minority of the English people remained Catholic and they were viewed with deep distrust. Christopher Marlowe was also accused of being an atheist, which was a serious charge. Today we believe that religion is a private matter but during the 16th century it was very different. Everybody was expected to have the same religion as the King or Queen.

14.3. INTRODUCTION TO THE DRAMATIST: CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

a) HIS LIFE

Christopher Marlowe is an English playwright, poet and translator of the Elizabethan era. Marlowe was the foremost Elizabethan tragedian of his day. Marlowe was born in Canterbury to shoemaker John Marlowe and his wife Catherine. His date of birth is not known, but he was baptised on 26 February 1564, and is likely to have been born a few days before. Thus, he was just two months older than his contemporary William Shakespeare, who was baptised on 26 April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. He greatly influenced William Shakespeare, who was born in the same year as Marlowe and who rose to become the pre-eminent Elizabethan playwright after Marlowe's mysterious

early death.

Marlowe attended Corpus Christi College at Cambridge University and received degrees in 1584 and 1587. Traditionally, the education that he received would have prepared him to become a clergyman, but Marlowe chose not to join the ministry. For a time, Cambridge even wanted to withhold his degree, apparently suspecting him of having converted to Catholicism, a forbidden faith in late-sixteenth-century England, where Protestantism was the state-supported religion. Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council intervened on his behalf, saying that Marlowe had "done her majesty good service" in "matters touching the benefit of the country." This odd sequence of events has led some to theorize that Marlowe worked as a spy for the crown, possibly by infiltrating Catholic communities in France.

After leaving Cambridge, Marlowe moved to London, where he became a playwright and led a turbulent, scandal-plagued life. He produced seven plays, all of which were immensely popular. Among the most well known of his plays are *Tamburlaine, The Jew of Malta, and Doctor Faustus.* In his writing, he pioneered the use of blank verse—non rhyming lines of iambic pentameter—which many of his contemporaries, including William Shakespeare, later adopted. In1593, however, Marlowe's career was cut short. After being accused of heresy (maintaining beliefs contrary to those of an approved religion), he was arrested and put on a sort of probation. On May 30, 1593, shortly after being released, Marlowe became involved in a tavern brawl and was killed when one of the combatants stabbed him in the head. After his death, rumors were spread accusing him of treason, atheism, and homosexuality, and some people speculated that the tavern brawl might have been the work of government agents. Little evidence to support these allegations has come to light, however.

b) HIS WORKS

Of the dramas attributed to Marlowe, *Dido, Queen of Carthage* is believed to have been his first. It was performed by the Children of the Chapel, a company of boy actors, between 1587 and 1593. The play was first published in 1594; the title page attributes the play to Marlowe and Thomas Nashe. Marlowe's first play performed on the regular stage in London, in 1587, was *Tamburlaine the Great*, about the conqueror Tamburlaine, who rises from shepherd to war-lord. It is among the first

English plays in blank verse, and, with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy,* generally is considered the beginning of the mature phase of the Elizabethan theatre. *Tamburlaine* was a success, and was followed with *Tamburlaine* the Great, Part II. The two parts of *Tamburlaine* were published in 1590; all Marlowe's other works were published posthumously. The sequence of the writing of his other four plays is unknown; all deal with controversial themes.

The Jew of Malta (first published as *The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta),* about a Maltese Jew's barbarous revenge against the city authorities, has a prologue delivered by a character representing Machiavelli. It was probably written in 1589 or 1590, and was first performed in 1592. It was a success, and remained popular for the next fifty years. The play was entered in the Stationers' Register on 17 May 1594, but the earliest surviving printed edition is from 1633.

Edward the Second is an English history play about the deposition of King Edward II by his barons and the Queen, who resent the undue influence the king's favourites have in court and state affairs. The play was entered into the Stationers' Register on 6 July 1593, five weeks after Marlowe's death. The full title of the earliest extant edition, of 1594, is *The troublesome reigne and lamentable death of Edward the second, King of England, with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer.*

The Massacre at Paris is a short and lucidly written work, the only surviving text of which was probably a reconstruction from memory of the original performance text, portraying the events of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, which English Protestants invoked as the blackest example of Catholic treachery. It features the silent "English Agent", whom subsequent tradition has identified with Marlowe himself and his connections to the secret service. *The Massacre at Paris* is considered his most dangerous play, as agitators in London seized on its theme to advocate the murders of refugees from the low countries and, indeed, it warns Elizabeth I of this possibility in its last scene. Its full title was *The Massacre at Paris: With the Death of the Duke of Guise.*

14. 4. INTRODUCTION TO DOCTOR FAUSTUS

Doctor Faustus (or *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus),* based on the German Faustbuch, was the first dramatised version of

the Faust legend of a scholar's dealing with the devil. While versions of "The Devil's Pact" can be traced back to the 4th century, Marlowe deviates significantly by having his hero unable to "burn his books" or repent to a merciful God in order to have his contract annulled at the end of the play. Marlowe's protagonist is instead carried off by demons, and in the 1616 quarto his mangled corpse is found by several scholars. Doctor Faustus is a textual problem for scholars as two versions of the play exist: the 1604 quarto, also known as the A text, and the 1616 quarto or B text. Both were published after Marlowe's death. Scholars have disagreed which text is more representative of Marlowe's original, and some editions are based on a combination of the two. The latest scholarly consensus (as of the late 20th century) holds the A text is more representative because it contains irregular character names and idiosyncratic spelling, which are believed to reflect a text based on the author's handwritten manuscript, or "foul papers." The B text, in comparison, was highly edited, censored because of shifting theatre laws regarding religious words onstage, and contains several additional scenes which scholars believe to be the additions of other playwrights, particularly Samuel Rowley and William Bird (*alias* Borne).

Marlowe also wrote the poem *Hero and Leander* (published in 1598, and with a continuation by George Chapman the same year), the popular lyric "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", and translations of Ovid's *Amores* and the first book of *Lucan's Pharsalia.* In 1599, his translation of Ovid was banned and copies publicly burned as part of Archbishop Whitgift's crackdown on offensive material.

14.5. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Write a note on Marlowe's life.

Possible answer: Christopher Marlowe is an English playwright, poet and translator of the Elizabethan era. Marlowe was the foremost Elizabethan tragedian of his day. Marlowe was born in Canterbury to shoemaker John Marlowe and his wife Catherine. Marlowe attended Corpus Christi College at Cambridge University. After leaving Cambridge, Marlowe moved to London, where he became a playwright and led a turbulent, scandal-plagued life. He produced seven plays, all of which were immensely popular.

Q2. Describe the chief works of Marlowe.

Possible answer: Of the dramas attributed to Marlowe, *Dido, Queen of Carthage* is believed to have been his first. It was performed by the Children of the Chapel, a company of boy actors, between 1587 and 1593. The play was first published in 1594; the title page attributes the play to Marlowe and Thomas Nashe. Marlowe's first play performed on the regular stage in London, in 1587, was *Tamburlaine the Great,* about the conqueror Tamburlaine, who rises from shepherd to war-lord. It is among the first English plays in blank verse, and, with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy,* generally is considered the beginning of the mature phase of the Elizabethan theatre.

Q3. What is the source of the legend of Doctor Faustus?

_____

_____

_____

MCQs

Q1. The Age of Renaissance falls under which period?

a) Elizabethan Age
b) Age of Chaucer
c) Victorian Age
d) Modern Age

Q2. Christopher Marlowe is an:

a) Irish Playwright
b) Dutch playwright
c) American playwright
d) English playwright

Q3. Which is Marlowe's first play to be performed on a regular stage in London?

a) *The Jew of Malta*
b) *The Tamburlaine*
c) *Edward the Second*
d) *The Massacre at Paris*

Q4. Which one is Marlowe's famous lyric?

a) *Amores*
b) *Pharsalia*
c) *Hero and Leander*
d) *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*

Q5. Which translation was banned?

a) *Amores* b) *Pharsalia*

c) *Doctor Faustus* d) *Dido*

14.6. ANSWER KEY

1. a)
2. d)
3. b)
4. d
5. a)

14.7. RECAPITULATION OF THE LESSON

Marlowe was a great dramatist. It was the age of Renaissance, when the genius of Marlowe reached its maturity. He belonged to the greatest group of young writers generally called the "University Wits." Before his untimely death at the age of twenty-nine, he had founded the English romantic tragedy, had written one of the greatest poetical dramas in the English language and had converted the stiff mechanical blank verse of Gorboduc into a vital form which Shakespeare in his turn could make fit for the speeches of his greatest characters. Marlowe was far more than a pioneer. He shines across the centuries in the blaze of his genius. His most important works include *Tamburlaine the Great* which may be called a pure "hero-play", *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta,* and *Edward II* which is unquestionably Marlowe's masterpiece. Other plays which Marlowe is said to have had a share are: *The Massacre at Paris; and Dido, Queen of Carthage*. Both these were written in collaboration with Thomas Nashe. Besides these plays, Marlowe also wrote a poem called *Hero and Leander,* in which apart from the drama, the Renaissance movement is seen perhaps at its highest point in English poetry. Marlowe also wrote one of the finest lyrics in the English language: T*he Passionate Shepherd to His Love,* a poem of pure fancy and radiant melody.

14.8. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Doctor Faustus- Edited by Suroopa Mukherjee
2. The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature – R. Beadle
3. Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical study – F. S. Boas
4. Renaissance Self- fashioning from More to Shakespeare – Stephen Greenblatt
5. English drama before Shakespeare – P. Happe

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DOCTOR FAUSTUS: CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

STRUCTURE

15.1. OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson the student will be able to:

a) gain an insight into this play and its background

b) get acquainted with the main characters of the play

The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, commonly referred to simply as *Doctor Faustus*, is a play by Christopher Marlowe, based on the German story *Faust*. *Doctor Faustus* was first published in 1604, eleven years after

Marlowe's death and at least 10 years after the first performance of the play. It is the most controversial Elizabethan play outside of Shakespeare, with few critics coming to any agreement as to the date or the nature of the text

15.2. SOURCES OF THE LEGEND

Doctor Faustus is based on an older tale; it is believed to be the first dramatisation of the Faust legend. Some scholars believe that Marlowe developed the story from a popular 1592 translation, commonly called The English Faust Book. There is thought to have been an earlier, lost, German edition of 1587, which itself may have been influenced by even earlier, equally unpreserved pamphlets in Latin, such as those that likely inspired Jacob Bidermann's treatment of the damnation of the doctor of Paris, Cenodoxus (1602). Several soothsayers or necromancers of the late fifteenth century adopted the name Faustus, a reference to the Latin for "favoured" or "auspicious"; typical was Georgius Faustus Helmstetensis, calling himself astrologer and chiromancer, who was expelled from the town of Ingolstadt for such practices. Subsequent commentators have identified this individual as the prototypical Faustus of the legend.

Whatever the inspiration, the development of Marlowe's play is very faithful to the Faust Book, especially in the way it mixes comedy with tragedy. However, Marlowe also introduced some changes to make it more original. He made three main additions:

- Faustus's soliloquy, in Act 1, on the vanity of human science
- Good and Bad Angels
- The substitution of a Pageant of Devils for the Seven Deadly Sins

He also emphasised Faustus' intellectual aspirations and curiosity, and minimised the vices in the character, to lend a Renaissance aura to the story.

15.3. STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY

The play is in blank verse and prose in thirteen scenes (1604) or twenty scenes (1616). Blank verse is largely reserved for the main scenes while prose is used in the comic scenes. Modern texts divide the play into five acts; act 5 being the shortest. As in many Elizabethan plays, there is a chorus (which functions as a narrator), that does not

interact with the other characters but rather provides an introduction and conclusion to the play and, at the beginning of some Acts, introduces events that have unfolded.

Along with its history and language style, scholars have critiqued and analysed the structure of the play. Leonard H. Frey wrote a document entitled "In the Opening and Close of Doctor Faustus," which mainly focuses on Faustus's opening and closing soliloquies. He stresses the importance of the soliloquies in the play, saying: "the soliloquy, perhaps more than any other dramatic device, involved the audience in an imaginative concern with the happenings on stage". By having Doctor Faustus deliver these soliloquies at the beginning and end of the play, the focus is drawn to his inner thoughts and feelings about succumbing to the devil. The soliloquies have parallel concepts. In the introductory soliloquy, Faustus begins by pondering the fate of his life and what he wants his career to be. He ends his soliloquy with the solution and decision to give his soul to the devil. Similarly in the closing soliloquy, Faustus begins pondering, and finally comes to terms with the fate he created for himself. Frey also explains: "The whole pattern of this final soliloquy is thus a grim parody of the opening one, where decision is reached after, not prior to, the survey".

15.4. INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

Doctor Faustus was probably written in 1592, although the exact date of its composition is uncertain, since it was not published until a decade later. The idea of an individual selling his or her soul to the devil for knowledge is an old motif in Christian folklore, one that had become attached to the historical persona of Johannes Faustus, a disreputable astrologer who lived in Germany sometime in the early 1500s. The immediate source of Marlowe's play seems to be the anonymous German work Historia von D. Iohan Fausten of 1587, which was translated into English in 1592, and from which Marlowe lifted the bulk of the plot for his drama. Although there had been literary representations of Faust prior to Marlowe's play, *Doctor Faustus* is the first famous version of the story. Later versions include the long and famous poem Faust by the nineteenth-century Romantic writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, as well as operas by Charles Gounod and Arrigo Boito and a symphony by Hector Berlioz. Meanwhile, the phrase "Faustian bargain" has entered the English lexicon, referring to any deal made for a short-term gain with great costs in the long run.

15.5. PLOT OVERVIEW

Doctor Faustus, a well-respected German scholar, grows dissatisfied with the limits of traditional forms of knowledge—logic, medicine, law, and religion—and decides that he wants to learn to practice magic. His friends Valdes and Cornelius instruct him in the black arts, and he begins his new career as a magician by summoning up Mephistophilis, a devil. Despite Mephistophilis's warnings about the horrors of hell, Faustus tells the devil to return to his master, Lucifer, with an offer of Faustus's soul in exchange for twenty-four years of service from Mephistophilis. Meanwhile, Wagner, Faustus's servant, has picked up some magical ability and uses it to press a clown named Robin into his service.

