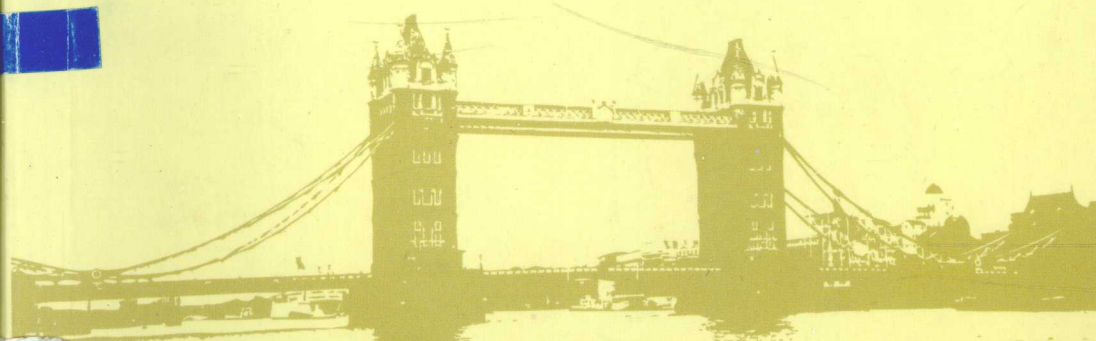
高等学校英语专业系列教材

英国文学经典选读

刁克利 编著

Classical Readings of English Literature

（上）



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“高等学校英语专业系列教材”是一套为英语专业高年级本科生和研究生编写的教材，包括高级英语语言技能、英语专业知识和相关专业知识三个方面。本系列教材为开放式，涵盖面广，设计科学，注重时代性、知识性与实用性，有助于学习者在掌握英语技能的基础上进一步扩展知识领域，培养应用能力，提高综合素养。

本书是供高等学校英语专业学生使用的英国文学教材，涵盖了从Anglo-Saxon时期到20世纪的主要作家作品。全书分上、下两册，共44个单元，可供一个学年使用。本书具有以下特点：

- 在介绍作家和文学作品的同时，巧妙地融合了文学史的内容，体系更完整。
- 将文学批评方法和理论热点融入到每一单元，帮助学生提高文学欣赏和文学批评水平。
- 每单元设有课后问答题，便于学生更好地理解内容，也有助于学生准备英语专业研究生入学考试。
- 每单元后的课堂活动可激发学生的学习积极性，活跃课堂气氛。

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前　言

文学作品既是一种语言精华的体现，也是一个民族文化、精神与情感的反映。

英国文学学习至少有四个目的：一是阅读最优美的英语；二是系统地学习英国文学知识，提高作品欣赏能力，启迪并发展文学批评能力；三是开阔视野，了解与文学相关的英语文化和思想潮流的产生和发展；四是丰富情感体验，提高人文素养和思想水平。

根据多年课堂教学经验，一本理想的英国文学教材应当包括：学习要点提示、系统的背景介绍、经典的作品遴选、详尽的注释、文学评论要点综述、富有启发性的思考题、灵活多样的课堂活动以及作家名言选录等。而正是这些构成了本教材的基本内容：

全书分上、下两册，由 7 个部分组成，共 44 单元，结构如下表所示：

上册	第 1 部分 1～4 单元	中世纪文学，英语文学的形成时期
	第 2 部分 5～7 单元	16 世纪文学，即文艺复兴时期文学
	第 3 部分 8～11 单元	17 世纪文学
	第 4 部分 12～21 单元	以启蒙运动为背景的 18 世纪文学
下册	第 5 部分 22～29 单元	以诗歌为主要形式的浪漫主义文学
	第 6 部分 30～37 单元	维多利亚时期的文学
	第 7 部分 38～44 单元	20 世纪文学

在对英国文学内容进行了全面梳理和系统讲解的基础上，本书对教材形式进行了较大的创新。大致框架如下：

每一部分首先介绍了学习要点和背景知识，然后是分单元讲解的作家作品。学习要点由关键词组成，放在各部分前面，明确教学目标，提示学习重点，在正文中出现时都以黑体标记。这也有利于在学习中加深印象，以及对相关参考书目的选择。背景知识主要介绍与作家作品相关的文学思潮，及其生成的社会、历史、文化背景，以及不同文学体裁的转换原因和新特点，还有对代表性作家作品的概述。

每一单元（1～3单位除外）以作家为标题，主要内容是作家介绍与作品选读，以及注释、评论要点、问题思考、课堂活动和作家名言等。

• 作家介绍（life and writing）：包括作家在文学史中的地位和总体评价，作家的生活经历、文学思想和创作风格的形成，以及作家的重要作品与影响。

• 作品选读（selected works）：遴选文学史中有定论的一流作家的代表作，讲解部分主要包括作品的内容概述、结构分析、语言欣赏、艺术特色和主题思想等。

• 注释（notes）：涵盖语言点、专用词汇和文学术语解释，以及精彩句子点评、文学现象延伸讲解和重要段落的意思总结等。

• 评论要点（critical points）：概括经典作品的魅力所在，综述作品批评的历史沿革和不同的阐释角度，引导文学欣赏与批评的新方法，有助于文学论文写作和深入研究。对于热爱文学、想进一步探索研究的同学，这一部分会有很大的帮助。

• 问题思考（questions）：既促进思考，又是重点内容提示，强调对文学作品意义的思考和体验。

• 课堂活动（class activities）：有写作训练、角色扮演、作品朗诵、分组讨论、主题报告和演讲等，鼓励同学交流和师生互动，以多种形式促进文学学习。教师可根据实际情况采用。

• 作家名言（quotations）：选录作家在不同作品中的精彩句子，有助于理解作家的文学思想。

本教材的特点可以概括为以下几个方面，这同时也是学习英国文学需要注意的地方：

一是注重文学规律，清楚作家作品产生的社会背景、文化背景，及其在文学思潮中的发生和流变；阅读文学作品的同时学习文学批评和文学思潮的更迭。

二是注重作品解读，提高文学欣赏和批评水平。对作品从内容结构、情节安排、表意层面，音韵格律、写作特色和技法等方面进行详尽地分析，对作品的意义表述从情、理、思三个方面进行透彻地剖析。

三是以作家年代先后为线索编排内容，注重作家思想的来源、文学风格的形成，及其对文学史的贡献和影响。

四是强调教学互动。问题思考、课堂活动和作家名言等的设计旨在启示新的教学方法和学习、体验文学的新思路，以达到更好的教学效果。奇文共欣赏，疑义相与析。相互交流和切磋会使学习过程生动有趣。

教材主要服务于教学实践。全书（上下册）的内容和形式均符合

两个学期的课程安排和每周一次课的教学需要。每次课可以是 2 到 4 个学时。授课对象为英语专业本科高年级学生。在实际教学中，根据学生兴趣和实际需要，对部分作家作品可以有所取舍，各单元内容的讲解也可以有所侧重。

文学教材的目的不仅只是教授知识，也要培养学生对文学的终生热爱。维护这种热爱的途径就是知道文学有趣、有益，同时懂得如何登堂入室。所以，本书的理念是在全面理解和执行教学大纲的前提下，提倡对文学的多层次学习和理解。

本书的编写特别感谢美国伊利诺伊大学厄巴纳－香槟分校英语系彼德·葛瑞特教授（Peter Garrett），我和他详细讨论过本书的选材和主要内容。从他的文学课堂，我获益良多。感谢查尔斯·兰福先生（Charles Lansford），他逐句审读了本书的课堂活动和问题思考部分。感谢中国人民大学外国语学院英语系的学生，他们的学习热情使我不断完善本书的构想。衷心欢迎读者提出宝贵意见。

刁克利

2008 年 7 月 17 日

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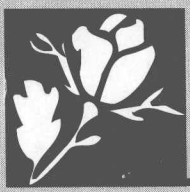


Part I

The Middle Ages (to ca. 1485)

Key Words

Old English	Middle English
epic	romance
alliteration	kenning
understatement	heroic couplet
ballad	

Unit 1

Beowulf

Beowulf, *written in the Old English sometime before the 10th century AD, describes the adventures of a great Scandinavian warrior of the sixth century. Beowulf is the oldest surviving epic in British literature, and the first major poem in a European vernacular language.*

Background Knowledge: The Anglo-Saxon Period (450-1066)

Literature, as a written record of human life and representative of high level of national language, is also a legacy of long civilisation. Therefore, the knowledge of early English people and English language is beneficial to literature learning.

The important events in the early part of English history are Roman Conquest, Anglo-Saxon Conquest and Norman Conquest in subsequence, which leave influence to different extent upon the development of England as a nation and that of English as a language.