Mephistophilis returns to Faustus with word that Lucifer has accepted Faustus's offer. Faustus experiences some misgivings and wonders if he should repent and save his soul; in the end, though, he agrees to the deal, signing it with his blood. As soon as he does so, the words "Homo fuge," Latin for "O man, fly," appear branded on his arm. Faustus again has second thoughts, but Mephastophilis bestows rich gifts on him and gives him a book of spells to learn. Later, Mephastophilis answers all of his questions about the nature of the world, refusing to answer only when Faustus asks him who made the universe. This refusal prompts yet another bout of misgivings in Faustus, but Mephastophilis and Lucifer bring in personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins to prance about in front of Faustus, and he is impressed enough to quiet his doubts.

Armed with his new powers and attended by Mephastophilis, Faustus begins to travel. He goes to the pope's court in Rome, makes himself invisible, and plays a series of tricks. He disrupts the pope's banquet by stealing food and boxing the pope's ears. Following this incident, he travels through the courts of Europe, with his fame spreading as he goes. Eventually, he is invited to the court of the German emperor, Charles V (the enemy of the pope), who asks Faustus to allow him to see Alexander the Great, the famed fourth-century B.C. Macedonian king and conqueror. Faustus conjures up an image of Alexander, and Charles is suitably impressed. A knight scoffs at Faustus's powers, and Faustus chastises him by making antlers sprout from his head. Furious, the knight vows revenge.

Meanwhile, Robin, Wagner's clown, has picked up some magic on his own, and with his fellow stablehand, Rafe, he undergoes a number of comic misadventures. At one

point, he manages to summon Mephastophilis, who threatens to turn Robin and Rafe into animals (or perhaps even does transform them; the text isn't clear) to punish them for their foolishness.

Faustus then goes on with his travels, playing a trick on a horse-courser along the way. Faustus sells him a horse that turns into a heap of straw when ridden into a river. Eventually, Faustus is invited to the court of the Duke of Vanholt, where he performs various feats. The horse-courser shows up there, along with Robin, a man named Dick (Rafe in the A text), and various others who have fallen victim to Faustus's trickery. But Faustus casts spells on them and sends them on their way, to the amusement of the duke and duchess.

As the twenty-four years of his deal with Lucifer come to a close, Faustus begins to dread his impending death. He has Mephastophilis call up Helen of Troy, the famous beauty from the ancient world, and uses her presence to impress a group of scholars. An old man urges Faustus to repent, but Faustus drives him away. Faustus summons Helen again and exclaims rapturously about her beauty. But time is growing short. Faustus tells the scholars about his pact, and they are horror-stricken and resolve to pray for him. On the final night before the expiration of the twenty-four years, Faustus is overcome by fear and remorse. He begs for mercy, but it is too late. At midnight, a host of devils appears and carries his soul off to hell. In the morning, the scholars find Faustus's limbs and decide to hold a funeral for him.

Faustus becomes dissatisfied with his studies of medicine, law, logic and theology; therefore, he decides to turn to the dangerous practice of necromancy, or magic. He has his servant Wagner summon Valdes and Cornelius, two German experts in magic. Faustus tells them that he has decided to experiment in necromancy and needs them to teach him some of the fundamentals.

When he is alone in his study, Faustus begins experimenting with magical incantations, and suddenly Mephistophilis appears, in the form of an ugly devil. Faustus sends him away, telling him to reappear in the form of a friar. Faustus discovers that it is not his conjuring which brings forth Mephistophilis but, instead, that when anyone curses the trinity, devils automatically appear. Faustus sends Mephistophilis back to hell with the

bargain that if Faustus is given twenty-four years of absolute power, he will then sell his soul to Lucifer.

Later, in his study, when Faustus begins to despair, a Good Angel and a Bad Angel appear to him; each encourages Faustus to follow his advice. Mephistophilis appears and Faust agrees to sign a contract in blood with the devil even though several omens appear which warn him not to make this bond. Faustus begins to repent of his bargain as the voice of the Good Angel continues to urge him to repent. To divert Faustus, Mephistophilis and Lucifer both appear and parade the seven deadly sins before Faustus. After this, Mephistophilis takes Faustus to Rome and leads him into the pope's private chambers, where the two become invisible and play pranks on the pope and some unsuspecting friars.

After this episode, Faustus and Mephistophilis go to the German emperor's court, where they conjure up Alexander the Great. At this time, Faustus also makes a pair of horns suddenly appear on one of the knights who had been skeptical about Faustus' powers. After this episode, Faustus is next seen selling his horse to a horse-courser with the advice that the man must not ride the horse into the water. Later, the horse-courser enters Faustus' study and accuses Faustus of false dealings because the horse had turned into a bundle of hay in the middle of a pond.

After performing other magical tricks such as bringing forth fresh grapes in the dead of winter, Faustus returns to his study, where at the request of his fellow scholars, he conjures up the apparition of Helen of Troy. An old man appears and tries to get Faustus to hope for salvation and yet Faustus cannot. He knows it is now too late to turn away from the evil and ask for forgiveness. When the scholars leave, the clock strikes eleven and Faustus realizes that he must give up his soul within an hour.As the clock marks each passing segment of time, Faustus sinks deeper and deeper into despair. When the clock strikes twelve, devils appear amid thunder and lightning and carry Faustus off to his eternal damnation.

15.6. LEGEND

The old legend that a man could obtain supernatural power by selling his soul to the devil found its climax in the sixteenth century in the person of *Doctor Faustus* who

really lived in the first half of that century. This man was a wandering scholar who became notorious as a necromancer, braggart, and super-quack, who, abandoning the disinterested pursuit of knowledge in favour of its worldly exploitation, and attaining some temporary success, ultimately met disaster. After his death, a book called *Faustbuch* (or, *Faustbook*) appeared in German in 1587. This book was supposed to contain the experiences and adventures of *Doctor Faustus*. It was translated into English under the title: *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus*. Marlowe must have taken the material for writing of his play from this English translation. He has the distinction of being probably the first in any country to see the dramatic possibilities of this striking story. The story was one which subsequently led to the publication of a long series of Faustus plays in Germany, until Goethe gave us its first perfect series expression in his *Faust* (which in turn inspired a number of great painters and composers). Marlowe's play follows the *Faust-book* closely only in the general theme and in the low comedy scenes. He raises the character of *Doctor Faustus* to a higher level than is touched by his character in the original, and the serious scenes of the play seem to some extent to be a sublimation of the vulgar sensationalism of the original.

15.7. LIST OF CHARACTERS

Doctor Faustus – Doctor Faustus, the protagonist of the play, is a brilliant sixteenth-century scholar from Wittenberg, Germany, whose ambition for knowledge, wealth, and worldly might make him willing to pay the ultimate price—his soul—to Lucifer in exchange for supernatural powers. Faustus's initial tragic grandeur is diminished by the fact that he never seems completely sure of the decision to forfeit his soul and constantly wavers about whether or not to repent. His ambition is admirable and initially awesome, yet he ultimately lacks a certain inner strength. He is unable to embrace his dark path wholeheartedly but is also unwilling to admit his mistake.

Mephistophilis – He is a devil whom Faustus summons with his initial magical experiments. Mephistophilis's motivations are ambiguous: on the one hand, his oft-expressed goal is to catch Faustus's soul and carry it off to hell; on the other hand, he actively attempts to dissuade Faustus from making a deal with Lucifer by warning him about the horrors of hell. Mephistophilis is ultimately as tragic a figure as Faustus, with his moving,

regretful accounts of what the devils have lost in their eternal separation from God and his repeated reflections on the pain that comes with damnation.

Chorus - A character who stands outside the story, providing narration and commentary. The Chorus was customary in Greek tragedy.

Old Man - An enigmatic figure who appears in the final scene. The old man urges Faustus to repent and to ask God for mercy. He seems to replace the good and evil angels, who, in the first scene, try to influence Faustus's behavior.

Good Angel - A spirit that urges Faustus to repent for his pact with Lucifer and return to God. Along with the old man and the bad angel, the good angel represents, in many ways, Faustus's conscience and divided will between good and evil.

Evil Angel - A spirit that serves as the counterpart to the good angel and provides Faustus with reasons not to repent for sins against God. The evil angel represents the evil half of Faustus's conscience.

Lucifer - The prince of devils, the ruler of hell, and Mephastophilis's master.

Wagner - Faustus's servant. Wagner uses his master's books to learn how to summon devils and work magic.

Clown - A clown who becomes Wagner's servant. The clown's antics provide comic relief; he is a ridiculous character, and his absurd behavior initially contrasts with Faustus's grandeur. As the play goes on, though, Faustus's behavior comes to resemble that of the clown.

Robin - An ostler, or innkeeper, who, like the clown, provides a comic contrast to Faustus. Robin and his friend Rafe learn some basic conjuring, demonstrating that even the least scholarly can possess skill in magic. Marlowe includes Robin and Rafe to illustrate Faustus's degradation as he submits to simple trickery such as theirs.

Rafe - An ostler, and a friend of Robin. Rafe appears as Dick (Robin's friend and a clown) in B-text editions of *Doctor Faustus*.

Valdes and Cornelius - Two friends of Faustus, both magicians, who teach him the art of black magic.

Horse-courser - A horse-trader who buys a horse from Faustus, which vanishes after the horse-courser rides it into the water, leading him to seek revenge.

The Scholars - Faustus's colleagues at the University of Wittenberg. Loyal to Faustus, the scholars appear at the beginning and end of the play to express dismay at the turn Faustus's studies have taken, to marvel at his achievements, and then to hear his agonized confession of his pact with Lucifer.

The Pope - The head of the Roman Catholic Church and a powerful political figure in the Europe of Faustus's day. The pope serves as both a source of amusement for the play's Protestant audience and a symbol of the religious faith that Faustus has rejected.

Emperor Charles V - The most powerful monarch in Europe, whose court Faustus visits.

Knight - A German nobleman at the emperor's court. The knight is skeptical of Faustus's power, and Faustus makes antlers sprout from his head to teach him a lesson. The knight is further developed and known as Benvolio in B-text versions of *Doctor Faustus*; Benvolio seeks revenge on Faustus and plans to murder him.

Bruno - A candidate for the papacy, supported by the emperor. Bruno is captured by the pope and freed by Faustus. Bruno appears only in B-text versions of *Doctor Faustus*.

Duke of Vanholt - A German nobleman whom Faustus visits.

Martino and Frederick - Friends of Benvolio who reluctantly join his attempt to kill Faustus. Martino and Frederick appear only in B-text versions of *Doctor Faustus*.

15.8. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

15.8.1 SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1. What are the sources of the legend?

Possible Answer : The old legend that a man could obtain supernatural power by selling his soul to the devil found its climax in the sixteenth century in the person of *Doctor Faustus* who really lived in the first half of that century. This man was a wandering scholar who became notorious as a necromancer, braggart, and super-quack, who, abandoning the disinterested pursuit of knowledge in favour of its worldly exploitation, and attaining

some temporary success, ultimately met disaster. After his death, a book called *Faustbuch* (or, *Faustbook*) appeared in German in 1587. This book was supposed to contain the experiences and adventures of *Doctor Faustus*. It was translated into English under the title: *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus*. Marlowe must have taken the material for writing of his play from this English translation.

Q2. Discuss the plot of the play Doctor Faustus.

Possible Answer : Doctor Faustus, a well-respected German scholar, grows dissatisfied with the limits of traditional forms of knowledge—logic, medicine, law, and religion—and decides that he wants to learn to practice magic. His friends Valdes and Cornelius instruct him in the black arts, and he begins his new career as a magician by summoning up Mephistophilis, a devil. Despite Mephistophilis's warnings about the horrors of hell, Faustus tells the devil to return to his master, Lucifer, with an offer of Faustus's soul in exchange for twenty-four years of service from Mephistophilis. Meanwhile, Wagner, Faustus's servant, has picked up some magical ability and uses it to press a clown named Robin into his service.

Q3. Write a short note on the structure of Doctor Faustus.

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Q4. Discuss briefly the main characters in the play.

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MCQs

Q1. Who is the main character in the play *Doctor Faustus*?

a) Lucifer b) Mephistophillis

c) Doctor Faustus d) Good Angel

Q2. What is the nationality of Doctor Faustus?

a) English b) Dutch

c) Irish d) German

Q3 Except for the Good Angel, who dissuades Faustus from signing the deal with Satan?

a) Mephistophillis b) Lucifer

c) The Old Man d) Wagner

Q4. This play is written in the form of a:

a) Lyric b) Ode

c) Blank Verse d) Sonnet

Q5. Which translation was banned?

a) Amores b) Pharsalia

c) Doctor Faustus d) Dido

15.9. ANSWER KEY

1. c)
2. d)
3. c)
4. c)
5. b)

15.10. SUGGESTED READINGS

1) *Doctor Faustus*- Edited by Suroopa Mukherjee

2) The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature – R. Beadle

3) Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical study – F. s. Boas

4) Renaissance Self- fashioning from More to Shakespeare – Stephen Greenblatt.

5) English drama before Shakespeare – P. Happe

DOCTOR FAUSTUS : CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

STRUCTURE

16.1. OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson the student will be able to gain an insight into the detailed summary of the play. The detailed summary will help the students understand the play. A Glossary of difficult words is also provided.

16.2. SCENE WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Act I – Scene i, Scene ii, Scene iii, Scene iv,

Act II- Scene i, scene ii, Scene iii, Chorus I

Act III – Scene i, Scene ii, Scene iii, Chorus II

Act I

Scene i

The play begins with a long soliloquy where Faustus reflects on the most rewarding type of scholarship. He first considers logic, quoting the Greek philosopher Aristotle, but notes that disputing well seems to be the only goal of logic, and, since Faustus' debating skills are already good, logic is not scholarly enough for him. He considers medicine, quoting the Greek physician Galen, and decides that medicine, with its possibility of achieving miraculous cures, is the most fruitful pursuit—yet he notes that he has achieved great renown as a doctor already and that this fame has not brought him satisfaction. He considers law, quoting the Byzantine emperor Justinian, but dismisses law as too petty, dealing with trivial matters rather than larger ones. Divinity, the study of religion and theology, seems to offer wider vistas, but he quotes from St. Jerome's Bible that all men sin and finds the Bible's assertion that "[t]he reward of sin is death" an unacceptable doctrine. He then dismisses religion and fixes his mind on magic, which, when properly pursued, he believes will make him "a mighty god" (1.62).

Wagner, Faustus's servant, enters as his master finishes speaking. Faustus asks Wagner to bring Valdes and Cornelius, Faustus's friends, to help him learn the art of magic. While they are on their way, a good angel and an evil angel visit Faustus. The good angel urges him to set aside his book of magic and read the Scriptures instead; the evil angel encourages him to go forward in his pursuit of the black arts. After they vanish, it is clear that Faustus is going to heed the evil spirit, since he exults at the great powers that the magical arts will bring him. Faustus imagines sending spirits to the end of the world to fetch him jewels and delicacies, having them teach him secret knowledge, and using magic to make himself king of all Germany.

Valdes and Cornelius appear, and Faustus greets them, declaring that he has set aside all other forms of learning in favor of magic. They agree to teach Faustus the principles of the dark arts and describe the wondrous powers that will be his if he remains committed during his quest to learn magic. Cornelius tells him that "[t]he miracles that magic will perform / Will make thee vow to study nothing else" (1.136–137). Valdes lists a number of texts that Faustus should read, and the two friends promise to help him become better at magic than even they are. Faustus invites them to dine with

him, and they exit.

Scene ii

Two scholars come to see Faustus. Wagner makes jokes at their expense and then tells them that Faustus is meeting with Valdes and Cornelius. Aware that Valdes and Cornelius are infamous for their involvement in the black arts, the scholars leave with heavy hearts, fearing that Faustus may also be falling into "that damned art" as well (2.29).

Scene iii

That night, Faustus stands in a magical circle marked with various signs and words, and he chants in Latin. Four devils and Lucifer, the ruler of hell, watch him from the shadows. Faustus renounces heaven and God, swears allegiance to hell, and demands that Mephastophilis rise to serve him. The devil Mephastophilis then appears before Faustus, who commands him to depart and return dressed as a Franciscan friar, since "[t]hat holy shape becomes a devil best" (3.26). Mephastophilis vanishes, and Faustus remarks on his obedience. Mephastophilis then reappears, dressed as a monk, and asks Faustus what he desires. Faustus demands his obedience, but Mephastophilis says that he is Lucifer's servant and can obey only Lucifer. He adds that he came because he heard Faustus deny obedience to God and hoped to capture his soul.

Faustus quizzes Mephastophilis about Lucifer and hell and learns that Lucifer and all his devils were once angels who rebelled against God and have been damned to hell forever. Faustus points out that Mephastophilis is not in hell now but on earth; Mephastophilis insists, however, that he and his fellow demons are always in hell, even when they are on earth, because being deprived of the presence of God, which they once enjoyed, is hell enough. Faustus dismisses this sentiment as a lack of fortitude on Mephastophilis's part and then declares that he will offer his soul to Lucifer in return for twenty-four years of Mephastophilis's service. Mephastophilis agrees to take this offer to his master and departs. Left alone, Faustus remarks that if he had "as many souls as there be stars," he would offer them all to hell in return for the kind of power that Mephastophilis offers him (3.102). He eagerly awaits Mephastophilis's return.

Scene iv

Wagner converses with a clown and tries to persuade him to become his servant for seven years. The clown is poor, and Wagner jokes that he would probably sell his soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton; the clown answers that it would have to be well-seasoned mutton. After first agreeing to be Wagner's servant, however, the clown abruptly changes his mind. Wagner threatens to cast a spell on him, and he then conjures up two devils, who he says will carry the clown away to hell unless he becomes Wagner's servant. Seeing the devils, the clown becomes terrified and agrees to Wagner's demands. After Wagner dismisses the devils, the clown asks his new master if he can learn to conjure as well, and Wagner promises to teach him how to turn himself into any kind of animal—but he insists on being called "Master Wagner."

Act II

Scene i

Faustus begins to waver in his conviction to sell his soul. The good angel tells him to abandon his plan and "think of heaven, and heavenly things," but he dismisses the good angel's words, saying that God does not love him (5.20). The good and evil angels make another appearance, with the good one again urging Faustus to think of heaven, but the evil angel convinces him that the wealth he can gain through his deal with the devil is worth the cost. Faustus then calls back Mephastophilis, who tells him that Lucifer has accepted his offer of his soul in exchange for twenty-four years of service. Faustus asks Mephastophilis why Lucifer wants his soul, and Mephastophilis tells him that Lucifer seeks to enlarge his kingdom and make humans suffer even as he suffers.

Faustus decides to make the bargain, and he stabs his arm in order to write the deed in blood. However, when he tries to write the deed his blood congeals, making writing impossible. Mephastophilis goes to fetch fire in order to loosen the blood, and, while he is gone, Faustus endures another bout of indecision, as he wonders if his own blood is attempting to warn him not to sell his soul. When Mephastophilis returns, Faustus signs the deed and then discovers an inscription on his arm that reads "Homo fuge," Latin for "O man, fly" (5.77). While Faustus wonders where he should fly Mephastophilis presents a group of devils, who cover Faustus with crowns and rich garments. Faustus puts aside his doubts. He hands over the deed, which promises his

body and soul to Lucifer in exchange for twenty-four years of constant service from Mephastophilis.

Scene ii

After he turns in the deed, Faustus asks his new servant where hell is located, and Mephastophilis says that it has no exact location but exists everywhere. He continues explaining, saying that hell is everywhere that the damned are cut off from God eternally. Faustus remarks that he thinks hell is a myth. At Faustus's request for a wife, Mephastophilis offers Faustus a she-devil, but Faustus refuses. Mephastophilis then gives him a book of magic spells and tells him to read it carefully.

Faustus once again wavers and leans toward repentance as he contemplates the wonders of heaven from which he has cut himself off. The good and evil angels appear again, and Faustus realizes that "[m]y heart's so hardened I cannot repent!" (5.196). He then begins to ask Mephastophilis questions about the planets and the heavens. Mephastophilis answers all his queries willingly, until Faustus asks who made the world. Mephastophilis refuses to reply because the answer is "against our kingdom"; when Faustus presses him, Mephastophilis departs angrily (5.247). Faustus then turns his mind to God, and again he wonders if it is too late for him to repent. The good and evil angels enter once more, and the good angel says it is never too late for Faustus to repent. Faustus begins to appeal to Christ for mercy, but then Lucifer, Belzebub (another devil), and Mephastophilis enter. They tell Faustus to stop thinking of God and then present a show of the Seven Deadly Sins. Each sin—Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Wrath, Gluttony, Sloth, and finally Lechery—appears before Faustus and makes a brief speech. The sight of the sins delights Faustus's soul, and he asks to see hell. Lucifer promises to take him there that night. For the meantime he gives Faustus a book that teaches him how to change his shape.

Scene iii

Meanwhile, Robin, a stablehand, has found one of Faustus's conjuring books, and he is trying to learn the spells. He calls in an innkeeper named Rafe, and the two go to a bar together, where Robin promises to conjure up any kind of wine that Rafe desires.

Chorus I

Wagner takes the stage and describes how Faustus traveled through the heavens

on a chariot pulled by dragons in order to learn the secrets of astronomy. Wagner tells us that Faustus is now traveling to measure the coasts and kingdoms of the world and that his travels will take him to Rome.

Act III

Scene i

Faustus appears, recounting to Mephastophilis his travels throughout Europe—first from Germany to France and then on to Italy. He asks Mephastophilis if they have arrived in Rome, whose monuments he greatly desires to see, and Mephastophilis replies that they are in the Pope's privy chamber. It is a day of feasting in Rome, to celebrate the Pope's victories, and Faustus and Mephastophilis agree to use their powers to play tricks on the Pope.

As Faustus and Mephastophilis watch, the Pope comes in with his attendants and a prisoner, Bruno, who had attempted to become Pope with the backing of the German emperor. While the Pope declares that he will depose the emperor and forces Bruno to swear allegiance to him, Faustus and Mephastophilis disguise themselves as cardinals and come before the pope. The Pope gives Bruno to them, telling them to carry him off to prison; instead, they give him a fast horse and send him back to Germany.

Scene ii

Later, the Pope confronts the two cardinals whom Faustus and Mephastophilis have impersonated. When the cardinals say that they never were given custody of Bruno, the Pope sends them to the dungeon. Faustus and Mephastophilis, both invisible, watch the proceedings and chuckle. The pope and his attendants then sit down to dinner. During the meal, Faustus and Mephastophilis make themselves invisible and curse noisily and then snatch dishes and food as they are passed around the table. The churchmen suspect that there is some ghost in the room, and the Pope begins to cross himself, much to the dismay of Faustus and Mephastophilis. Faustus boxes the Pope's ear, and the Pope and all his attendants run away. A group of friars enters, and they sing a dirge damning the unknown spirit that has disrupted the meal. Mephastophilis and

Faustus beat the friars, fling fireworks among them, and flee.

Scene iii

Robin the ostler, or stablehand, and his friend Rafe have stolen a cup from a tavern. They are pursued by a vintner (or wine-maker), who demands that they return the cup. They claim not to have it, and then Robin conjures up Mephastophilis, which makes the vintner flee. Mephastophilis is not pleased to have been summoned for a prank, and he threatens to turn the two into an ape and a dog. The two friends treat what they have done as a joke, and Mephastophilis leaves in a fury, saying that he will go to join Faustus in Turkey.

Chorus II

The Chorus enters to inform us that Faustus has returned home to Germany and developed his fame by explaining what he learned during the course of his journey. The German emperor, Charles V, has heard of Faustus and invited him to his palace, where we next encounter him.

16.3. GLOSSARY

Act I

Mars – the god of war

Mate- help

Dalliance – amusement

Muse – poet

Vaunt – display

Swoln – puffed up

Cunning – pride of knowledge

Self- conceit – egoism

Glutted- filled

Necromancy – black art, magic

Profess – attain proficiency in

Ravished – charmed

Eternized – immortalized

Physic – medicine

Aphorisms – axioms

Bills – prescriptions

Monuments – memorials

Paltry – trivial

Mercenary – money-minded

Trash – something worthless

Servile – low and mean

Necromantic – pertaining to magic

Omnipotence – unlimited power

Artizan – artist

Exceeds – excels

Deity- supernatural power

Conference – conversation

Plod- wok laboriously

Blasphemy- insult to God

Conceit- notion

Ambiguities- doubtful or obscure matters

Desperate- reckless

Ransack- search thoroughly

Delecates- delicious eatables

Clad- dressed

Brunt- assault

Keel- ship

Fantasy-imagination

Ruminates-meditates

Concise- brief

Syllogisms-logical conclusions

Gravelled-puzzled

Pastor- priest

Swarm-come in a crowd

Infernal- of hell

Canonize-elevate to sainthood

Almain-German

Fleece-treasure

Mystery-magical skill

Delphian-located in Delphi

Entrails-depths

Canvass- examine or discuss

Quiddity- essential

Sirrah-Sir

Licentiates- those studying foe a doctors degree

Dunces-block heads

Phlegmatic- not excitable

Precisian-puritan

Drizzling-watery

Anagrammatized-rearranged

Virtue- merit

Plint-obedient

Laureate-distinguished

Abjure- renounce

Stoutly- firmly

Belzebub- devil

Elysium- heaven

Frivolous-trivial

Passionate-emotionally stirred

Fortitude- courage

Tidings- news

Voluptuous-lustful

Potentate-ruler

Speculation-contemplative study

Bare- half clad

Vile-ugly or foul

Flee- a flying insect

Wenches-girls

Act II

Altar- place of worship

Contrition-repentance

Illusions- false ideas

Lunacy- madness

Signiory- lordship

Tidings- news

Hazarded- risked

Bequeath- leave to somebody by signing a bill

Solemnly- earnestly

Craves- strong desires

Bind-pledge

Regent- ruler

Congeals-solidifies

Potend- indicate

Chafer-vessel

Apparel- clothes

Scroll- roll of paper

Prescribed-laid down

Inviolate- intact

Wilt-desire

Circumscribed-having definite boundaries

Bowels- interior

Affable- myth

Chaste-pure

Tempest-storm

Armour- armed men

Execute- accomplish

Fain-gladly

Dispositions- attribute

Renounce-give up

Salvation- soul's liberation

Ravishing- charming

Despair- hopelessness

Celestial- heavenly

Faint- tnreal

Accursed- damned

Raze- touch lightly

Distressed- tormented

Slay- kill

Gratify- please

Fie- shame

Scent- smell

Covetousness- greed

Begotten- born

Rapiers-pair of swords

Envy- jealous

Gluttony- greed for food

Sloth- lazy

Act III

Astronomy- science of stars and planets

Firmament- sky

Toil- tiresome

Exploits- adventures

Flint- rock

Sumptuous- highly ornamented

Privy chamber- private room

Ordinance- artillery and ammunition

Discerned- seen

Choke- suffocate

Halt- stop

Dirge- funeral services

Hog- pig

Calf- young one of cow

16. 4. SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS

16.4.1. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the dramatic significance of the opening soliloquy of Faustus?

Possible answer : The play begins with a long soliloquy where Faustus reflects on the most rewarding type of scholarship. He first considers logic, but notes that logic is not scholarly enough for him. He considers medicine and law but dismisses law as too petty, dealing with trivial matters rather than larger ones. Divinity, the study of religion and theology, seems to offer wider vistas, but he then dismisses religion and fixes his mind on magic, which, when properly pursued, he believes will make him "a mighty god".

Q2. What does Faustus Study?

Possible answer : Faustus renounces heaven and God, swears allegiance to hell, and demands that Mephastophilis rise to serve him. The devil Mephastophilis then appears before Faustus, who commands him to depart and return dressed as a Franciscan friar. Mephastophilis vanishes, and Faustus remarks on his obedience. Mephastophilis then reappears, dressed as a monk, and asks Faustus what he desires. Faustus offers his soul to Lucifer in return for twenty-four years of Mephastophilis's service. Mephastophilis agrees to take this offer to his master and departs. Left alone, Faustus remarks that if he had "as many souls as there be stars," he would offer them all to hell in return for the kind of power that Mephastophilis offers him (3.102). He eagerly awaits Mephastophilis's return.

Q3. What does Faustus thoughts soon turn away from?

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

Q4. What are the Seven Deadly Sins?