English literature started from the Middle Ages, which embraced two quite different periods of literary history, the Old English and the Middle English. The Old English is also known as Anglo-Saxon English, mainly used during the period of Anglo-Saxon Conquest. The first most impressive long poem in this period is *Beowulf*, the greatest of Germanic epics in the English language, which is a fabulous starting point of English literature. It is the Norman Conquest in 1066 that sharply divided the two periods and began the period of the Middle English. The Middle English is used to describe the language from then to about 1500, a period during which London English gradually became the dominant dialect.

The larger proportion of Middle English literature is religious. The church had a virtual monopoly on literacy during much of the Middle Ages.

Christianity teaching was primarily concerned with the issue of personal salvation. The premises of literature are timeless, and the scenes and characters in literature are unchanging. A romance written at the beginning of the 13th century differs little from one written in the 15th century.

The summit of Middle English literature came during the last quarter of the 14th century, represented by three great poets, writing at almost the same time. The author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* not only produced the best romance of the entire period, but also wrote some of the best religious poetry. William Langland's achievement in *Piers Plowman* is important both in literature and in history, since he faced squarely the great issues of his day. Geoffrey Chaucer's achievement was the greatest of all and *The Canterbury Tales* remains a world masterpiece for centuries.

1 Roman Conquest

The early inhabitants in the island were Britons, a tribe of Celts. From the Britons the island got its name—Britain, the land of Britons. The Celts were primitive people living in the tribal society, knowing how to make swords and grow crops. Their religious ceremonies were May Day and the cult of mistletoe, which have become part of the national tradition of the English people.

The Celts suffered repetitive invasions by foreign forces. In 55 BC, Julius Caesar[1], the Roman conqueror, led his legions to England. There were frequent conflicts between the native Celts and the Roman invaders. The Celts remained free and wild in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The Roman occupation lasted for three and a half centuries. They built temples, roads, walls, and military camps, and they also built many walled towns and made them the sites of military settlement. This explains the reason why there are towns today in Britain ending in "-chester" or "-caster". In AD 410, the Romans withdrew their legions from the island. The Roman Conquest witnessed the foundation of London, but the Conquest left little influence on its national life, and the people continued to speak Celtic.

1 Julius Caesar (102/100-44 BC): Roman politician and a general of genius. He was also a writer of exceptional ability and has left a lucid account of his campaigns in his *Commentaries*. He is the author of *De Bello Gallico*, from which we get most of our knowledge of the Roman Britain.

2 Anglo-Saxon Conquest

In the first half of the fifth century, the island of Britain was invaded by three Germanic tribes: the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, usually known as Anglo-Saxons. They originally occupied parts of the coast of modern Denmark and Germany on both sides of the Elbe. The old Saxon word "angul" means a hook, and the name Saxon is from "seax", a short sword. They lived a life related to fishing, and they were brave fighters. This is the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon period in British history (449-1100).

The Anglo-Saxons were the ancestors of the present English people. They killed many Celts and drove the rest into Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and settled down themselves. The Jutes occupied Kent, the southeastern part of the island. The Saxons took the southern part and established small kingdoms as Wessex, Essex and Sussex. The Angles spread over the east midland and built the kingdom of the East Angles.

The Celts resisted bravely. In the struggle against the invaders, there appeared a legendary figure, the Celtic King Arthur. King Arthur was a Romanised Celt, and a general and brave fighter. At Camelot in Somersetshire, the legendary capital of his kingdom, he gathered around him the bravest of his followers, who were known as the Knights of the Round Table. King Arthur and his knights fought bravely for the kingdom against the Anglo-Saxon invaders, and left rich materials for endless English romances.

The Anglo-Saxons also fought among themselves, and seven kingdoms were established at the end of the sixth century. In the process of fighting against other invaders later, these small kingdoms were combined into a united kingdom named England, that is, the land of Angles. The three tribes had mixed into a whole people called English.

Language spoken by them is now called the Old English, which is the foundation of English language and literature. Its usage covers a period of approximately 700 years—from the Anglo-Saxon migrations that created England in the fifth century to some time after the Norman invasion of 1066.

With the settlement of Anglo-Saxons in Britain, the history of English literature began.

3 Religion and Literature

An important event in the period is the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. The Angles and Saxons, before they came to England, believed

in the old mythology of Northern Europe. The Northern mythology has left its mark upon the English language. For example, there is a convincing evidence that the days of the week in English are named after the Northern gods. In AD 597, Pope Gregory sent St. Augustine as a missionary to King Ethelbert of Kent, and the Anglo-Saxon conversion to Christianity began.

About the same time missionaries from Ireland began to preach Christianity in the north. Monasteries were built all over the country from the seventh century. The Anglo-Saxons gradually accepted Christianity. This changed their outlook, and enabled them to read the Scriptures and the classical writings of the ancient Greek. Although at a time only monks could read and write, the earliest English books were written down. Heathen mythology was replaced by Christian religion.

As for the change of social structure, the Anglo-Saxon period witnessed a transition from tribal society to feudalism. In that age of frequent wars, they admired greatly the wisdom and courage of their war leaders. Their kings were essentially warriors, whose duty was mainly to protect the tribe from being attacked. The ideal of kingly behaviour was enormously important. It is possibly that this chief spiritual force and the admiration for the great deeds of the kings shaped their earliest history and literature, and helped in the formation of epic as the first important literary genre.

In the development of the Anglo-Saxon literature, three figures were worthy of being mentioned. The first one was Caedmon, who lived in the seventh century and turned the stories of the Bible into verse form. He used *Paraphrase* as the title of the work. The legend goes like this: Caedmon knew nothing about how to sing at first, and one night he heard the voice from God: "Caedmon, sing me something." Caedmon answered honestly that he could not sing. Then God told him, "Sing me the Creation." And all of a sudden Caedmon got the magic power to sing, and was remembered as the first Anglo-Saxon poet.

Another important figure was Venerable Bede (673-735), a monk and the author of *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in Latin. The book covers the whole length of early English history from the invasion by Julius Caesar to the year 731, four years before Bede's death. The book earned the author the title of "Father of English History". We know the story of Caedmon from this book, which is full of strange religious stories and miracles.

The third figure was King Alfred the Great of Wessex (849-899), who is remembered not only as a king to unite the forces of the Anglo-Saxon kings and defeat the Danes, but also as the guiding spirit of his kingdom. During his

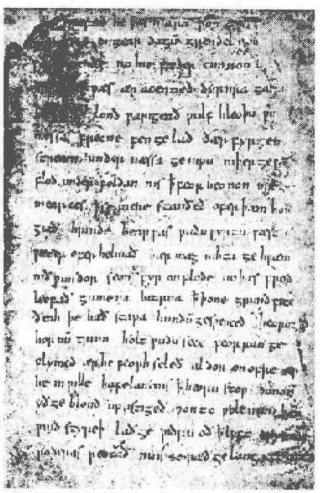
reign, many Latin books were translated into West Saxon dialect. He himself is said to translate Bede's *History*. He launched *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which began with the story of Caesar's conquest and annually recorded important events until 1154.

Among all the achievements of literary legacy, the chief survivor of Old English literature is *Beowulf*.

Beowulf

Beowulf exists in only one manuscript. The poem is untitled in the manuscript, but has been known as *Beowulf* since the early 19th century. As the single major surviving work of Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry, the poem has become "England's national epic".

Beowulf consists of 3,182 lines, depicts a vivid picture of an early Germanic society, of its public life, its customs, rituals and cultural activities. A rich fabric of fact and fancy, the poem demonstrates its charm in the description of a world of legends, fantasies and primitive beauty. It also recaptures the values, beliefs, and longings of the Anglo-Saxon people before they came to England, and presents a mixture of ideas of paganism and Christianity. Much of the material of the poem is legendary and paralleled in other Germanic historical-mythological literature in Norse, Old English, and German.



The first page of the *Beowulf* manuscript
This copy survived both the wholesale destruction of religious artifacts during the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII and a disastrous fire.

Plot Summary

In the poem, Beowulf, a hero of a Germanic tribe, battles three antagonists: Grendel, who is destroying Heorot and its inhabitants in Denmark; Grendel's Mother, who wants to take the revenge for the killing of her son by Beowulf; and later in life, a dragon.

The first two fights occur in his youth. In the land of the Danes during the reign of King Hrothgar, who builds a splendid hall and gives it the name Heorot. One night while the Danes are feasting, Grendel, a giant monster of

human shape, enraged at the sound of merry-making, suddenly appears and kills 30 warriors. For the next 12 years the monster haunts the place until no one dares to enter the grand hall. When Beowulf, nephew to King Hygelac of the Geats, hears of this, he sails with his warriors to Heorot to offer his help. He persuades the Danes to feast with him in the hall. After they fall asleep, the monster bursts in the door, seizes a warrior and devours him. Beowulf disdains to use a sword against the monster and grapples with him. After a fierce combat, Beowulf tears away one arm and a shoulder off the monster who flees to die. The next night Hrothgar rewards the hero with rich gifts and a banquet in Heorot. Then Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son, and carries away the king's dearest friend. Beowulf follows Grendel's mother to her sea dwelling and kills her with a sword found hanging in the cave.