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

Q5. Why did Faustus barter his soul to the Devil?

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

Q6. How does Faustus sign his compact with Lucifer?

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

Q7. What does the Latin words "Homo Fuge" means?

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

Q8. Who tries to dissuade Faustus from signing the pact with Devil?

Ans. _____

_____

_____

_____

16.4.2 MCQs

Q1. Which field of study does Faustus opt for?

a) Logic b) Theology

c) Medicine d) Necromancy

Q2. Who is the ruler of hell?

a) Mephistophillis b) Dr. Faustus

c) Bad Angel d) Lucifer

Q3. For how many dears does Faustus offer his soul to Mephistophillis?

a) 10 b) 12

c) 24 d) 30

Q4. "Homo Fuge" is a _____ term.

a) Spanish b) Latin

c) Mexican d) Portuguese

Q5. Which German emperor invites Dr. Faustus to his palace?

a) Charles V b) Paul V

c) Albert V d) John V

16. 5. ANSWER KEY

1. d)
2. d)
3. c)
4. b)
5. b)

16.6. RECAPITULATION OF THE LESSON

In this lesson we learned about the dramatic significance of the soliloquy in the opening scene and how it sets the tone of the play. He first considers logic, quoting the Greek philosopher Aristotle, but notes that disputing well seems to be the only goal of logic, and, since Faustus' debating skills are already good, logic is not scholarly enough for him. He considers medicine yet he notes that he has achieved great renown as a doctor already and that this fame has not brought him satisfaction. He considers law but dismisses law as too petty, dealing with trivial matters rather than larger ones. Divinity,

the study of religion and theology, seems to offer wider vistas, but eventually dismisses religion. He fixes his mind on magic, which, when properly pursued, he believes will make him "a mighty god". Later he signs a pact with the Devil where he sells his soul to attain supernatural powers.

16.7. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. *Doctor Faustus*- Edited by Suroopa Mukherjee
2. The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature – R. Beadle
3. ssance Self- fashioning from More to Shakespeare – Stephen Greenblatt
4. English drama before Shakespeare – P. Happe

DOCTOR FAUSTUS: CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

STRUCTURE

17.1. OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson the student will be able to gain an insight into the detailed summary of the play. The detailed summary will help the students understand the play.

17.2. SCENE WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Act IV

Scene i-ii

At the court of the emperor, two gentlemen, Martino and Frederick, discuss the

imminent arrival of Bruno and Faustus. Martino remarks that Faustus has promised to conjure up Alexander the Great, the famous conqueror. The two of them wake another gentleman, Benvolio, and tell him to come down and see the new arrivals, but Benvolio declares that he would rather watch the action from his window, because he has a hangover.

Faustus comes before the emperor, who thanks him for having freed Bruno from the clutches of the pope. Faustus acknowledges the gratitude and then says that he stands ready to fulfill any wish that the emperor might have. Benvolio, watching from above, remarks to himself that Faustus looks nothing like what he would expect a conjurer to look like.

The emperor tells Faustus that he would like to see Alexander the Great and his lover. Faustus tells him that he cannot produce their actual bodies but can create spirits resembling them. A knight present in the court is skeptical, and asserts that it is as untrue that Faustus can perform this feat as that the goddess Diana has transformed the knight into a stag. Before the eyes of the court, Faustus creates a vision of Alexander embracing his lover Faustus conjures a pair of antlers onto the head of the knight. The knight pleads for mercy, and the emperor entreats Faustus to remove the horns. Faustus complies, warning Benvolio to have more respect for scholars in the future.

Scene iii-iv

With his friends Martino and Frederick and a group of soldiers, Benvolio plots an attack against Faustus. His friends try to dissuade him, but he is so furious at the damage done to his reputation that he will not listen to reason. They resolve to ambush Faustus as he leaves the court of the emperor and to take the treasures that the emperor has given Faustus. Frederick goes out with the soldiers to scout and returns with word that Faustus is coming toward them and that he is alone. When Faustus enters, Benvolio stabs him and cuts off his head. He and his friends rejoice, and they plan the further indignities that they will visit on Faustus's corpse. But then Faustus rises with his head restored. Faustus tells them that they are fools, since his life belongs to Mephastophilis and cannot be taken by anyone else. He summons Mephastophilis, who arrives with a group of lesser devils, and orders the devils to carry his attackers off to hell. Then, reconsidering, he orders them instead to punish Benvolio and his friends by dragging

them through thorns and hurling them off of cliffs, so that the world will see what happens to people who attack Faustus. As the men and devils leave, the soldiers come in, and Faustus summons up another clutch of demons to drive them off.

Benvolio, Frederick, and Martino reappear. They are bruised and bloody from having been chased and harried by the devils, and all three of them now have horns sprouting from their heads. They greet one another unhappily, express horror at the fate that has befallen them, and agree to conceal themselves in a castle rather than face the scorn of the world.

Scene v

Faustus, meanwhile, meets a horse-courser and sells him his horse. Faustus gives the horse-courser a good price but warns him not to ride the horse into the water. Faustus begins to reflect on the pending expiration of his contract with Lucifer and falls asleep. The horse-courser reappears, sopping wet, complaining that when he rode his horse into a stream it turned into a heap of straw. He decides to get his money back and tries to wake Faustus by hollering in his ear. He then pulls on Faustus's leg when Faustus will not wake. The leg breaks off, and Faustus wakes up, screaming bloody murder. The horse-courser takes the leg and runs off. Meanwhile, Faustus's leg is immediately restored, and he laughs at the joke that he has played. Wagner then enters and tells Faustus that the Duke of Vanholt has summoned him. Faustus agrees to go, and they depart together.

Robin and Rafe have stopped for a drink in a tavern. They listen as a carter, or wagon-driver, and the horse-courser discuss Faustus. The carter explains that Faustus stopped him on the road and asked to buy some hay to eat. The carter agreed to sell him all he could eat for three farthings, and Faustus proceeded to eat the entire wagonload of hay. The horse-courser tells his own story, adding that he took Faustus's leg as revenge and that he is keeping it at his home. Robin declares that he intends to seek out Faustus, but only after he has a few more drinks.

Scene vi

At the court of the Duke of Vanholt, Faustus's skill at conjuring up beautiful illusions wins the duke's favor. Faustus comments that the duchess has not seemed to

enjoy the show and asks her what she would like. She tells him she would like a dish of ripe grapes, and Faustus has Mephastophilis bring her some grapes. Robin, Dick, the carter, the horse-courser, and the hostess from the tavern burst in at this moment. They confront Faustus, and the horse-courser begins making jokes about what he assumes is Faustus's wooden leg. Faustus then shows them his leg, which is whole and healthy, and they are amazed. Each then launches into a complaint about Faustus's treatment of him, but Faustus uses magical charms to make them silent, and they depart. The duke and duchess are much pleased with Faustus's display, and they promise to reward Faustus greatly.

Chorus 4

Wagner announces that Faustus must be about to die because he has given Wagner all of his wealth. But he remains unsure, since Faustus is not acting like a dying man—rather, he is out carousing with scholars.

Act V

Scene i

Faustus enters with some of the scholars. One of them asks Faustus if he can produce Helen of Greece (also known as Helen of Troy), who they have decided was "the admirablest lady / that ever lived" (12.3–4). Faustus agrees to produce her, and gives the order to Mephastophilis: immediately, Helen herself crosses the stage, to the delight of the scholars.

The scholars leave, and an old man enters and tries to persuade Faustus to repent. Faustus becomes distraught, and Mephastophilis hands him a dagger. However, the old man persuades him to appeal to God for mercy, saying, "I see an angel hovers o'er thy head / And with a vial full of precious grace / Offers to pour the same into thy soul!" (12.44–46). Once the old man leaves, Mephastophilis threatens to shred Faustus to pieces if he does not reconfirm his vow to Lucifer. Faustus complies, sealing his vow by once again stabbing his arm and inscribing it in blood. He asks Mephastophilis to punish the old man for trying to dissuade him from continuing in Lucifer's service; Mephastophilis says that he cannot touch the old man's soul but that he will scourge his body. Faustus then asks Mephastophilis to let him see Helen again. Helen enters, and

Faustus makes a great speech about her beauty and kisses her.

Scene ii

The final night of Faustus's life has come, and he tells the scholars of the deal he has made with Lucifer. They are horrified and ask what they can do to save him, but he tells them that there is nothing to be done. Reluctantly, they leave to pray for Faustus. A vision of hell opens before Faustus's horrified eyes as the clock strikes eleven. The last hour passes by quickly, and Faustus exhorts the clocks to slow and time to stop, so that he might live a little longer and have a chance to repent. He then begs God to reduce his time in hell to a thousand years or a hundred thousand years, so long as he is eventually saved. He wishes that he were a beast and would simply cease to exist when he dies instead of facing damnation. He curses his parents and himself, and the clock strikes midnight. Devils enter and carry Faustus away as he screams, "Ugly hell gape not! Come not, Lucifer! / I'll burn my books—ah, Mephastophilis!" (13.112–113).

Chorus 4–Epilogue

The Chorus enters and warns the wise "only to wonder at unlawful things" and not to trade their souls for forbidden knowledge .The final scenes contain some of the most noteworthy speeches in the play, especially Faustus's speech to Helen and his final soliloquy. His address to Helen begins with the famous line "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships," referring to the Trojan War, which was fought over Helen, and goes on to list all the great things that Faustus would do to win her love (12.81). He compares himself to the heroes of Greek mythology, who went to war for her hand, and he ends with a lengthy praise of her beauty. In its flowery language and emotional power, the speech marks a return to the eloquence that marks Faustus's words in earlier scenes, before his language and behavior become mediocre and petty. Having squandered his powers in pranks and childish entertainments, Faustus regains his eloquence and tragic grandeur in the final scene, as his doom approaches. Still, as impressive as this speech is, Faustus maintains the same blind spots that lead him down his dark road in the first place. Earlier, he seeks transcendence through magic instead of religion. Now, he seeks it through sex and female beauty, as he asks Helen to make him "immortal" by kissing him (12.83). Moreover, it is not even clear that Helen is real, since Faustus's

earlier conjuring of historical figures evokes only illusions and not physical beings. If Helen too is just an illusion, then Faustus is wasting his last hours dallying with a fantasy image, an apt symbol for his entire life.

Faustus's final speech is the most emotionally powerful scene in the play, as his despairing mind rushes from idea to idea. One moment he is begging time to slow down, the next he is imploring Christ for mercy. One moment he is crying out in fear and trying to hide from the wrath of God, the next he is begging to have the eternity of hell lessened somehow. He curses his parents for giving birth to him but then owns up to his responsibility and curses himself. His mind's various attempts to escape his doom, then, lead inexorably to an understanding of his own guilt.

The passion of the final speech points to the central question in *Doctor Faustus* of why Faustus does not repent. Early in the play, he deceives himself into believing either that hell is not so bad or that it does not exist. But, by the close, with the gates of hell literally opening before him, he still ignores the warnings of his own conscience and of the old man, a physical embodiment of the conscience that plagues him. Faustus's loyalty to Lucifer could be explained by the fact that he is afraid of having his body torn apart by Mephastophilis. But he seems almost eager, even in the next-to-last scene, to reseal his vows in blood, and he even goes a step further when he demands that Mephastophilis punish the old man who urges him to repent. Marlowe suggests that Faustus's self-delusion persists even at the end. Having served Lucifer for so long, he has reached a point at which he cannot imagine breaking free.

In his final speech, Faustus is clearly wracked with remorse, yet he no longer seems to be able to repent. Christian doctrine holds that one can repent for any sin, however grave, up until the moment of death and be saved. Yet this principle does not seem to hold for Marlowe's protagonist. *Doctor Faustus* is a Christian tragedy, but the logic of the final scene is not Christian. Some critics have tried to deal with this problem by claiming that Faustus does not actually repent in the final speech but that he only speaks wistfully about the possibility of repentance. Faustus appears to be calling on Christ, seeking the precious drop of blood that will save his soul. Yet some unseen force—whether inside or outside him—prevents him from giving himself to God.

Ultimately, the ending of *Doctor Faustus* represents a clash between Christianity,

which holds that repentance and salvation are always possible, and the dictates of tragedy, in which some character flaw cannot be corrected, even by appealing to God. The idea of Christian tragedy, then, is paradoxical, as Christianity is ultimately uplifting. People may suffer—as Christ himself did—but for those who repent, salvation eventually awaits. To make *Doctor Faustus* a true tragedy, then, Marlowe had to set down a moment beyond which Faustus could no longer repent, so that in the final scene, while still alive, he can be damned and conscious of his damnation.

The unhappy Faustus's last line returns us to the clash between Renaissance values and medieval values that dominates the early scenes and then recedes as Faustus pursues his mediocre amusements in later scenes. His cry, as he pleads for salvation, that he will burn his books suggests, for the first time since early scenes, that his pact with Lucifer is primarily about a thirst for limitless knowledge—a thirst that is presented as incompatible with Christianity. As the Chorus says in its final speech:

> *Faustus is gone! Regard his hellish fall,*
> *Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise*
> *Only to wonder at unlawful things:*
> *Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits*
> *To practice more than heavenly power permits.*
> *(Epilogue.4–8)*

In the duel between Christendom and the rising modern spirit, Marlowe's play seems to come down squarely on the side of Christianity. Yet Marlowe, himself notoriously accused of atheism and various other sins, may have had other ideas, and he made his Faustus sympathetic, if not necessarily admirable. While his play shows how the untrammeled pursuit of knowledge and power can be corrupting, it also shows the grandeur of such a quest. Faustus is damned, but the gates that he opens remain standing wide, waiting for others to follow.

17.3. GLOSSARY

Act IV

Conjuring books- books of magic

Prithee- request

Tarry- wait

Dismembered- cut in to pieces

Tabern- liquor bar

Goblet- wine cup

Vintner- wine seller

Gull- cheat

Supernatural- magical

Favour- kind permission

Impeach- accuse

Scour- punish

Presumption- arrogance

Endamaged- harmed

Closet- private study

Sundry- miscellaneous

Provice- valour

Subdued- conquered

Paramour- mistress

Substantial- important

Deceased- dead

Content- satisfy

Begone- go away

Stag- male deer

Execrable- hateful

Monstrous- ugly and fearful

Worthily- fittingly

Requited- punished

Injurious- unjust

Restless- without a pause

Horse Courser- horse dealer

Act V

Goods- belongings

Banquet- enjoy feasting

Carouse- drinks to one's fill

Swill- drink heavily

Belly-cheer- food and drink

Peerless- having no equal

Dame- lady

Beholding- indebted

Unfeigned- sincere

Paragon- matchless person

Prevail- succeed

Celestial- heavenly

Loathsome- hateful

Filthiness- wickedness

Stench- foul smell

Flagitious- deeply criminal

Commiseration- pity

Vial- a small vessel for holding a medicine

Revolt- rebel against God

Shun- avoid

Snares- trap

Piece meal- bit by bit

Afflict- torment

Glut- satisfy

Dross- something worthless

Sagged- destroyed

Combat- fight

Hapless- unfortunate

Wanton- flirtatious

Azure- blue

Sift- tempt

Fiends- devils

Surfeit- access

Pants- beat quickly

Quiver- shakes

Felicity- Happiness

Divinity- God

Wrath- anger

Ransomed- redeemed

Incessant- constant

Plagued- tormented

Engendered- produced

Fierce- frightening

Gape- urban

Exhort- instruct

Entice- lure

Wits- Intellects

17.4. SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS

17.4.1 SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss Faustus' apostrophe to Helen of Troy?

Possible Answer : His address to Helen begins with the famous line "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships," referring to the Trojan War, which was fought over Helen, and goes on to list all the great things that Faustus would do to win her love.

Q2. How does Faustus teach Benvolio a lesson?

Possible answer: The emperor tells Faustus that he would like to see Alexander the Great and his lover. Faustus tells him that he cannot produce their actual bodies but can create spirits resembling them. A knight present in the court is skeptical, and asserts that it is as untrue that Faustus can perform this feat as that the goddess Diana has transformed the knight into a stag. Before the eyes of the court, Faustus creates a vision of Alexander embracing his lover Faustus conjures a pair of antlers onto the head of the knight. The knight pleads for mercy, and the emperor entreats Faustus to remove the horns. Faustus complies, warning Benvolio to have more respect for scholars in the future.

Q3. Explain the opening of Scene V.

Q4. What noteworthy speeches does the final scene contain?

17.4.2 MCQs

Q1. The Trojan War lasted for how many years?

a) 12 b) 11

c) 10 d) 8

Q2. Whom did Faustus free from the clutches of the Pope?

a) Bruno b) Old Man

c) Helen d) Wagner

Q3. Which famous conqueror does Faustus conjure up in the court of the emperor?

a) William the Great b) Alexander the Great

c) Napoleon the Great d) Charles the Great

Q4. Which war was fought for Helen?

a) War of Mesopotamia b) War of Macedonia

c) Punic War d) Trojan War

Q5. Doctor Faustus represents a clash between Renaissance and _____?

a) Medievalism b) Modernism

c) Utilitarianism d) Humanitarianism

17.5. ANSWER KEY

1) c

2) a

3) b

4) d

5) a

17.6. RECAPITULATION OF THE LESSON

The present lesson discussed the Act IV and V of the play. The final scenes contain some of the most noteworthy speeches in the play, especially Faustu's speech of Helen and his final soliloquy. Faustus's final speech is the most emotionally powerful scene in the play, as his despairing mind rushes from idea to idea. One moment he is begging time to slow down, the next he is imploring Christ for mercy. One moment he is crying out in fear and trying to hide from the wrath of God, the next he is begging to have the eternity of hell lessened somehow. He curses his parents for giving birth to him but then owns up to his responsibility and curses himself. His mind's various attempts to escape his doom, then, lead inexorably to an understanding of his own guilt.

The passion of the final speech points to the central question in *Doctor Faustus* of why Faustus does not repent. Early in the play, he deceives himself into believing either that hell is not so bad or that it does not exist. But, by the close, with the gates of hell literally opening before him, he still ignores the warnings of his own conscience and of the old man, a physical embodiment of the conscience that plagues him. Faustus's loyalty to Lucifer could be explained by the fact that he is afraid of having his body torn apart by Mephastophilis. Marlowe suggests that Faustus's self-delusion persists even at the end. Having served Lucifer for so long, he has reached a point at which he cannot imagine breaking free. In his final speech, Faustus is clearly wracked with remorse, yet he no longer seems to be able to repent.

17.7. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. *Doctor Faustus*- Edited by Suroopa Mukherjee

2. The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature – R. Beadle
3. Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical study – F. s. Boas
4. Renaissance Self- fashioning from More to Shakespeare – Stephen Greenblatt
5. English drama before Shakespeare – P. Happe

DOCTOR FAUSTUS: CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

STRUCTURE

18.1 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the present lesson is to discuss the character-sketch of Dr. Faustus in detail. This lesson will discuss in detail

a) Doctor Faustus as a product of Renaissance

b) Faustus' thirst for power

c) the moral degeneration of Faustus from a great scholar to a doomed man.

d) what led to the tragic fall of Faustus

18 2. FAUSTUS: AS A RENAISSANCE MAN

Faustus appears as a man of the Renaissance in the very opening scene when, rejecting the traditional subjects of study, he turns to magic and considers the varied uses to which he can put his magic skill after he has acquired it. He contemplated the "world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, of omnipotence" which he hopes to enjoy as a magician. In dwelling upon the advantages which will accrue to him by the exercise of his magic power, he shows his ardent curiosity, his desire for wealth and luxury, his nationalism, and his longing for power. These were precisely the qualities of the Renaissance, which was the age of discovery. A number of allusions in the first scene of Act I maintain our sense of the enlarged outlook and extended horizons of that great period of English history. Faustus desires gold from the East Indies, pearls from the depths of the sea, pleasant fruits and princely delicacies from America. His friend Valdes refers to the Indians in the Spanish colonies, to Lapland giants, and to the annual plate-fleet which supplied gold and silver to the Spanish treasury from the New World. There was much in this scene to inflame the hearts of English audiences who must have heartily approved of Faustus' intention to chase away the Prince of Parma from the Netherlands. Thus Faustus' dream of power included much that had a strong appeal for the English people including Marlowe himself.

Faustus certainly embodies the new enquiring and aspiring spirit of the age of the Renaissance. Marlowe expressed in this play both his fervent sympathy with that new spirit and, ultimately, his awed and pitiful recognition of the danger into which it could lead those who were dominated by it. The danger is clearly seen in Faustus' last soliloquy in which Faustus offers to burn his books. No doubt these books are chiefly the books of magic. Faustus attributed his downfall, partly at least, to his learning.

Doctor Faustus as not only the first major Elizabethan tragedy, but the first to explore the tragic possibilities of the direct clash between the Renaissance compulsions and the Hebraic-Christian tradition. Faustus put into an old legend a new meaning. He

inserted into the old medieval or Christian moral equation the new and ambiguous dynamic of the Renaissance. He treated the legend of Faustus in such a manner as to give it a fascination and a dignity never realized in previous treatments of the story. The story of this 24 year action, compressed by Marlowe in a few vivid scenes, represents a soul torn between the desire to stretch to its utmost limit its new mastery and freedom on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the claims of the old teachings a defiance of which meant guilt and a growing sense of alienation from society.

The legend of Faustus was believed to be a terrible and ennobling example, and a warning to all Christians to avoid the pitfalls of science, pleasure, and ambition which had led to Faustus' damnation. But it has to be noted that all that the Renaissance valued is represented in what the devil has to offer, and one is left wondering whether it is the religious life of the worldly life that is more attractive. All that the Good Angel in this play has to offer is "warnings". For instance, the Good Angel warns Faustus against reading the book of magic because it will invite God's "heavy wrath" upon his head, and asks him to think of heaven. To this the Evil Angel replies: "No Faustus, think of honour and wealth". At another point in the play the Evil Angel urges Faustus to go forward in the famous art of magic and to become a lord and commander of the earth. There can be no doubt that the devil here represents the natural ideal of the Renaissance by appealing to the vague but healthy ambitions of a young soul which wishes to launch itself upon the wide world. No wonder that Faustus, a child of the Renaissance, cannot resist the devil's suggestion. We like him for his love of life, for his trust in Nature, for his enthusiasm for beauty. He speaks for all when, looking at Helen he cries: "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships/And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?" To sum up, Marlowe's Faustus is a martyr to everything that the Renaissance valued – power, curious knowledge, enterprise, wealth, and beauty. The play shows Marlowe's own passion for these Renaissance values.

18.3. HIS THIRST FOR POWER

The Prologue, or first Chorus, sets Faustus, his character and his doom before us in clear, emphatic terms. We are here told that Faustus, swollen with pride in his attainments, meets a sad end because he has preferred forbidden pursuits to the pursuit of salvation. His insatiable thirst for knowledge and power is clearly evident from the

first scene which deals with Faustus' decision to take up magic. One by one he examines the branches of higher learning as they were organized in the universities of his day: philosophy, medicine, law, and theology. One by one the feats of secular leaning are rejected because their ends do not satisfy his demand. But his demands has clearly to be understood. He does not pursue knowledge for the sake of truth, but for the sake of power, super-human power, the power over life and death. His fundamental grievances is: "Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man". Dissatisfied with his human status, he rebels against human limitations. He would like to have the power to make men live eternally, and the power to bring the dead back to life. He rejects divine learning (or theology) also, because it is based on a recognition of man's mortality and fallibility. Leaving divinity to God, Faustus dedicates himself to the devil. Rejecting the fatalism of the doctrine "*Che sera, sera"* (what will be, shall be), he performs an act of his own will, and it is one of the developing ironies of the play that what he wills to be shall be (that is, he chooses the devil and damnation, and he goes, in the end, to the devil and damnation).

When the two Angels make their exit, and Faustus is left alone, in a soliloquy, Faustus dwells upon the power and the pleasures that he will be able to enjoy by means of magic. He will make spirits bring him gold from India, pearls from the ocean, and delicious fruits from all corners of the New World. He will make spirits read to him "strange philosophy" and tell him the secrets of foreign kings. Through the agency of spirits, he will wall all Germany with brass, make the river Rhine circle the city of Wittenberg, clothe university students with silk, raise an army to chase the Prince of Parma from his land, and have at his disposal marvelous weapons of war.

The study of Necromancy further aids to fulfill his achievements as he makes it clear that magic has "ravished" him. He recalls his victories in the discussions he has had with the priests of the German church and says that he has resolved to become as great a magician as Agrippa used to be. Valdes encourages Faustus in his resolve and says that spirits of every element will be at the service of Faustus. Spirits will attend on him, guard him, and bring great treasures to him from America. Sometimes these spirits will appear before him as lovely women, or unmarried maidens. Faustus assures Valdes of his firm resolution. Cornelius says that, as Faustus is fully qualified and equipped for the study of magic, he will in course of time be held in greater reverence than the Delphian

oracle. Valdes then gives Faustus the necessary guidance and asks him to go to some solitary grove in order to conjure. Faustus decides to conjure this same night, no matter what happens.

The superficial logic by which Faustus rejects the scriptures and divinity is in itself a deeply ironic comment on his character and career. This logic is also misleading, and only an excuse for Faustus to try to gain "a world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, and omnipotence". This logic betrays not only a willingness to discard the scriptures but also an attitude of mind that will gradually lead him to the sin of despair. In aspiring to be more than man, Faustus repudiates his humanity, and rebels against the ultimate reality. In his aspiration to be as God, he chooses the not-God.

The first section of the play ends with the first scene. Faustus has "settled his studies" and decided to conjure the same night "thought I die therefore". The reference to death here foreshadows ironically the ultimate result of the choice he has made.

18.4. HIS MORAL DEGENERATION

As soon as Faustus, has decided that necromancy is the only study worth his while, he seeks the aid of Valdes and Cornelius, who, are already proficient in the art. The pair are ready enough to help Faustus, for they have been trying in the past to lead him into forbidden ways. he tells them that their exhortations have won him at last "to practise magic and concealed arts". At the same time, he is anxious not to appear too pliant, and adds: "Yet not your words only, but mine own fantasy." He makes it plain that he is no humble seeker after instruction, but one who has already earned fame and honour. The two friends are willing to accept him on his own terms.

He paints a glowing picture of the possibilities before them, the only condition being that Faustus remains firm in his decision: "If learned Faustus will be resolute." However, it soon appears that for all their reputation for proficiency in magic, the two friends of Faustus have not yet gone far. They have certainly called spirits, but they have made no use of this success. They have been careful not to sacrifice their salvation for the attainment of supernatural powers. They have never yielded to the temptation of the spirits and never put their powers to test. Even when they agree to guide Faustus in his explorations of magic, they leave us in no doubt of their intention to use Faustus as a tool rather than run into danger themselves. These two men are not perfect magicians

welcoming a promising beginner, but merely the devil's decoys luring Faustus along the road to destruction. They serve their purpose in giving a dramatic turn to the scene of his temptation, and except for a passing mention by the students, we hear no more of them.

Faustus goes to conjure alone, and alone he concludes his pact with the devil. As for the use to which he will put his newly-acquired powers, he speaks in a heroic vein about the world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, and omnipotence; all things that move between the quiet poles shall be at his command; his dominion will stretch as far as does the mind of man; he will become a demi-god; he will wall all Germany with brass, and chase the Prince of Parma from his land. Whatever baser elements there may be in his ambition, we should not fail to recognize its nobler elements, even though subsequently Faustus, instead of pursuing ends worthy of his professed ideals, abandons these and appears content to amuse the Emperor with conjuring tricks and play childish pranks on the Pope.

Faustus soon lapses into luxury and buffoonery. The reason is that all that happens to Faustus, once the pact has been signed, is the devil's work. Who but a fool would imagine that any power but evil could be won by a bargain with evil, or that truth could be elicited from the father of lies? Marlowe knew the nature of the power his hero had acquired and the inevitable curse it carried with it. Of course, Faustus' deterioration is not an automatic results of his pact with the devil. In spite of his genuine desire to know truth, the seeds of decay existed in his character from the first; otherwise he would not have made his fatal bargain. Besides his passion for knowledge, he has a lust for riches and pleasure and power. He does express patriotic sentiments, but he has an almost vulgar desire to exercise authority over kings and rulers and even reveals his sensual nature by speaking of living "in all voluptuousness." Faustus is a man dazzled by an unlimited possibilities of magic, and he shows himself quite aware of his own weakness when he says: "The god thou servest is thine own appetite."