Beowulf's fight with a dragon happens 50 years later, when Beowulf has been king of the Geats for a long time. A runaway slave steals some hidden treasure guarded by a dragon for 300 years in a cave. The dragon is enraged and ravages the land with his fiery breath. Beowulf sets out with 12 companions. Ordering his men waiting outside, he alone seeks the dragon in the cave and fights bravely against it. Both Beowulf and the dragon are mortally wounded. The dying Beowulf gives his last orders about his funeral, and is glad to learn that he gains new treasure for his people. His people throw the dragon into the sea and build a large bonfire on a headland, stretching far into the sea to burn Beowulf's body. Then they lay all the treasure with Beowulf's ashes and bury them together under a tremendous mound. The mound, according to Beowulf's will, may serve as a beacon for seafarers who sail along the coast. The poem ends with praises of the great deeds of the hero, who was "the mildest and most beloved, to his kin the kindest, keenest".

The two halves of the poem are distinguished in many ways: youth, then age; Denmark, then Geatland; the hall, then the barrow; diverse, then focused.

Artistic Features

Beowulf represents the highest achievement of the Old English. The most distinct feature of the epic is the extensive use of alliteration, that is, certain accented words in a line begin with the same consonant sound. Its poetic vocabulary includes sets of metrical compounds that vary according to alliterative needs. It also makes extensive use of elided metaphors.

Besides, a figurative language called "kenning" is largely applied to add beauty on ordinary objects, and the device is typical of much of classic poetry in the Old English, which is heavily formulaic. A **kenning** is a poetic

compound, made up of two or more nouns standing for another noun. For example, "*the rough sea*" is the "whale-road", "*the smooth sea*" is "swan's road", the "boat" is the "wave-rider", the "dragon" is the "shadow-walker", the "ocean" is "the mingling of the waves", the "body" is the "bone house", the "king" is the "ring-giver", and "helmet bearer" stands for "warrior", the "world candle" for the "sun". The name Beowulf itself is a kenning, "bee-wolf", that is, "bear". In the text selected below, "the jaws of the hall" refers to "the door", "the house of bone" to "the body".

Understatements can also be found to give an impression of reserve and at times a tinge of ironical humour, which is often regarded as a characteristic of the English language. Such phrases as "not troublesome" for "welcome", "need not praise" for "a right to condemn" are examples of understatements.

Beowulf's Fight with Grendel

Down off the moorlands' misting fells[1] came
Grendel stalking[2]; God's brand was on him[3].
The spoiler[4] meant to snatch away
from the high hall some of human race.
He came on under the clouds, clearly saw at last
the gold-hall of men, the mead-drinking place[5]
nailed with gold plates. That was not the first visit
he had paid to the hall of Hrothgar the Dane:
he never before and never after
harder luck nor hall-guards found.[6]

Walking to the hall came this warlike creature
condemned to agony. The door gave way[7],
toughened with iron, at the touch of those hands.
Rage-inflamed, wreckage-bent, he ripped open

1 fells: crags.
2 stalk: stride haughtily.
3 God's brand was on him: with God's wrath laden. brand: a mark of infamy.
4 spoiler: here refers to Grendel, who is to spoil and seize.
5 the mead-drinking place: the gold-hall. mead: wine made of honey and water.
6 he never before and never after harder luck nor hall-guards found: never had he before met and nor would he meet with such bad luck and powerful warriors.
7 gave way: opened.

the jaws of the hall[1]. Hastening on,
the foe then stepped onto the unstained floor,
angrily advanced: out of his eyes stood
an unlovely light like that of fire.
He saw then in the hall a host of young soldiers,
a company of kinsmen caught away in sleep,
a whole warrior-band. In his heart he laughed then,
horrible monster, his hopes swelling
to a gluttonous meal[2]. He meant to wrench[3]
the life from each body that lay in the place
before night was done. It was not to be;
he was no longer to feast on the flesh of mankind
after that night.

Narrowly the powerful
kinsman of Hygelac kept watch how the ravager
set to work with his sudden catches;
nor did the monster mean to hang back.
As a first step he set his hands on
a sleeping soldier, savagely tore at him,
gnashed at his bone-joints, bolted huge gobbets,
sucked at his veins[4], and had soon eaten
all of the dead man, even down to his
hands and feet.

Forward he stepped,
stretched out his hands to seize the warrior
calmly at rest there, reached out for him with his
unfriendly fingers: but the faster man
forestalling[5], sat up, sent back his arm.
The upholder of evils at once knew

1 the jaws of the hall: the door.
2 his hopes swelling to a gluttonous meal: a lusty banquet waited his will. swelling: growing.
3 wrench: tear apart by violence.
4 A description of the series of cruel actions when the monster tore the man fiercely asunder, ate the small bone-joints, swallowed hastily large pieces of flesh, and drank blood in streams.
5 the faster man forestalling: Beowulf took action first to prevent Grendel from further attacking.

he had not met, on middle earth's
extremest acres, with any man
of harder hand-grip[1]: his heart panicked.
He was quit of the place no more quickly for that[2].

Eager to be away, he ailed for his darkness[3]
and the company of devils; the dealings he had there
were like nothing he had come across in his lifetime[4].
Then Hygelac's brave kinsman called to mind
that evening's utterance[5], upright he stood,
fastened his hold till fingers were bursting[6].
The monster strained away: the man stepped closer.
The monster's desire was for darkness between them,
direction regardless, to get out and run
for his fen-bordered lair; he felt his grip's strength
crushed by his enemy. It was an ill journey
the rough marauder had made to Heorot.

The crash[7] in the banqueting-hall came the Danes,
the men of the guard that remained in the building,
with the taste of death. The deepening rage
of the claimants to Herorot[8] caused it to resound.
It was indeed wonderful that the wine-supper-hall
withstood the wrestling pair[9], that the world's palace
fell not to the ground. But it was girt firmly,

1 The upholder...harder hand-grip: Grendel realised that he had never met before a man with heavier hand-grip.
2 quit of the place no more quickly for that: none the sooner escaped!
3 he ailed for his darkness: suffered and eager to be back to his dark den.
4 the dealings he had there were like nothing he had come across in his lifetime: the doings now were what he had never done before, that is, he had never behaved in such an awkward way.
5 that evening's utterance: his boast at evening.
6 fastened his hold till fingers were bursting: grasped firm his foe till the foe's fingers cracked.
7 crash: noise.
8 The deepening rage of the claimants to Herorot: both Grendel and Beowulf claimed themselves as the guardians of the hall, and both of them were angry.
9 the wrestling pair: Grendel and Beowulf in the strain of struggle.

both inside and out, by iron braces
of skilled manufacture. Many a figured
gold-worked wine-bench, as we heard it,
started from the floor at the struggles of that pair.
The men of the Danes had not imagined that
any of mankind by what method soever
might undo that intricate, antlered hall,
sunder it by strength—unless it were swallowed up in
the embraces of fire.[1]

Beowulf's Funeral

The death of Beowulf

The Geat race then reared up for him
a funeral pyre[2]. It was not a petty mound,
but shining mail-coats and shields of war
and helmets hung upon it, as he had desired.
Then the heroes, lamenting, laid out in the
middle
their great chief, their cherished lord.
On top of the mound the men then kindled
the biggest of funeral-fires. Black wood-smoke
arose from the blaze, and the roaring of flames
mingled with weeping. The winds lay still
as the heat at the fire's heart consumed
the house of bone. And in heavy mood
they uttered their sorrow at the slaughter of their lord.

A woman of the Geats in grief sang out
the lament for his death. Loudly she sang,
her hair bound up, the burden of her fear
that evil days were destined her[3]—

1 The whole sentence means that Danes had never thought that any man in any manner might break down by strength the complicatedly built hall adorned with horns unless it was destroyed by fire.
2 reared up for him a funeral pyre: pile up wood for the ceremonial burning of his dead body.
3 Pay attention to the state of the woman in grief, who demonstrated the early image of an epic singer or a poet inspired.

troops cut down, terror of armies,
bondage, humiliation. Heaven swallowed the smoke.

Then the Storm-Geat nation constructed for him
a stronghold on the headland, so high and broad
that seafarers might see it from afar.
The beacon to that battle-reckless man
they made in ten days. What remained from the fire
they cast a wall around, of workmanship
as fine as their wisest men could frame for it.
They placed in the tomb both the torques[1] and the jewels,
all the magnificence[2] that the men had earlier
taken from the hoard in hostile mood.
They left the earl's[3] wealth in the earth's keeping,
the gold in the dirt. It dwells there yet,
of no more use to men that in ages before.

Then the warriors rode around the barrow,
twelve of them in all, athelings'[4] sons.
They recited a dirge[5] to declare their grief,
spoke of the man, mourned their King.
They praised his manhood and the prowess of his hands,
they raised his name; it is right a man
should be lavish in honouring his lord and friend,
should love him in his heart when the leading-forth
from the house of flesh befalls him at last.