After Faustus has signed the bond with his blood, we can trace the stages of a gradual deterioration. Although he was sceptical regarding hell and heaven in his first interview with Mephistophilis (before he signed the bond), his scepticism now becomes bolder and more jeering. He now tells Mephistophilis that he thinks hell to be a "fable".

He refuses to believe that "after life there is any pain". To Mephistophili's remark that he (Mephistophilis) is now in hell, Faustus's reply is that if this be hell ("sleeping, eating, walking, and disputing"), he will willingly be damned. Faustus's discussion with Mephistophilis on the subject of astronomy is curiously barren. The quarrel that follows on Mephistophili's refusal to say who made the world leads to the intervention of Lucifer and the "pastime" of the Seven Deadly Sins. It is a much shrunken Faustus who, after seeing the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins, exclaims: "O, this feeds my soul." He had felt equally delighted with the dance of the devils who offered him "crowns and rich apparel" just before his signing the bond. At that time he was told that he would be able to conjure up such spirits at will and even perform greater feats. Faustus had thereupon said: "Then there's enough for a thousand souls." We may perhaps infer that Mephistophili's promise included sensual satisfaction. That interference would accord with Faustus's mood soon, afterwards when he demands a wife, "the fairest maid in Germany", and when, instead of providing a suitable wife for him, Mephistopilis offered to bring him a mistress, any woman who attracted him, "be she as chaste as was Penelope……"

So far Faustus has not left Wittenberg, and the emphasis has been on the hollowness of his bargain in respect of any intellectual progress or enlightenment. Only his childish pleasure in the devil-dance (Act III, Scene I, Lines 82-83) and the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins (Act II, Scene II, Lines 112-172) hints at the vulgar trivialities to which he will descend. Now, in the company of Mephistophilis, he launches forth into the world (Act III-the speech of the Chorus).

There is something strange and peculiar, not only in Faustus's situation, but in his nature. Once he has signed the bond, he has of his own free will renounced salvation. But he has brought upon himself another change also. In this connection, we should not neglect the first clause of his agreement with the devil: "that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance". This clause has generally been taken to mean merely that Faustus will be free of the bonds of flesh, so that he may be invisible at will, able to change his shape, ride on dragons, and so on.

When Faustus calls on Christ to save his distressed soul, Lucifer replies with admirable logic that Christ, being just, will not interfere because Fastus's soul has been

pledged to the devil. Thus the possibility of Faustus's salvation is left nicely balanced in doubt. It is only when, back among his students at Wittenberg, he faces the final reckoning that Faustus regains some degree of heroic dignity.

One good, or at least amiable, quality, apart from a genuine tenderness towards his students, Faustus shows throughout: a love of beauty in Nature and in art:

> Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
> Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death?
> And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes
> With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
>
> Made music-? (Act II, Scene II, Lines 26-30)

The climax of his career in his union with the immortal beauty of Helen. This sensitive appreciation of beauty could be something that has survived uncorrupted from his days of innocence. And who is Helen? Here we come to the central theme of the damnation of Faustus. When the Emperor asks him to summon Alexander and his paramour, Faustus explains the nature of the figures that will appear. The circumstances in which Helen is summoned for the second time should also be noted. Urged by the Old Man, Faustus has tried for the last time to revolt against the devil. But he has been threatened into submission, and has renewed the blood-bond. He has sunk so low as to ask for the revenge upon the Old Man who had tried to save his soul. And it is in the first place as a safeguard against once again trying to desert the devil that he seeks possession of Helen. He wants Helen so that her sweet embraces "may extinguish clean/ Those thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow,/ And keep mine oath I made to Lucifer!" Revenge upon the Old Man and the desire to make love to Helen are both sought as guarantees against salvation. Helen then is a "spirit", and in this play a spirit means a "devil". In making her his paramour Faustus commits the sin of demoniality, that is, bodily or sexual intercourse with a demon.

Thus with Faustus's union with Helen the nice balance between possible salvation and imminent damnation is upset, and the Old Man recognizes the inevitable in his above-quoted speech. Faustus, in his talk with the Scholars in Act V, Scene II, shows a terrible clarity of vision: "a surfeit of deadly sin, that hath damned both body and soul. Faustus' offence can never be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved,

but not Faustus." In the final scene Faustus is still haunted by the idea of a salvation beyond his reach:

See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: Ah, my Christ!
(Act V, Scene III, Lines 79-80)

This play presents the fall and slow moral disintegration of an ardent, but erring, spirit. It depicts not only Faustas's spiritual sin of bartering his soul to the powers of evil, but also the physical counterpart of that sin, the physical counterpart being demoniality.

18.5. TRAGIC FALL OF FAUSTUS

The first thing that strikes us about Faustus is his extra-ordinary learning and scholarship. The Chorus, in his very first speech, tell us of this aspect of Faustus's character,. According to the Chorus, Faustus made a rapid progress in the study of divinity. From Faustus' first soliloquy we learn that, before he decided to practice magic, he had already attained mastery over various branches of study. He had acquired great proficiency in logic; his medical skill had won him great renown; he had made a name as a theologian; and so on. Intellectually equipped as Faustus is, he soon becomes a great magician whose wonderful performances astonish all Germany. Speaking to the Scholars towards the end of the play, Faustus recalls the wonders that he has done and that the whole world has witnessed.

Faustus is endowed with a rare imaginative faculty. Having rejected the various branches of study, Faustus visualizes the wonders that he will be able to work with the power of magic:

O, what a world of profit and delight
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
Is promised to the studious artizan!
(Act I, Scene I, Lines 51-53)

He goes on to speak of the unlimited authority he will wield. He will be greater than emperors and kings, and his dominion will "stretch as far as doth the mind of man". He will become a "mighty god". He sees bright visions of spirits bringing his gold from

India, pearls from the ocean, pleasant fruits from distant corners of the world. He hopes to wall all Germany with brass, make the Rhine circle the city of Wittenberg, chase the Prince of Parma from his land, and so on. He thinks that he will be able to make a bridge through the moving air in order to cross the ocean with an army of soldier; he thinks of joining the hills that bind the African shore; he imagines that no ruler will be able to rule except by his permission. Not only does Faustus possess an exceptional imaginative power which enables him to see bright dreams of his future as a magician, but he is a born poet. His poetic faculty is, indeed, remarkable. Almost every major speech of Faustus is instinct with the poetry that is an innate gift with him. Even the manner in which he gives expression to his conflicts and despairs is worthy of a poet.

Faustus' sin is pride, presumption, and elf-conceit. The Chorus refers to his as becoming "swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit," and compares his to Icarus who flew into the sky with wings made of wax which melted with the heat of the sun and led to Icarus' dropping to the earth and meeting his death because of his presumption in challenging the Gods who then "conspired his overthrow". Faustus' pride is the pride of knowledge with which he proceeds to study necromancy. The Chorus puts it thus:

Nothing so sweet as magic is to him
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss:

In his very first soliloquy, Faustus speaks of a "world of profit, and delight, of honour, of omnipotence" which he hopes to attain. He dreams of ruling all things "that move between the quiet poles" and thinks that his power will "stretch as far as doth the mind of man". "A sound magician is a mighty god", he says, and decides to exert his brains in order "to gain a deity". He quickly responds to the suggestion of the Evil Angel that he should be on earth "as Jove in the sky", and attain the position of a "lord and commander" of this world. Faustus sees extravagant visions of the power that he will wield, and is encouraged in his hopes by Valdes and Cornelius. He becomes so proud that the word "damnation", he says, "terrifies not him" and he refuses to believe that there is any pain waiting for human beings after death. He scolds Mephistophilis for feeling unhappy at having lost the joys of heaven and asks him to learn from him "manly fortitude". He expects Mephistophilis to do whatever he shall command, "be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,/Or the ocean to overwhelm the world." Closely allied

to the sin of pride is Faustus' "curiosity" which makes him probe the secrets of the universe. He not only wants Mephitophilis to tell him what hell is like but he would like to visit to hell in order that he can see it with his own eyes: "O, might I see hell, and return again." He demands from the devil a book which can teach him all about spells and incantations, characters and planets of the heavens, the plants and trees that grow on the earth. With the power of magic, he ascends to the top of the Olympus mountain, sees the Tropic, the Zones, and the heights of Primum Mobile, and studies cosmography, not to speak of his visits of various places on the earth. This excessive curiosity is also regarded as part of Faustus' sin. But that is not all. He is also guilty of sensuality. While laying down his conditions for signing a contract with the devil, he demands that he should be allowed to live for twenty-four years "in all voluptuousness". Soon after the bond has been signed, he demands a wife, "the fairest maid in Germany" because, as he says, he cannot live without a wife. Subsequently, he asks for Helen whose sweet embraces, he says, will drive out from his mind all thoughts of rebellion against Lucifer. When Helen is brought to him, he goes into raptures over her beauty and says that none but she shall be his paramour. Faustus knows very well that the woman to whom he is making love is not the real Helen, but a succuba, a devil in the guise of Helen. This means that, in making love to her, he commits the sin of demoniality. Finally, Faustus is guilty of the sin of despair. "Despair" in this context means allegiance to the devil and loss of faith in God. At several points in the course of the play, Faustus speaks of his despair. For instance, after the Old Man, has spoken to him of his sinful life, Faustus, addressing himself, says: "Damned art thou, Faustas, damned; despair and die!"

Although it is in a mood of exhilaration and elation that Faustus decides to take the study of necromancy and to practice magic, he has no peace once he has taken that decision. Throughout the twenty-four years during which he practices magic, he experiences a mental conflict between his godly and ungodly impulses. A feeling of regret at having alienated God keeps haunting him during this period. The Good and the Evil Angels, who appear to him on several occasions, are merely that personifications of his own good and evil impulses. The words they speak to him are symbolic of the mental debate that goes on his own mind between his desire to enjoy the fruits of the power he has gained through magic and an urge not to renounce his trust in God. Several times he gives an outward expression to the tussle that goes on in his mind.

Even while continuing to practice magic, Faustus experiences the pangs and pricks of his conscience. The manner in which Faustus harasses the Pope by snatching away eatables and drinks from the Pope's hands and the manner in which he befools and cheats the Horse-courses, far from doing him any credit, lower and degrade him in our eyes. This great scholar, who had planned to wall all Germany with brass and to drive away the Prince of Parma from his land, is now frittering away his energies by playing crude tricks and by giving magic performances to entertain the Emperor and the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt. Perhaps the scene of the Pope's harassment and the Horse-courser scene were not written by Marlowe himself. Perhaps it was Marlowe's intention to show, with the help of such scenes, the rapid deterioration that takes place in the character of Faustus after his becoming a disciple of the devil. The Faustus who plays tricks on the Pope, the Knight, and the Horse-courser is different from the Faustus of the opening scenes.

The final monologue of Faustus not only emphasizes Faustus imaginative and poetic faculties, but is unsurpassed as an expression of spiritual horror. Faustus here realizes that time will not stop and that the devil will come at the fixed hour:

> *The starts move still, time runs, the clock will strike,*
> *The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.*
> *(Act V, Scene III, Lines 76-77)*

Faustus wishes that he did not have a soul or that his soul were not immortal. He would like his body to turn into air and his soul to little water-drops which may mingle with the ocean and never be found again. The climax of horror is reached in the last four lines of his monologue.

18.6. HIS TRAGIC END

We first see Faustus at the peak of his worldly career. He is already master of all the existing knowledge and skills. He is a famous physician, honoured by whole cities and held in reverence by his students. Why, then did he becomes restless? Why was he unwilling to remain "but Faustus, and a man"? (Act I, Scene I, Line 23). Why did he feel an urge to command "all things that move between the quiet poles"? (Act I, Scene I, Line 54). It is because a tragic hero feels the compulsion to realize himself fully in the face of all the odds, and that the test of his heroism is the degree of the risk he

is willing to take. In his sense, the tragedy of Faustus is the tragedy of Adam. To Adam, paradise was not enough. He sought knowledge, and this was a forward step in the direction of self-realization. To the orthodox people, Adam's action is surely sinful, just as Faustus' action is wholly devilish in the eyes of the Chorus who opens and closes of the play. Faustus' opening soliloquy also represents his action as sinful because, after he has dismissed all studies but necromancy (which he thinks to be the key to his self-realization), the Good Angel tells him to put aside the damned book of magic, while the Evil Angel urges him to go forward in that famous art.

Marlowe sees the whole case not only as Good or Evil would see it but as it would be seen by a man of flesh and blood, the man who takes the risk is prepared to face the consequences. The meaning is the total yield of the situation into which Faustus walks of his own free will, in accordance with the mysterious, tragic urge of his times. Faustus' first move after deciding upon necromancy as the field of his research is one of arrogant and impatient lust for power. His absurd egotism is mixed with intellectual and humanitarian impulses. He would resolve all ambiguities, read strange philosophy, rid his country of the foreign domination and fortify it with a wall of brass, clothe the schoolboys in silk. He is prepared, at the end of Act I, Scene I, to take the ultimate risk: "This night I'll conjure, though I die therefore". Kater, in Act I, Scene III, he rebukes the Devil's own messenger, Mephistophilis, whose heart faints as he anticipates Faustus' awful fate. Faustus here speaks of his own "manly fortitude", he scorns Mephistophilis' warning; he rejects all hope of heavenly joys; and offers his soul to Lucifer for twenty-four years of his heart's desires. With this decision come new energy, new power, new command.

By the time of his second conjuring (Act II, Scene I), even before the signing of the bond, he confesses doubts, "Something sounds in mine ears: Abjure this magic, turn to God again!", he says. And he asks himself why he is wavering. He feels like turning to God again, but thinks that God does not love him. The doubts will not vanish, and Faustus lives out his twenty-four years as the first modern tragic man, part believer, part unbeliever, wavering between independence, and dependence upon God, now arrogant and confident, now anxious and worried, justified yet horribly unjustified.

Faustus is forced constantly to renew his choice between two alternatives. In

contrast moods, he sees greater heights, and he experiences greatest terror. Soon the gentle voice that sounded in his ears, urging him to give up his magic and return to God, takes the shape of "fearful echoes" thundering in his ears: "Faustus, thou art damned" (Act II, Scene II, Lines 20-21). What he is learning is the truth of his own nature, that he is a creature, as well as a creator, a man and not a God, a dependent and a responsible part of a greater whole. He learns that his soul is not a mere trifle which he can use as a commodity, and that contrition, prayer, repentance, hell, and damnation are not just "illusions" (as the Evil Angel told him).

Between the high-soaring scholar of the first scene and the agonised figure of the final scene, there is a notable difference. In the final scene, Faustus enters with the Scholars, and for the first time in the play he has normal, compassionate discourse with his fellows. His role of demi-god is over; he is human once more, a friend and befriended. "Ah, gentlemen, learn me with patience", says he who had been only recently acting as if he were the lord of all creation. His friends now seem more "sweet" (he uses this word thrice for them) than any "princely delicate", or the "Signiory of Emden". Although the thrill of his exploits still lingers (in his recollection of "the wonders he has done"), he is humble and repentant. He longs to weep and pray but finds himself prevented by the devils from doing so. He confesses to the Scholars the cause of all his misery. Knowing his doom is near, he refuses their help and asks them not to talk to him but save themselves and depart. They retire, leaving him to meet his fate alone.

Faustus reaches levels of perception never gained by less venturesome individuals. He must see things with his own eyes. He does not want so much what power can bring: he never takes the Signiory of Emden, never builds a brass wall around Germany, never clothes the school-boys in silk. He wants what all men, good and bad, have wanted. He wants to conquer time, space, and ignorance. Above all, he wants knowledge: What is hell? Where is it? Who made the world? He wants to know everything about "the plants, the herbs, the trees that grow upon the earth". "He explores this world and also the regions above this world; he tries to understand the secrets of the heavens. He digs into the past, making blind Homer sing to him, and Amphion play the harp for him. What Marlowe dramatizes is not only the terror of the black art as the old legend told about it, but the wonder of it, the wonder of the man who dared to use the black art and the wonder of the mysteries it reveals. But the play also points to the peculiar

dilemma of modern times. On the one hand is human limitation: on the other is the compulsion of the modern man to deny his limitations, and to press even further into the mysteries of a universe which appears steadily to yield more and more of its secrets to his enquiring mind. To rest content with his limitations would mean that he refuses to make the fullest use of his own God-given powers; yet to explore the mysteries of the universe is somehow evil and may bring not only the present suffering but the horrors of eternity".

In his last despairing moments, Faustus asks why he was not born a creature lacking in a soul, or why his soul had to be immortal. Medieval theology held that man is because he believes. To this the answer of the Renaissance was that man is because he thinks and acts and discovers. Neither view, as Marlowe presents Faustus' dilemma, is wholly right or wholly wrong. In the world of tragedy, the hero can only take the road of experiment. He must follow his bent, take action, and live it through.

18.7. LET US SUM UP

This lesson deals with the important themes of the play. The important aspects to be kept in mind is how Doctor Faustus represents the Renaissance spirit, how his morality disintegrated, how there was fall in his character, and how he met a tragic end.

18.8. SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

18.8.1 SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss Faustus as a man of Renaissance.

Possible answer: Faustus appears as a man of the Renaissance in the very opening scene when, rejecting the traditional subjects of study, he turns to magic and considers the varied uses to which he can put his magic skill after he has acquired it. He contemplated the "world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, of omnipotence" which he hopes to enjoy as a magician. In dwelling upon the advantages which will accrue to him by the exercise of his magic power, he shows his ardent curiosity, his desire for wealth and luxury, his nationalism, and his longing for power. These were precisely the qualities of the Renaissance, which was the age of discovery.

Q2. How makes *Doctor Faustus* a tragedy?

Possible answer: The first thing that strikes us about Faustus is his extra-ordinary learning and scholarship. The Chorus, in his very first speech, tell us of this aspect of Faustus's character,. According to the Chorus, Faustus made a rapid progress in the study of divinity. From Faustus' first soliloquy we learn that, before he decided to practice magic, he had already attained mastery over various branches of study. He had acquired great proficiency in logic; his medical skill had won him great renown; he had made a name as a theologian; and so on. Intellectually equipped as Faustus is, he soon becomes a great magician whose wonderful performances astonish all Germany. Speaking to the Scholars towards the end of the play, Faustus recalls the wonders that he has done and that the whole world has witnessed.

Q3. What is the cause of tragedy in Doctor Faustus?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q4. Trace the various stages of Faustus's damnation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q5. How does Marlowe portray the character of Faustus?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8.2 MCQs

Q1. Which is the first major Elizabethan tragedy?

a) *The Jew of Malta* b) *Amores*

c) *Doctor Faustus* d) *Pharsalia*

Q2. "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships/ And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?" is referred to _____.

a) Helen of Troy b) The Emperor's Wife

c) The pimp d) The Cook

Q3. By studying Necromancy, he makes it clear that magic has "_____" him.

a) bewildered b) enlightened

c) ravished d) revolutionized

Q4. Faustus aims to become a:

a) Demi-god b) Conqueror

c) Sadist d) Learned Man

Q5. Doctor Faustus reunites with his immortal beauty_____?

a) Aphrodite b) Venus

c) Helen d) Nefertiti

18.9 ANSWER KEY

1. c)
2. a)
3. c)
4. a)
5. c)

18.10. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. *Doctor Faustus*- Edited by Suroopa Mukherjee
2. The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature – R. Beadle
3. Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical study – F. S. Boas
4. Renaissance Self- fashioning from More to Shakespeare – Stephen Greenblatt
5. English drama before Shakespeare – P. Happe

DOCTOR FAUSTUS: CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

STRUCTURE

19.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the student will be able to understand critical passages and their contextual meaning.

19.2. EXPLANATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO CONTEXT

Passage I

These metaphysics of magicians,
And necromantic books are heavenly!

Reference: These lines are taken from Act I, scene I of Christopher Marlowe's play *Dr. Faustus.*

Context: The play begins with a long soliloquy where Faustus reflects on the most rewarding type of scholarship. He first considers logic, quoting the Greek philosopher Aristotle, but notes that disputing well seems to be the only goal of logic, and, since Faustus' debating skills are already good, logic is not scholarly enough for him. He

considers medicine, quoting the Greek physician Galen, and decides that medicine, with its possibility of achieving miraculous cures, is the most fruitful pursuit—yet he notes that he has achieved great renown as a doctor already and that this fame has not brought him satisfaction. He considers law, quoting the Byzantine emperor Justinian, but dismisses law as too petty, dealing with trivial matters rather than larger ones. Divinity, the study of religion and theology, seems to offer wider vistas, but he quotes from St. Jerome's Bible that all men sin and finds the Bible's assertion that "the reward of sin is death" an unacceptable doctrine. He then dismisses religion and fixes his mind on magic, which, when properly pursued, he believes will make him "a mighty god" (1.62).

Passage II

Think'st tough that I, who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

Reference:

This passage has been taken from Scene III of Act I

Explanation:

Faustus stands in a magical circle marked with various signs and words, and he chants in Latin. Four devils and Lucifer, the ruler of hell, watch him from the shadows. Faustus renounces heaven and God, swears allegiance to hell, and demands that Mephastophilis rise to serve him. The devil Mephastophilis then appears before Faustus, who commands him to depart and return dressed as a Franciscan friar, since "that holy shape becomes a devil best" (3.26). Mephastophilis vanishes, and Faustus remarks on his obedience. Mephastophilis then reappears, dressed as a monk, and asks Faustus what he desires. Faustus demands his obedience, but Mephastophilis says that he is Lucifer's servant and can obey only Lucifer. He adds that he came because he heard Faustus deny obedience to God and hoped to capture his soul.

Passage III

Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.
Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,

And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

Reference: This passage has been extracted from Act I, Scenes III, Lines 76-80.

Context: The speaker is Mephistophilis. He offers a powerful portrait of hell that seems to warn against any pact with Lucifer. He exposes the horrors of his own experience as if offering sage guidance to Faustus. His honesty in mentioning the "ten thousand hells" that torment him shines a negative light on the action of committing one's soul to Lucifer.

Passage IV

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss:
Her lips sucks 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 Helena!

Reference: These lines occur in Act V, Scene I of the play.

Context: Faustus enters with some of the scholars. One of them asks Faustus if he can produce Helen of Greece (also known as Helen of Troy), who they have decided was "the admirablest lady / that ever lived" (12.3–4). Faustus agrees to produce her, and gives the order to Mephastophilis: immediately, Helen herself crosses the stage, to the delight of the scholars. He is awed by her beauty and graces and loses sense of time. He wants to attain immortality by kissing her. He praises her lips as filled with sweetness that they have drawn his soul out of his body. Then he asks her to give back his soul which the first kiss had sucked forth. He believes that heaven is in her lips.

Passage V

Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually.

Ugly hell gape not! Come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books—ah, Mephastophilis!

Reference: These lines occur in Scene III of Act V of the play.

Context: The final night of Faustus's life has come, and he tells the scholars of the deal he has made with Lucifer. They are horrified and ask what they can do to save him, but he tells them that there is nothing to be done. Reluctantly, they leave to pray for Faustus. A vision of hell opens before Faustus's horrified eyes as the clock strikes eleven. The last hour passes by quickly, and Faustus exhorts the clocks to slow and time to stop, so that he might live a little longer and have a chance to repent. He then begs God to reduce his time in hell to a thousand years or a hundred thousand years, so long as he is eventually saved. He wishes that he were a beast and would simply cease to exist when he dies instead of face damnation. He curses his parents and himself, and the clock strikes midnight. Devils enter and carry Faustus away as he screams, "Ugly hell gape not! Come not, Lucifer! / I'll burn my books—ah, Mephastophilis!"

Passage VI

O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down? . . .
One drop of blood would save my soul, half a drop: ah my

Christ— (13.69–71)

Reference:

These lines are spoken by Dr. Faustus in the Epilogue.

Context: Faustus appears to be calling on Christ, seeking the precious drop of blood that will save his soul. Yet some unseen force—whether inside or outside him—prevents him from giving himself to God.

Passage VII

Faustus is gone! Regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise
Only to wonder at unlawful things:

Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practice more than heavenly power permits.
:

Reference: These lines occur in the Epilogue of the play in lines 4-8.

Context: In the duel between Christendom and the rising modern spirit, Marlowe's play seems to come down squarely on the side of Christianity. Yet Marlowe, himself notoriously accused of atheism and various other sins, may have had other ideas, and he made his Faustus sympathetic, if not necessarily admirable. While his play shows how the untrammeled pursuit of knowledge and power can be corrupting, it also shows the grandeur of such a quest. Faustus is damned, but the gates that he opens remain standing wide, waiting for others to follow.

19.3. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Explain with reference to context.

a). Think'st though that I, who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

b) Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually.
Ugly hell gape not! Come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books—ah, Mephistophilis!

c) Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss:
Her lips sucks 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 Helena!

19.4. RECAPITULATION OF THE LESSON

In this lesson, the important passages from the play have been given and explained with reference to context.

19.5. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. *Doctor Faustus*- Edited by Suroopa Mukherjee
2. The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature – R. Beadle
3. Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical study – F. s. Boas
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5. English drama before Shakespeare – P. Happe

DOCTOR FAUSTUS: CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

STRUCTURE

20.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the student will be able to understand and attempt important and relevant questions from the examination point-of-view.

20.2. EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss Marlowe's contribution to English Drama?

Ans. The chief works of Marlowe are as follows; *Dido, Queen of Carthage* is believed to have been his first. It was performed by the Children of the Chapel, a company of boy actors, between 1587 and 1593. The play was first published in 1594; the title page attributes the play to Marlowe and Thomas Nashe. Marlowe's first play performed on the regular stage in London, in 1587, was *Tamburlaine the Great*, about the conqueror Tamburlaine, who rises from shepherd to war-lord. It is among the first English plays in blank verse, and, with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, generally is considered the beginning of the mature phase of the Elizabethan theatre. *Tamburlaine* was a success, and was followed with *Tamburlaine the Great, Part II*. The two parts of *Tamburlaine* were published in 1590. *The Jew of Malta*, about a Maltese Jew's barbarous revenge against the city authorities, has a prologue

delivered by a character representing Machiavelli. It was probably written in 1589 or 1590, and was first performed in 1592. It was a success, and remained popular for the next fifty years.

Edward the Second is an English history play about the deposition of King Edward II by his barons and the Queen, who resent the undue influence the king's favourites have in court and state affairs. The play was entered into the Stationers' Register on 6 July 1593, five weeks after Marlowe's death. *The Massacre at Paris* is a short and luridly written work, the only surviving text of which was probably a reconstruction from memory of the original performance text, portraying the events of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, which English Protestants invoked as the blackest example of Catholic treachery. It features the silent "English Agent", whom subsequent tradition has identified with Marlowe himself and his connections to the secret service. *The Massacre at Paris* is considered his most dangerous play, as agitators in London seized on its theme to advocate the murders of refugees from the low countries and, indeed, it warns Elizabeth I of this possibility in its last scene. Its full title was *The Massacre at Paris: With the Death of the Duke of Guise*. Marlowe also wrote the poem *Hero and Leander* (published in 1598), the popular lyric "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", and translations of Ovid's *Amores* and the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. In 1599, his translation of Ovid was banned and copies publicly burned as part of Archbishop Whitgift's crackdown on offensive material.

Q2. What is the dramatic significance of the opening scene of the play *Doctor Faustus?*

Possible Answer : The play begins with a long soliloquy where Faustus reflects on the most rewarding type of scholarship. He first considers logic, quoting the Greek philosopher Aristotle, but notes that disputing well seems to be the only goal of logic, and, since Faustus' debating skills are already good, logic is not scholarly enough for him. He considers medicine, quoting the Greek physician Galen, and decides that medicine, with its possibility of achieving miraculous cures, is the most fruitful pursuit—yet he notes that he has achieved great renown as a doctor already and that this fame has not brought him satisfaction. He considers law, quoting the Byzantine emperor Justinian, but dismisses law as too petty, dealing with trivial matters rather than larger ones. Divinity, the study

of religion and theology, seems to offer wider vistas, but he quotes from St. Jerome's Bible that all men sin and finds the Bible's assertion that "the reward of sin is death" an unacceptable doctrine. He then dismisses religion and fixes his mind on magic, which, when properly pursued, he believes will make him "a mighty god".