This was the manner of the mourning of the men of the Geats,
sharers in the feast, at the fall of their lord;
they said that he was of all the world's kings

1 torque: an ornamental band of twisted metal worn round the neck or arms by ancient Gauls.
2 all the magnificence: all the wealth.
3 the earl: Beowulf.
4 athelings: noble families, esp. princes.
5 dirge: a sombre song expressing mourning or grief as appropriate for performance at a funeral.

the gentlest of men, and the most gracious,
the kindest to his people, the keenest for fame.

Critical Points

1 Religious Interpretation: Mixture of Christianity and Paganism

The poem is a retelling of orally transmitted legends for a Christian audience. One distinctive theme of the epic is that Christian details are placed in the story alongside traditional accounts of ancient Germanic religious practices.

On the one hand, since the poem is about the life of the Anglo-Saxons before they came to England, it is not surprising that it carries many non-Christian elements. On the other hand, the conversion of the Germanic settlers in England had largely been completed for several centuries before the poem was written, and a Christian tradition is clearly reflected in the poem.

The critical points concerning the epic are, therefore, how the paganism and Christian factors mix together in the narration of the poem, and to what extent that Christian morality finds its influence upon the explanation of the heroic deeds.

2 Social and Cultural Interpretations: Warrior Society, Ancient Hero and Fate

First of all, the poem reveals the relationship in a warrior society that binds together the warrior and his lord. Their relationship is based on mutual trust and respect rather than on subordination. When a warrior vows loyalty to his lord, he becomes not so much his servant as his voluntary companion. In return, the lord is expected to take affectionate care of his thanes and to reward them richly for their valour. This is the historical context *Beowulf* depicts of a Germanic warrior society.

Beowulf, the protagonist, is also a perfect representative of the ancient hero: the embodiment of loyalty, duty, and courage. When Grendel and the dragon are threats to the security of the lands, it is the duty of the king and his companions to put down the evil.

Moreover, ancient people believe this is a world governed by fate and destiny. The belief that fate controls him is a central factor in all of Beowulf's actions. In undertaking to slay Grendel, and later Grendel's mother, Beowulf is testing his relationship with unknowable destiny.

Courage is the instrument by which the hero realises himself, and is the quality that can perhaps influence fate against its natural tendency to doom a hero.

3 Epic: Definition and Characteristics

Epic is a long verse narrative on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style, and centred on a heroic or quasi-divine figure whose actions depend on the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race. *Illiad* and *Odyssey* of the ancient Greece, *Beowulf* of the Old English and *Paradise Lost* by John Milton are among the great epics of the world masterpiece.

The origin of epic is the oral poetic tradition in preliterate societies. In these traditions, poetry is transmitted to the audience from performer to performer by purely oral means.

The structure of an epic is that it usually opens by stating the theme or subject matter of the epic. The poet prays to the Muses to provide him with divine inspiration to tell the story of a great hero. Then the narrative starts in the middle of the story, usually with the hero at his lowest point, and flashbacks show earlier portions of the story.

The specific characteristics of an epic are as follow: The hero is of imposing stature, of national or international importance, and of great historical or legendary significance. The setting is vast, covering many nations, the world or the universe. The action consists of deeds of great valour or requiring superhuman courage. Supernatural forces—gods, angels, demons—interest themselves in the action. A style of sustained elevation is used. The poet retains a measure of objectivity, and the use of the epic simile and repetition is common.

Questions

1 Heroism is one of the major themes in the poem. Which qualities make Beowulf an epic hero? How do you identify a hero?

2 Christian elements and paganism are somewhat mixed in the poem. Read through the poem and find examples of both.

Class Activities

Group Contest:

Step 1 Group division

Divide the class of equal size with seven students per group. One group focuses on the discussion of "Beowulf's fight with Grendel"; the other, "Beowulf's funeral".

Step 2 Role assignment and group discussion

Assign different roles among the group members. Each group respectively needs a discussion leader, a summariser, a line pointer, a connection maker, a vocabulary highlighter, an illustrator, and an investigator.

Role descriptions: The discussion leader begins the discussion, keeps the discussion moving with questions, and makes sure the group members are aware of their role assignments. The summariser sums up and clarifies the important points of the assigned passage. The line pointer notes interesting lines for discussion, and explains why he or she chooses these lines. The connection maker links the passage with real life. For example, in this case, you may want to tell about your understanding of a hero's deeds, which has similarities to the character in the epic. The vocabulary highlighter (the only one who is allowed to use a dictionary during the discussion) notes important words for discussion, and defines each chosen word. The role of an illustrator here is to visually represent something related to the fight or funeral, and to explain the visual representations. The investigator does research on one topic from "study questions and essay topics"[1] to deepen the understanding of the discussion.

(**Note:** It is strongly recommended that the roles rotate in later class discussions so that each student will have equal opportunity to experience each role.)

Step 3 Group presentation

All the members of each group will give a presentation together, explaining their roles and their findings.

QUOTATIONS

Heroism is the divine relation which, in all times, unites a great man to other men.

—Thomas Carlyle

A hero is a man who is afraid to run away.

—English Proverb

Unit 2

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight *is one of the best of the Middle English romances. The poem consists of 2,500 lines and contains four parts. It was written about 1375-1400. The author is unknown, except that he might write the three religious poems, namely,* Pearl, Patience, *and* Purity, *so he is often referred as the Gawain-poet, or the Pearl poet. The four narrative poems are written in a Northwest Midland dialect of the Middle English.*

Deriving from Celtic legend, the romance deals with the exploits of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table. In the story, Sir Gawain, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table, accepts a challenge from a mysterious knight who is completely green.

Background Knowledge: The Norman Period (1066-1350)

1 The Norman Conquest and English Feudal System

In 1066, the English were defeated at the Battle of Hastings, and were conquered by the Normans, led by Duke William. The Normans—the name is actually a form of "Norsemen"—were the descendants of Scandinavian adventurers. At the beginning of the 10th century they had seized a wide part of northern France, adopted the French language and set up a powerful state, Normandy. William became the king of England and insured the succession to his descendants. The Norman Conquest started the medieval period in England (1066-1485).

Feudal system was accordingly established in English society. At the top of it was the king William, who claimed himself the sole owner of the land. Below him were his noblemen such as barons and knights. The former referred to people who received land from the king directly, the latter received land from the barons with the promise that they should be ready to fight when called

upon. The rest of land was possessed by the church, which had political power as well as religious authority. At the bottom of society were serfs, who farmed on the borrowed land.

The first seven kings of England were more interested in their possessions in France than in England; therefore, they were mostly absentee rulers. It was not until the 13th century, when Henry III (1207-1272) came to the throne that England became the principal concern of its kings. By the end of the Middle Ages English monarchs finally gave up trying to make good their continental claims and became purely English.

2 The Middle English[1]

With the coming of the Normans, the Anglo-Saxons sank to a position of abjectness. The English aristocracy was either displaced or forced into service with the invaders. French words began to come into the English language, and thus three languages coexisted in England at that time: Latin, the language of the Roman Catholic Church, holding the status as a language of courtly life; Anglo-Norman French, used in literature and documentation, and most books, including official documents and literary works; English, spoken language of the majority of the common English people.

Owing to the great influence of the Norman Conquest, the 14th century witnessed thousands of words and expressions borrowed from French and Latin and Greek, and many inflectional forms of the words were dropped and formal grammar simplified. The Old English underwent a remarkable change, and the Middle English is proper to describe the new features of the language.

While religious expressions still made the largest proportion of the Middle English literature, and most books dealt with the paraphrasing and retelling of the biblical stories, the secular literature, with varied interest and extensive range, did emerge and demonstrate new trends. The writers of the Middle English literature dealt with a wide range of topics in a great diversity of styles and tones and genres. They addressed themselves to a popular audience, giving an accurate presentation of the details of life. Humour is the chief virtue of the

1 The Middle English is the name given by historical linguistics to the diverse forms of the English language spoken between the Norman invasion of 1066 and the mid-to-late 15th century, when the Chancery English, a form of London-based English, began to become widespread. The Middle English was the spoken language of the majority.

Middle English literature.

The notable Middle English writers are John Wycliff, William Langland, the Gawain Poet, and Geoffrey Chaucer. The best known works are Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and other shorter poems.

3 French Influence and Romance

With the Norman Conquest, the body of customs and ideals known as chivalry were introduced. The knightly code and the romantic interest in love were reflected in the literature. The prevailing form of literature in the feudal England was known as "romance", also called chivalric romance or medieval romance, which is a type of narrative that developed in 12th-century France, spread to the literatures of other countries, and displaced the earlier "epic" and heroic forms. The romance is distinguished from the epic in that it does not represent a heroic age of tribal wars, but a courtly and chivalric age, often one of highly developed manners and civility.