Wagner, Faustus's servant, enters as his master finishes speaking. Faustus asks Wagner to bring Valdes and Cornelius, Faustus's friends, to help him learn the art of magic. While they are on their way, a good angel and an evil angel visit Faustus. The good angel urges him to set aside his book of magic and read the Scriptures instead; the evil angel encourages him to go forward in his pursuit of the black arts. After they vanish, it is clear that Faustus is going to heed the evil spirit, since he exults at the great powers that the magical arts will bring him. Faustus imagines sending spirits to the end of the world to fetch him jewels and delicacies, having them teach him secret knowledge, and using magic to make himself king of all Germany.

Q3. Discuss Doctor Faustus as a man of Renaissance.

Possible Answer : Faustus appears as a man of the Renaissance in the very opening scene when, rejecting the traditional subjects of study, he turns to magic and considers the varied uses to which he can put his magic skill after he has acquired it. He contemplated the "world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, of omnipotence" which he hopes to enjoy as a magician. In dwelling upon the advantages which will accrue to him by the exercise of his magic power, he shows his ardent curiosity, his desire for wealth and luxury, his nationalism, and his longing for power. These were precisely the qualities of the Renaissance, which was the age of discovery. A number of allusions in the first scene of Act I maintain our sense of the enlarged outlook and extended horizons of that great period of English history. Faustus desires gold from the East Indies, pearls from the depths of the sea, pleasant fruits and princely delicacies from America. His friend Valdes refers to the Indians in the Spanish colonies, to Lapland giants, and to the annual plate-fleet which supplied gold and silver to the Spanish treasury from the New World. There was much in this scene to inflame the hearts of English audiences who must have heartily approved of Faustus' intention to chase away the Prince of Parma from the Netherlands. Thus Faustus' dream of power included much that had a strong appeal for the English people including Marlowe himself.

Faustus certainly embodies the new enquiring and aspiring spirit of the age of the Renaissance. Marlowe expressed in this play both his fervent sympathy with that new spirit and, ultimately, his awed and pitiful recognition of the danger into which it could lead those who were dominated by it. The danger is clearly seen in Faustus' last soliloquy in which Faustus offers to burn his books. No doubt these books are chiefly the books of magic. Faustus attributed his downfall, partly at least, to his learning.

Doctor Faustus as not only the first major Elizabethan tragedy, but the first to explore the tragic possibilities of the direct clash between the Renaissance compulsions and the Hebraic-Christian tradition. Faustus put into an old legend a new meaning. He inserted into the old medieval or Christian moral equation the new and ambiguous dynamic of the Renaissance. He treated the legend of Faustus in such a manner as to give it a fascination and a dignity never realized in previous treatments of the story. The story of this 24 year action, compressed by Marlowe in a few vivid scenes, represents a soul torn between the desire to stretch to its utmost limit its new mastery and freedom on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the claims of the old teachings a defiance of which meant guilt and a growing sense of alienation from society.

The legend of Faustus was believed to be a terrible and ennobling example, and a warning to all Christians to avoid the pitfalls of science, pleasure, and ambition which had led to Faustus' damnation. But it has to be noted that all that the Renaissance valued is represented in what the devil has to offer, and one is left wondering whether it is the religious life of the worldly life that is more attractive. All that the Good Angel in this play has to offer is "warnings". For instance, the Good Angel warns Faustus against reading the book of magic because it will invite God's "heavy wrath" upon his head, and asks him to think of heaven. To this the Evil Angel replies: "No Faustus, think of honour and wealth". At another point in the play the Evil Angel urges Faustus to go forward in the famous art of magic and to become a lord and commander of the earth. There can be no doubt that the devil here represents the natural ideal of the Renaissance by appealing to the vague but healthy ambitions of a young soul which wishes to launch itself upon the wide world. No wonder that Faustus, a child of the Renaissance, cannot resist the devil's suggestion. We like him for his love of life, for his trust in Nature, for his enthusiasm for beauty. He speaks for all when, looking at Helen he cries: "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships/And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?" (Act

V, Scene II (91-92)

To sum up, Marlowe's Faustus is a martyr to everything that the Renaissance valued-power, curious knowledge, enterprise, wealth, and beauty. The play shows Marlowe's own passion for these Renaissance values.

Q4. Trace the various stages of Faustus's damnation.

Possible Answer : The first thing that strikes us about Faustus is his extra-ordinary learning and scholarship. The Chorus, in his very first speech, tell us of this aspect of Faustus's character, According to the Chorus, Faustus made a rapid progress in the study of divinity. From Faustus' first soliloquy we learn that, before he decided to practice magic, he had already attained mastery over various branches of study. He had acquired great proficiency in logic; his medical skill had won him great renown; he had made a name as a theologian; and so on. Intellectually equipped as Faustus is, he soon becomes a great magician whose wonderful performances astonish all Germany. Speaking to the Scholars towards the end of the play, Faustus recalls the wonders that he has done and that the whole world has witnessed.

Faustus is endowed with a rare imaginative faculty. Having rejected the various branches of study, Faustus visualizes the wonders that he will be able to work with the power of magic. He goes on to speak of the unlimited authority he will wield. He will be greater than emperors and kings, and his dominion will "stretch as far as doth the mind of man". He will become a "mighty god". He sees bright visions of spirits bringing his gold from India, pearls from the ocean, pleasant fruits from distant corners of the world. He hopes to wall all Germany with brass, make the Rhine circle the city of Wittenberg, chase the Prince of Parma from his land, and so on. He thinks that he will be able to make a bridge through the moving air in order to cross the ocean with an army of soldier; he thinks of joining the hills that bind the African shore; he imagines that no ruler will be able to rule except by his permission. Not only does Faustus possess an exceptional imaginative power which enables him to see bright dreams of his future as a magician, but he is a born poet. His poetic faculty is, indeed, remarkable. Almost every major speech of Faustus is instinct with the poetry that is an innate gift with him. Even the manner in which he gives expression to his conflicts and despairs is worthy of a poet.

Faustus' sin is pride, presumption, and self-conceit. The Chorus refers to his as becoming "swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit," and compares his to Icarus who flew into the sky with wings made of wax which melted with the heat of the sun and led to Icarus' dropping to the earththe study of necromancy and to practice magic, he has no peace one he has taken that decision. Throughout the twenty-four years during which he practices magic, he experiences a mental conflict between his godly and ungodly impulses. A feeling of regret at having alienated God keeps haunting him during this period. The Good and the Evil Angels, who appear to him on several occasions, are merely that personifications of his own good and evil impulses. The words they speak to him are symbolic of the mental debate that goes on his own mind between his desire to enjoy the fruits of the power he has gained through magic and an urge not to renounce his trust in God. Several times he gives an outward expression to the tussle that goes on in his mind. At the beginning of Act II, Scene I, we find him speaking of the tug-of-war that is going on in his mind. Faustus, while continuing to practice magic, yet experiences the pangs and pricks of his conscience. The manner in which Faustus harasses the Pope by snatching away eatables and drinks from the Pope's hands and the manner in which he befools and cheats the Horse-courses, far from doing him any credit, lower and degrade him in our eyes. This great scholar, who had planned to wall all Germany with brass and to drive away the Prince of Parma from his land, is now frittering away his energies by playing crude tricks and by giving magic performances to entertain the Emperor and the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt. Perhaps the scene of the Pope's harassment and the Horse-courser scene were not written by Marlowe himself. Perhaps it was Marlowe's intention to show, with the help of such scenes, the rapid deterioration that takes place in the character of Faustus after his becoming a disciple of the devil. The Faustus who plays tricks on the Pope, the Knight, and the Horse-courser is different from the Faustus of the opening scenes.

The final monologue of Faustus not only emphasizes Faustus imaginative and poetic faculties, but is unsurpassed as an expression of spiritual horror. Faustus here realizes that time will not stop and that the devil will come at the fixed hour:

> *The starts move still, time runs, the clock will strike,*

The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.

(Act V, Scene III, Lines 76-77)

Faustus wishes that he did not have a soul or that his soul were not immortal. He would like his body to turn into air and his soul to little water-drops which may mingle with the ocean and never be found again. The climax of horror is reached in the last four lines of his monologue.

Q5. What do you think is the cause of the tragedy in *Doctor Faustus*?

Possible Answer : We first see Faustus at the peak of his worldly career. He is already master of all the existing knowledge and skills. He is a famous physician, honoured by whole cities and held in reverence by his students. Why, then did he becomes restless? Why was he unwilling to remain "but Faustus, and a man"? (Act I, Scene I, Line 23). Why did he feel an urge to comman "all things that move between the quiet poles"? (Act I, Scene I, Line 54). It is because a tragic hero feels the compulsion to realize himself fully in the face of all the odds, and that the test of his heroism is the degree of the risk he is willing to take. In his sense, the tragedy of Faustus is the tragedy of Adam. To Adam, paradise was not enough. He sought knowledge, and this was a forward step in the direction of self-realization. To the orthodox people, Adam's action is surely sinful, just as Faustus' action is wholly devilish in the eyes of the Chorus who opens and closes of the play. Faustus' opening soliloquy also represents his action as sinful because, after he has dismissed all studies but necromancy (which he thinks to be the key to his self-realization), the Good Angel tells him to put aside the damned book of magic, while the Evil Angel urges him to go forward in that famous art.

Marlowe sees the whole case not only as Good or Evil would see it but as it would be seen by a man of flesh and blood, the man who takes the risk is prepared to face the consequences. The meaning is the total yield of the situation into which Faustus walks of his own free will, in accordance with the mysterious, tragic urge of his times. Faustus' first move after deciding upon necromancy as the field of his research is one of arrogant and impatient lust for power. His absurd egotism is mixed with intellectual and humanitarian impulses. He would resolve all ambiguities, read strange philosophy, rid his country of the foreign domination and fortify it with a wall of brass,

clothe the schoolboys in silk. He is prepared, at the end of Act I, Scene I, to take the ultimate risk: "This night I'll conjure, though I die therefore". Kater, in Act I, Scene III, he rebukes the Devil's own messenger, Mephistophilis, whose heart faints as he anticipates Faustus' awful fate. Faustus here speaks of his own "manly fortitude", he scorns Mephistophilis' warning; he rejects all hope of heavenly joys; and e offers his soul to Lucifer for twenty-four years of his heart's desires. With this decision come new energy, new power, new command.

By the time of his second conjuring (Act II, Scene I), even before the signing of the bond, he confesses doubts, "Something sounds in mine ears: Abjure this magic, turn to God again!", he says. And he asks himself why he is wavering. He feels like turning to God again, but thinks that God does not love him. The doubts will not vanish, and Faustus lives out his twenty-four years as the first modern tragic man, part believer, part unbeliever, wavering between independence, and dependence upon God, now arrogant and confident, now anxious and worried, justified yet horribly unjustified.

Faustus is forced constantly to renew his choice between two alternatives. In contrast moods, he sees greater heights, and he experiences greatest terror. Soon the gentle voice that sounded in his ears, urging him to give up his magic and return to God, takes the shape of "fearful echoes" thundering in his ears: "Faustus, thou art damned" (Act II, Scene II, Lines 20-21). What he is learning is the truth of his own nature, that he is a creature, as well as a creator, a man and not a god, a dependent and a responsible part of a greater whole. He learns that his soul is not a mere trifle which he can use as a commodity, and that contrition, prayer, repentance, hell, and damnation are not just "illusions" (as the Evil Angel told him).

Between the high-soaring scholar of the first scene and the agonised figure of the final scene, there is a notable difference. In the final scene, Faustus enters with the Scholars, and for the first time in the play he has normal, compassionate discourse with his fellows. His role of demi-god is over; he is human once more, a friend and befriended. "Ah, gentlemen, learn me with patience", says he who had been only recently acting as if he were the lord of all creation. His friends now seem more "sweet" (he uses this word thrice for them) than any "princely delicate", or the "Signiory of Emden". Although the thrill of his exploits still lingers (in his recollection of "the wonders he has done"),

he is humble and repentant. He longs to weep and pray but finds himself prevented by the devils from doing so. He confesses to the Scholars the cause of all his misery. Knowing his doom is near, he refuses their help and asks them not to talk to him but save themselves and depart. They retire, leaving him to meet his fate alone.

Faustus reaches levels of perception never gained by less venturesome individuals. He must see things with his own eyes. He does not want so much what power can bring: he never takes the Signiory of Emden, never builds a brass wall around Germany, never clothes the school-boys in silk. He wants what all men, good and bad, have wanted. He wants to conquer time, space, and ignorance. Above all, he wants knowledge: What is hell? Where is it? Who made the world? He wants to know everything about "the plants, the herbs, the trees that grow upon the earth". "He explores this world and also the regions above this world; he tries to understand the secrets of the heavens. He digs into the past, making blind Homer sing to him, and Amphion play the harp for him. What Marlowe dramatizes is not only the terror of the black art as the old legend told about it, but the wonder of it, the wonder of the man who dared to use the black art and the wonder of the mysteries it reveals. But the play also points to the peculiar dilemma of modern times. On the one hand is human limitation: on the other is the compulsion of the modern man to deny his limitations, and to press even further into the mysteries of a universe which appears steadily to yield more and more of its secrets to his enquiring mind. To rest content with his limitations would mean that he refuses to make the fullest use of his own God-given powers; yet to explore the mysteries of the universe is somehow evil and may bring not only the present suffering but the horrors of eternity".

In his last despairing moments, Faustus asks why he was not born a creature lacking in a soul, or why his soul had to be immortal. Medieval theology held that man is because he believes. To this the answer of the Renaissance was that man is because he thinks and acts and discovers. Neither view, as Marlowe presents Faustus' dilemma, is wholly right or wholly wrong. In the world of tragedy, the hero can only take the road of experiment. He must follow his bent, take action, and live it through.

20.3. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions:

1. Discuss *Doctor Faustus* as a Morality play.
2. Discuss the structure or construction of the play *Doctor Faustus*.
3. Comment on the appropriateness or otherwise of the comic and farcical scenes in *Doctor Faustus*.
4. Write a note on the Renaissance character of the play *Doctor Faustus*.

20.4. SUGGESTED READINGS

1. *Doctor Faustus*- Edited by Suroopa Mukherjee
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