Many medieval romances recount the marvellous adventures of a chivalrous, heroic knight, often of super human ability, who, abiding by chivalry's strict codes of honour and demeanour, goes on a quest, and fights and defeats monsters and giants, thereby winning favour with a lady. The story of the medieval romance focuses not upon love and sentiment, but upon adventure. The first romances heavily drew on the legends and fairy tales to supply their characters with marvelous powers.

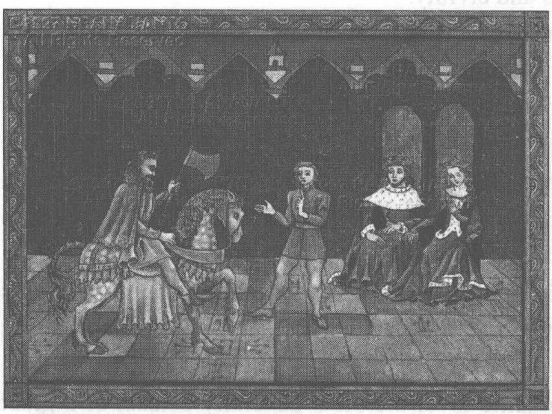
The romance has certain typical features: It generally concerns knights and involves a large amount of fighting as well as a number of miscellaneous adventures; it makes liberal use of the improbable, often of the supernatural; it is often involved with romantic love; the plots generally consist of a great number of events; the style is easy and colloquial. Love, chivalry and religion make the main content of romance.

The romance can be divided into four types of subject matters: (1) The Matter of Britain: Celtic subject matter, especially stories centring on the court of King Arthur, such as those of Sir Gawain, Sir Perceval and the quest for the Holy Grail; (2) The Matter of Rome: the history and legends of classical antiquity, including the exploits of Alexander the Great and of the heroes of Trojan War. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* belongs to this type; (3) The Matter of France: Charlemagne and his knights, a French national hero in the eighth century, the most famous works being *Chanson de Roland*; (4) The Matter of England: heroes such as King Horn and Guy of Warwick.

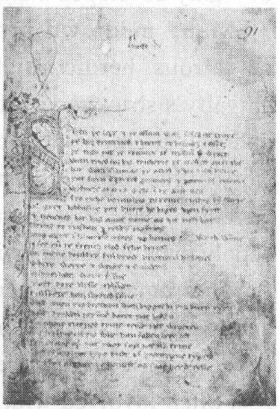
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight ingeniously combines two plots: the beheading contest between Sir Gawain and the Green Knight with an exchange of blows with a sword or ax, and the temptation of the hero by a lady. Gawain's struggle to meet the appointment, and the adventures involved in that, cause this work to be classified as a part of Arthurian legend involving themes of chivalry and loyalty.

The poem starts on New Year's day, when King Arthur is holding a feast with his knights at Camelot, a tall knight in green, riding on a green horse, enters the banquet hall and challenges the bravest knight present to a beheading contest, that is, he exposes his neck to a blow of his riual's big battle-ax, and any knight is to receive a similar blow from him a year later. Sir Gawain accepts the challenge. The Knight picks up his head and mounts his horse, warning Gawain to keep his promise.



Sir Gawain and the Green knight



The original Sir Gawain manuscript

Part two is a description of Sir Gawain's departure form Arthur's court and his long journey through the wilderness, seeking for the Green Chapel. On Christmas eve when he offers a prayer to "Mary, mildest mother so dear" in the midst of a vast forest, he sees a great castle. He is well entertained by the lord of the castle and his wife. The lord is an aged hero, and his wife appears the most beautiful woman Gawain has ever seen.

Part three shows the life in the castle during the next three days. The knight and the host reach an agreement that at night they exchange whatever good things they gain during the day. On the first day the host kills many deer,

and the young woman tries in vain to induce Gawain but ends with a kiss as a token of his chivalry. At night the host gives his guest what he kills and Gawain returns the kiss. On the second day the host kills a boar while the lady kisses him twice. On the third day, the host hunts a fox, and the lady kisses the knight three times and offers him a ring. The knight remains unyielding to the temptation. The lady, then, gives him a green girdle that can preserve the wearer from death. When the host comes back Gawain returns the kisses but mentions nothing about the green girdle.

In the last part Gawain reaches the Green Chapel. The Green Knight appears. For the first two times the Green Knight's new ax swings with little harm, but the third time it falls on Gawain's shoulder and blood flows. The Green Knight reveals himself as the lord of the castle and explains that the first two swings of the ax were harmless because Gawain was true in returning what he gained for the first two days. The last blow wounded him because he concealed the girdle. Gawain throws back the girdle and curses his own cowardice and deception, but the Green Knight thinks he has already atoned and gives him the green girdle as a gift. Gawain returns to Arthur's court and tells the whole story frankly. All the knights of the Round Table wear a green girdle in his honour ever since.

Theme and Artistic Features

The poem is a vivid portrayal of the hero Gawain as a man wholly dedicated to Christian ideals, who successfully maintains those ideals when he is subjected to unusual pressures. The poem is a rare combination of manners and a profoundly Christian view of character and its destiny. The court of King Arthur is presented as the place where the ideal of chivalry has reached its zenith, where all is courtesy and martial prowess in defence of the right.

Sir Gawain is not only a song for courage but also a praise for truth. Sir Gawain's coat of arms, displayed on his shield, is a five-pointed star called the pentangle, which is a symbol of truth. Truth is the first of the chivalric virtues, a quality even more than martial courage. Truth is to be tested in Gawain's quest to seek out the Green Chapel, and tested in the bedroom of a magical castle in the wilderness until he finally encounters the Green Knight.

The poem is universally admired for its elegance of the construction of the narrative, as well as the vivid language of the poem. The alliterative line preserves the essential feature of Old English verse, but it is longer and does not observe all the rules governing alliteration and stress. The poem is written in a unique stanza combining alliteration and rhyme. A group of long

alliterative lines concludes with a word or phrase of two syllables—the "bob", and is followed by a quatrain—the "wheel", rhyming *ababa* with the "bob".

Part I

Yet had he no helm[1], nor hauberk[2] neither,
Nor plate, nor appurtenance[3] appending to arms,
Nor shaft pointed sharp, nor shield for defense,
But in his one hand a holy bob[4]
That is goodliest[5] in green when groves are bare,
And an ax in his other, a huge and immense,
A wicked piece of work[6] in words to expound:
The head on its haft was an ell long;[7]
The spike of green steel, resplendent with gold[8];
The blade burnished bright, with a broad edge,
As well shaped to shear as a sharp razor;
Stout was the stave in the strong man's gripe,
That was wound all with iron to the weapon's end,
With engravings in green of goodliest work.[9]
A lace lightly about, that led to a knot,
Was looped in by lengths along the fair haft,
And tassels thereto attached in a row,
With buttons of bright green, brave to behold.

1 helm: helmet, a strong hard hat worn for protection.
2 hauberk: a medieval coat of armour, usually of chain mail, also used for protection.
3 appurtenance: apparatus or accessories. The Green Knight wears no battle-gear.
4 a holy bob: a branch carried in the hand as a sign of peace. the Green Knight carries the sign of peace in one hand, while holds a huge and immense ax in the other for fight. He comes here for peace, and also as a mysterious figure to challenge.
5 goodliest (goodly, goodlier): pleasant in appearance or good in quality.
6 A wicked piece of work: an evil battle-ax.
7 The head on its haft was an ell long: the head of the ax is as long as an ell, which is an old measurement unit equal to 45 inches, approximately an arm's length.
8 resplendent with gold: bright and shining with gold.
9 Stout was the stave in the strong man's gripe, ... in green of goodliest work: the strong man (the Green Knight) gripped the ax by the handle, which consisted of a strong staff bound with iron to the end of the shaft and engraved all over with pleasing designs in green. the stave: the staff of the ax.

This horseman hurtles in, and the hall enters;
Riding to the high dais, recked he no danger;
Not a greeting he gave as the guests he o'erlooked,
Nor wasted his words, but "Where is," he said,
"The captain of this crowd[1]? Keenly I wish
to see that sire with sight, and to himself say
my say."
He swaggered all about
To scan that host so gay;
He halted, as if in doubt
Who in that hall held sway[2].

There were stares on all sides as the stranger spoke,
For much did they marvel what it might mean
That a horseman and a horse should have such a hue,
Grow green as the grass, and greener, it seemed,
Than green fused on gold more glorious by far.
All the onlookers eyed him, and edged nearer,
And awaited in wonder what he would do,
For many sights had they seen, but such a one never,
So that phantom and faerie the folk there deemed it,
Therefore chary of answer was many a champion bold,
And stunned at his strong words stone-still they sat
In a swooning silence in the stately hall.
As all were slipped into sleep, so slackened their speech
apace.[3]
Not all, I think, for dread,
But some of courteous grace
Let him who was their head
Be spokesman in that place.

1 The captain of this crowd: King Arthur.
2 hold sway: have great power, influence or control.
3 So that phantom and faerie the folk there deemed it, ..., so slackened their speech apace: the whole court thought the Green Knight was a fantasy or a fairy character since none of them had ever seen such a strange figure before. All present were in awe and complete silence as if they had fallen asleep and could not speak.

Then Arthur before the high dais that entrance beholds,
And hailed him, as behooved, for he had no fear,
And said "Fellow, in faith you have found fair welcome;
The head of this hostelry Arthur am I;
Leap lightly down, and linger, I pray,
And the tale of your intent you shall tell us after."
"Nay, so help me," said the other, "He that on high sits,
To tarry here any time, 'twas not mine errand;
But as the praise of you, prince, is puffed up so high[1],
And your court and your company are counted the best,
Stoutest under steel-gear on steeds to ride,
Worthiest of their works the wide world over,
And peerless to prove in passages of arms,
And courtesy here is carried to its height,
And so at this season I have sought you out.
You may be certain by the branch that I bear in hand
That I pass here in peace, and would part friends,
For had I come to this court on combat bent,
I have a hauberk at home, and a helm beside,
A shield and a sharp spear, shining bright,
And other weapons to wield, I ween[2] well, to boot,
But as I willed no war, I wore no metal.
But if you be so bold as all men believe,
You will graciously grant the game that I ask
by right."
Arthur answer gave
And said, "Sir courteous knight,
If contest hare you crave,
You shall not fail to fight."

"Nay, to fight, in good faith, is far from my thought;
There are about on these benches but beardless children,[3]
Where I here in full arms on a haughty steed,

1 puffed up so high: too proud of himself, or too self-important.
2 I ween: I think, or I believe.
3 There are about on these benches but beardless children: they are too young and inexperienced and not worthy of fighting.

For measured against mine, their might is puny.
And so I call this court for a Christmas game[1],
For 'tis Yule[2] and New Year, and many young bloods about;
If any in this house such hardihood claims,
Be so bold in his blood, his brain so wild,
As stoutly to strike one stroke for another,
I shall give him as my gift this gisarme[3] noble,
This ax, that is heavy enough, to handle as he likes,
And I shall bide the first blow, as bare as I sit.
If there be one so willful my words to assay,[4]
Let him leap hither lightly, lay hold of this weapon;
I quitclaim it forever, keep it as his own,
And I shall stand him a stroke, steady on this floor,
So you grant me the guerdon[5] to give him another,
sans[6] blame.
In a twelvemonth and a day[7]
He shall have of me the game;
Now be it seen straightway
Who dares take up the game."

If he astonished them at first, stiller were then
All that household in hall, the high and the low;
The stranger on his green steed stirred in the saddle,
And roisterously his red eyes he rolled all about,
Bent his bristling brows, that were bright green,
Wagged his beard[8] as he watched who would arise.

1 I call this court for a Christmas game: I come here to amuse all with a Christmas game. He regards the beheading (action that he will have his head chopped off) as a Christmas game.
2 Yule (also as Yuletide): Christmas.
3 this gisarme: the medieval battle-ax.
4 If there be one so willful my words to assay: if anyone should be so daring to test my words.
5 guerdon: reward.
6 sans: without.
7 In a twelvemonth and a day: until the same day the next year. Here it refers to the next January 1. The twelvemonth is from January 1 to December 31, the Knight mentions an extra day to make it clear the appointment expires on the following day.
8 Wagged his beard: turned his head around.

When the court kept its counsel he coughed aloud,
And cleared his throat coolly, the clearer to speak:
"What, is this Arthur's house," said that horseman then,
"Whose fame is so fair in far realms and wide?
Where is now your arrogance and your awesome deeds,
Your valor and your victories and your vaunting words?
Now are the revel and renown of the Round Table
Overwhelmed with a word of one man's speech,
For all cower and quake, and no cut felt!"
With this he laughs so loud that the lord grieved[1];
The blood for sheer shame shot to his face,
and pride.
With rage his face flushed red,
And so did all beside.
Then the king as bold man bred[2]
Toward the stranger took a stride.

And said "Sir, now we see you will say but folly,
Which whoso has sought, it suits that he find.
No guest here is aghast of your great words.
Give to me your gisarme, in God's own name,
And the boon[3] you have begged shall straight be granted."
He leaps to him lightly, lays hold of his weapon;
The green fellow on foot fiercely alights.
Now has Arthur his ax, and the haft grips,
And sternly stirs it about, on striking bent.
The stranger before him stood there erect,
Higher than any in the house by a head and more;
With stern look as he stood, he stroked his beard,
And with undaunted countenance drew down his coat,
No more moved nor dismayed for his mighty dints
Than any bold man on bench had brought him a drink
of wine.
Gawain by Guenevere

1 the lord grieved: King Arthur was offended.
2 as bold man bred: like the brave man by nature.
3 boon: favour.

Toward the king doth now incline:
"I beseech, before all here,
That this melee[1] may be mine."

"Would you grant me the grace," said Gawain to his king,
"To be gone from this bench and stand by you there,
If I without discourtesy might quit this board,
And if I my liege lady[2] misliked it not,
I would come to your counsel before your court noble.
For I find it not fit, as in faith it is known,
When such a boon is begged before all these knights,
Though you be tempted thereto, to take it on yourself
While so bold men about upon benches sit,
That no host under heaven is hardier of will,
Nor better brothers-in-arms where battle is joined;
I am the weakest, well I know, and of wit feeblest;
And the loss of my life would be least of any;
That I have you for uncle is my only praise;
My body, but for your blood, is barren of worth;
And for that this folly befits not a king,
And 'tis I that have asked it, it ought to be mine,
And if my claim be not comely let all this court judge[3]
in sight."
The court assays the claim,
And in counsel all unite
To give Gawain the game
And release the king outright.

Then the king called the knight to come to his side,
And he rose up readily, and reached him with speed,
Bows low to his lord, lays hold of the weapon,
And he releases it lightly, and lifts up his hand,
And gives him God's blessing, and graciously prays

1 melee: the beheading game proposed by the Green Knight.
2 my liege lady: the Queen.
3 if my claim be not comely let all this court judge: if I speak unfittingly, let all this court decide.

That his heart and his hand may be hardy both.
"Keep, cousin," said the king, "what you cut with this day,
and if you rule it aright, then readily, I know,
you shall stand the stroke it will strike after."[1]
Gawain goes to the guest with gisarme in hand,
And boldly he bides there, abashed not a whit[2].
Then hails he Sir Gawain, the horseman in green:
"Recount we our contract, ere you come further.
First I ask and adjure you, how you are called
That you tell me true, so that trust it I may."
"In good faith," said the good knight, "Gawain am I
Whose buffet befalls you, what'er betide[3] after,
And at this time twelvemonth take from you another
With what weapon you will, and with no man else
alive."
The other nods assent:
"Sir Gawain, as I may thrive,
I am wonderous well content
That you this dint shall drive."

"Sir Gawain," said the Green Knight, "By God, I rejoice
That your fist shall fetch this favour I seek,
And you have readily rehearsed, and in right terms,
Each clause of my covenant[4] with the king your lord,
Save that you shall assure me, sir, upon oath,
That you shall seek me yourself, wheresoever you deem
My lodgings may lie, and look for such wages[5]
As you have offered me here before all this host."
"What is the way there?" said Gawain. "Where do you dwell?
I heard never of your house, by Him that made me,

1 "Keep, cousin ... you shall stand the stroke it will strike after": if you deal with him right, and cut his head off, you will stand the blow afterwards, because he will be dead then, and you do not need to stand it.
2 abashed not a whit: not slightly embarrassed.
3 betide: happen, especially by fate.
4 covenant: formal agreement.
5 wages (usually in plural form): reward.

Nor I know you not, knight, your name nor your court.
But tell me truly thereof, and teach me your name,
And I shall fare forth to find you, so far as I may,
And this I say in good certain, and swear upon oath."
"That is enough in New Year, you need say no more,"
Said the knight in the green to Gawain the noble,
"If I tell you true, when I have taken your knock,
And if you handily have hit, you shall hear straightway
Of my house and my home and my own name;
Then follow in my footsteps by faithful accord.
And if I spend no speech, you shall speed the better:
You can feast with your friends, nor further trace
my tracks.
Now hold your grim tool steady
And show us how it hacks."
"Gladly, sir, all ready,"
Says Gawain; he strokes the ax.

The Green Knight upon ground girds him with care[1]:
Bows a bit with his head, and bares his flesh:
His long lovely locks he laid over his crown,
Let the naked nape for the need be shown.
Gawain grips to his ax and gathers it aloft—
The left foot on the floor before him he set—
Brought it down deftly upon the bare neck,
That the shock of the sharp blow shivered the bones
And cut the flesh cleanly and clove it in twain[2],
That the blade of bright steel bit into the ground.
The head was hewn off and fell to the floor;
Many found it at their feet, as forth it rolled;
The blood gushed from the body, bright on the green,
Yet fell not the fellow, nor faltered a whit,
But stoutly he starts forth upon stiff shanks,
And as all stood staring he stretched forth his hand,

1 girds him with care: prepared himself carefully.
2 clove it in twain: divided or cut into two.

Laid hold of his head and heaved it aloft,
Then goes to the green steed, grasps the bridle,
Steps into the stirrup, bestrides his mount[1],
And his head by the hair in his hand holds,
And as steady he sits in the stately saddle
As he met with no mishap, nor missing were
his head.
His bulk about he haled,[2]
That fearsome body that bled;
There were many in the court that quailed[3]
Before all his say was said.

For the head in his hand he holds right up;
Toward the first on the dais directs he the face,
And it lifted up its lids, and looked with wide eyes,
And said as much with its mouth as now you may hear:
"Sir Gawain, forget not to go as agreed,
And cease not to seek till me, sir, you find,
As you promised in the presence of these proud knights.
To the Green Chapel come, I charge you, to take
Such a dint as you have dealt—you have well deserved
That your neck should have a knock on New Year's morn.
The Knight of the Green Chapel I am well-known to many,
Wherefore you cannot fail to find me at last;
Therefore come, or be counted a recreant[4] knight."
With a roisterous rush he flings round the reins,
Hurtles out at the hall-door, his head in his hand,
That the flint-fire flew from the flashing hooves.
Which way he went, not one of them knew
Nor whence he was come in the wide world
so fair.
That king and Gawain gay

1 bestrides his mount: rides on his horse.
2 His bulk about he haled: he pulled his body about. bulk: body; hale: pull or compel to go.
3 There were many in the court that quailed: many felt terrified.
4 recreant: coward.

Make game of the Green Knight there,
Yet all who saw it say
'Twas a wonder past compare.

Thought high-born Arthur at heart had wonder,
He let no sign be seen, but said aloud
To the comely queen, with courteous speech,
"Dear dame, on this day dismay you no whit;
Such crafts are becoming at Christmastide,
Laughing at interludes, light songs and mirth,
Amid dancing of damsels with doughty knights.
Nevertheless of my meat now let me partake,
For I have met with a marvel, I may not deny."
He glanced at Sir Gawain, and gaily he said,
"Now, sir, hang up your ax, that has hewn enough,"
And over the high dais it was hung on the wall
That men in amazement might on it look,
And tell in true terms the tale of the wonder.
Then they turned toward the table, these two together,
The good king and Gawain, and made great feast,
With all dainties double, dishes rare,
With all manners of meat and minstrelsy both,
Such happiness wholly had they that day
in hold.
Now take care, Sir Gawain,
That your courage wax not cold[1]
When you must turn again
To your enterprise foretold.

Critical Points

1 Symbolic Interpretation: Ambiguous Colour "Green"

Alongside its advanced plot and rich language, the symbolism of the

1 That your courage wax not cold: you do not shrink because of the danger from making trial of this exploit that you have taken.

poem is a chief interest in the critical and historical worlds. Everything, from the Green Knight, to the beheading game, to the girdle given to Gawain as a protection from the axe, to the symbols on his shield, is richly symbolic and steeped in Celtic, Germanic, and other historical cultures and folklores.

In English folklore and literature, the colour green has traditionally been used to symbolise nature and its embodied attributes, namely those of fertility and rebirth. Stories of the medieval period portray it as representing love and the amorous in life, and the basic, natural desires of man. Green is also known to have signified witchcraft, devilry and evil for its association with the faeries and spirits of early English folklore and for its association with decay and toxicity. The colour, when combined with gold, is also seen as representing the fading away of youth. In the Celtic tradition, green was avoided in clothing for its superstitious association with misfortune and death.

The green girdle too, originally worn for protection, is later worn as a symbol of shame and cowardice and is finally adopted as a symbol of honour by the knights of Camelot, signifying a transformation from good to evil and back, again displaying both the spoiling and regenerative connotations of the colour green.

The motif of the Green Knight's decapitation originates in a vegetation myth in which the beheading would have been a ritual death that insured the return of spring to the earth and the regrowth of the crops. One possible interpretation of the Green Knight is to view him as a fusion of the two deities, representing both life and death and good and evil as self-proliferating cycles.

Given the varied and even contradictory interpretations of the colour green, its precise meaning in the poem remains ambiguous.

2 Relation of Literary Genres: Romance and Later "Romantic Fiction"

In later romances, particularly those of French origin, there is a marked tendency to emphasise themes of courtly love, such as faithfulness in adversity. From the 19th century the connotations of "romance" moved from fantastic and eerie, somewhat Gothic adventure narratives to novels centred on the episodic development of a courtship that ends in marriage. With a female protagonist, during the rise of Romanticism the depiction of the course of such a courtship within contemporary conventions of the real world, the female equivalent of the "novel of education", informs much Romantic fiction.

Despite the popularity of this meaning of romance, other works are still,

occasionally, referred to as romances because of their uses of other elements descending from the medieval romance, or from the Romantic Movement: larger-than-life heroes and heroines, drama and adventure, marvels that may become fantastic, themes of honour and loyalty, or fairy-tale-like stories and story settings. Shakespeare's later comedies, such as *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* are sometimes called romances.

Questions

1 How is the colour symbolism used in the poem? How do you know the Green Knight is completely green?
2 Compare and contrast the heroic characteristics of the Green Knight and Beowulf, and illustrate in which ways an epic hero during the Anglo-Saxon period is different from a romance hero in the Middle English age.

Class Activities

Reading and Acting:

Assign the roles among students, and simply read the lines by different roles as King Arthur, Sir Gawain, and the Green Knight.

Or: Adapt Part I for a play, and act it out.

QUOTATIONS

> The hero of romance moves in a world in which the ordinary laws of nature are slightly suspended: Prodigies of courage and endurance, unnatural to us, are natural to him, and enchanted weapons, talking animals, terrifying ogres and witches, and talismans of miraculous power violate no rule of probability... Romance divides into two main forms: a secular form dealing with chivalry and knight-errantry, and a religious form devoted to legends of saints. Both lean heavily on miraculous violations of natural law for their interest as stories.
>
> —Northrop Frye

Unit 3

Ballads

A ballad *is a poem usually set to music; thus, it often is a story told in a song. Any myth form may be told as a ballad, such as historical accounts or fairy tales in verse form. It usually has foreshortened, alternating four-stress lines ("ballad metre") and simple repeating rhymes, often with a refrain. If it is based on a political or religious theme, a ballad may be a hymn.*

Background Knowledge: The 15th Century (1400-1485)

1 The Hundred Years' War

England in the following centuries experienced endless wars. The Hundred Years' War was a series of related conflicts between the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of France, and later Burgundy. It began in 1337, and ended in 1453, fighting over a 116-year period. The famous poet Chaucer was once in the war. In 1415 British King Henry V (1413-1422) defeated the French troops and claimed himself the heir to the French throne. During the reign of King Henry VI, French people won several victories under the leadership of the national heroine Joan

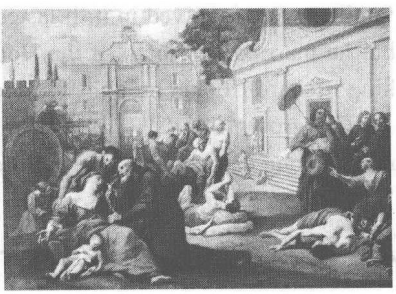
Joan of Arc

of Arc[1]. Some 24 years after the heroine's sacrifice, the English were driven out of France.

The war owes its historical significance to a number of factors such as the introduction of new weapons and tactics which eroded the older system of feudal armies dominated by heavy cavalry, changes in the roles of nobles and peasants, and over-all key developments in the early growth of nations and new monarchies.

2 The Plague

From 1347 to 1352, the plague, mainly "the Black Death" or bubonic plague, devastated European society, initially killing 25 million people—a third of the total population. Smaller outbreaks of plague continued until 1600 or so. In 1556-1560 a bout of plague reduced the English population by six percent. In the late 15th-16th centuries there was an immense overall population increase. By 1500, England had recovered from the plague and the population was about 5 million again, as it was in 1300.



The Black Death
A 19th-century painting depicts the agony of plague victims. The Black Death of the 1340s, the worst outbreak of plague in history, decimated Europe's population.

3 The War of the Roses (1455-1485)

The country was then under the Tudor sovereigns, extending from 1485

1 Joan of Arc (1412-1431) is a French national heroine during the Hundred Years' War. She stated that she received visions from God, through which she helped inspire Charles VII's troops to retake most of his dynasty's former territories. But, unfortunately, a politically motivated trial by the English convicted her of heresy. She was burnt at the stake in Rouen. She died at the age of 19. She was made a saint of the Roman Catholic Church in 1920.
Joan of Arc has remained an important figure in Western culture. Major writers and composers, including German poet Friedrich Schiller, Russian composer Tchaikovsky, American writer Mark Twain, and British dramatist George Bernard Shaw, have created works about her, and depictions of her continue to be prevalent in film, television, and song.

to 1603. Three generations of the Tudors came to English throne during the period, Henry VII (1485-1509), Henry VIII (1509-1547) and his three successors Edward VI (1547-1553), Mary (1553-1558), and Elizabeth (1558-1603).

The first Tudor monarch is the Henry VII. He defeated Richard III at Bosworth field, made an end to the War of the Roses (1455-1485), which was a series of civil wars fought between the two great families, the Duke of York and the Duke of Lancaster, both claiming the right to the English throne. Because the House of Lancaster had a red rose as its emblem and the House of York had a white rose as its emblem, the war was thus named. Almost all noble families were involved in it. It lasted for 30 years. Henry VII was Lancastrian, but he married Elizabeth of the House of York, who was niece of the Yorkist king Richard III, and brought compromise between the two families.

The crowning of Henry VII ended the domestic unrest, and imposed a much strong central authority and order upon the nation.

4 The Discovery of America and New Sea Routes

During the reign of Henry VII, Christopher Columbus, an Italian explorer, with the belief that he could reach India by sailing west, crossed the Atlantic Ocean and reached the Caribbean on 12 October 1492. His voyage marked the beginning of European exploration and colonisation of the Americas. A few years later Vasco da Gama[1] reached India by sailing around the Cape of Good Hope.

The English responded quickly and followed their steps. In 1497, five years after Columbus' discovery of the Caribbean, John Cabot[2] and his crew discovered the North American mainland. King Henry VII gave a grant to go on "full and free authority, leave, and power, to sail to all parts, countries, and seas of the East, of the West, and of the North, under our banners and ensigns, with five ships...and as many mariners or men as they will have in the said ships, upon their own proper costs and charges, to seek out, discover, and find, whatsoever

1 Vasco da Gama (1469-1524) was a Portuguese explorer, and the first person to sail directly from Europe to India.

2 John Cabot (c.1450-c.1499) was an Italian navigator and explorer. He went to Bristol, the second largest seaport in England then, to make the preparations for his voyage, so his explorations were made under the English flag. Cabot was commonly credited as the first early modern European to discover the North American mainland in 1497.

isles, countries, regions or provinces of the heathen and infidels, whatsoever they be, and in what part of the world soever they be, which before this time have been unknown to all Christians". Back in England, Cabot was made an admiral, rewarded with £10 and a patent was written for a new voyage.

The voyages provided the basis for the English claim to North America and other parts of the world in the next century.

5 The Enclosure Movement

The Enclosure in England began in the 12th century and proceeded rapidly from 1450 to 1640; the process was not virtually complete until the end of the 19th century.

In English economic history, the Enclosure Movement was the name given to the process by which farming in open field systems was ended. Before the Enclosure, farmland was under the control of individual cultivators only during the growing season; after harvest and before the next growing season, the land was used by the community for the grazing of livestock and other purposes. The Enclosure Movement permitted grazing on a larger scale, and the agrarian poor were driven off the land to the cities. The village common land now became "enclosed" as private property.

6 Reformation of the Church

During the reign of Henry VIII, a most influential event was the Reformation of the Church. Henry's motives for the break with Rome were dynastic, not religious: he needed a legitimate son; his queen, Catherine of Aragon, who had borne only one daughter, could not give him one. He was unable to obtain the divorce permission from Rome after long negotiations. In 1534, he passed the Act of Supremacy through parliament, and declared himself Supreme Head of the English Church, thus negating the claim of the Pope in Rome as the supreme power on earth.

After England separated from Rome, Henry VIII authorised a vernacular translation of the Bible, *The Great Bible*, making the Bible available in English to anyone who could read.

7 Popular Ballads

The art of printing had been introduced to England about a decade before

Henry VII won his throne. Printing made books cheaper and more plentiful, and more people could read. Literacy increased during the 15th century. Folk literature, especially ballads, became an important feature in the field of literature.

A ballad is a narrative poem that tells a story. Any forms of story can be told as a ballad, ranging from accounts of historical events to fairy tales in verse form. A ballad is usually meant to be sung or recited in musical form. If it is based on political or religious themes, a ballad may then be a version of a hymn.

The traditional poetic form of ballad has the following features: normally a short narrative arranged into four line stanzas with a memorable metre. A typical ballad metre is a first and third line with four stresses (iambic tetrameter) and then a second and fourth line with three stresses (iambic trimeter). The rhyme scheme is typically *abab* or *abcb*. It often uses colloquialisms to enhance the story telling, and sometimes to alter the rhyme scheme.

Broadsheet ballads (also known as broadside ballads) were cheaply printed and hawked in English streets from the 16th century. They were often topical, humourous, and even subversive; the legends of Robin Hood were disseminated through broadsheet ballads.

The English and Scottish ballads preserved today are mostly the 15th-century ballads. Of special significance are the Robin Hood ballads that tell the famous outlaw Robin Hood and his men and their activities.

Sir Patrick Spens

"Sir Patrick Spens" is one of the most popular of Child Ballads[1], and is primarily of Scottish origin.

The events of the ballad are similar to an actual event: in the reign of Alexander III of Scotland, his daughter Margaret was escorted by a large party of nobles to Norway for her marriage to King Eric; on the return journey many

1 The Child Ballads are a collection of 305 ballads from England and Scotland, and their American variants, collected by Francis James Child in the late 19th century, 38 separate Robin Hood ballads (and variant versions of them) being included. Francis J. Child (1825-1896): a professor of English at Harvard, important for his systematic study, collecting, and cataloguing of folk ballads. Child's five-volume work, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898), is considered by many as the "canon" of folk music, which is far more comprehensive than any previous collection of ballads in English.

of them were drowned. Twenty years later, after Alexander's death, his granddaughter Margaret, the Maid of Norway, was heiress to the Scottish throne, and on the voyage across the North Sea in 1290, the princess, who was merely seven years old at the time, died on the crossing. Many of the ships sent to fetch her are said to have foundered and perished.

The ballad combines two incidents. The King of Scotland has called for the greatest sailor in the land to command a ship for a royal errand. The name "Sir Patrick Spens" is mentioned by a courtier, and the king despatches a letter. Sir Patrick, though honoured to receive a royal commission, is dismayed at being put to sea in winter, clearly realising this voyage could well be his last.

The king sits in Dumferline town[1],
Drinking the blude-reid[2] wine:
"O whar[3] will I get guid[4] sailor,
To sail this ship of mine?"

Up and spak[5] an eldern knicht[6],
Sat at the king's richt knee:[7]
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That sails upon the sea."

The king has written a braid letter[8],
And signed it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick read,
A loud lauch[9] lauched he;

1 Dumferline town: a town in Scotland, an early favourite residence of the Scottish kings.
2 blude-reid: blood-red.
3 whar: where.
4 guid: good.
5 spak: spoke.
6 an eldern knicht: an old knight.
7 Sat at the king's richt knee: sat on the king's right hand, a seat of honour.
8 a braid letter: a full, long letter.
9 lauch: laugh.

The next line that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blinded his ee[1].

"O wha[2] is this has don this deed,
This ill deed done to me,
To send me out this time o' the year,
To sail upon the sea?

"Make haste, make haste, my mirry[3] men all,
Our guid ship sails the morn."
"O say na sae[4], my master dear,
For I fear a deadly storm.

"Late late yestre'en[5] I saw the new moon,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm,[6]
And I fear, I fear, my dear master,
That we will come to harm."

O our Scots nobles were richt laith
To weet their cork-heeled shoon,[7]
But lang owre a' the play were played[8],
Their hats they swam aboon.[9]

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,

1 ee: eye.
2 wha: who.
3 mirry: merry.
4 say na sae: do not say so.
5 yestre'en: yesterday evening.
6 This saying is a popular belief in Scotland, that to see the crescent moon with the remainder of the disk faintly illuminated by reflected light from the earth is a sign of storm. According to Child, the ill-omen was the sight of the new moon late yestre'en. auld: old.
7 laith/To weet their cork-heeled shoon: loath to wet their cork-heeled shoes. laith: loath; weet: wet; shoon: shoes.
8 lang owre a' the play were played: long before the whole game was over.
9 Their hats they swam aboon: their hats were floating on the water; they were in over their heads. aboon: above.

Or e'er they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the land.

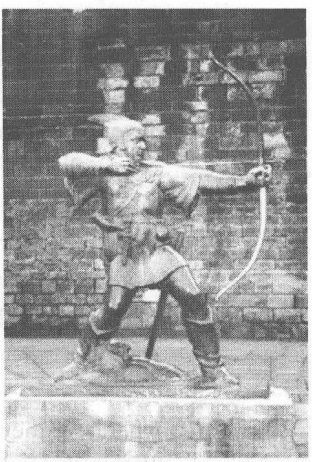
O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi' their gold kems[1] in their hair,
Waiting for their ain[2] dear lords,
For they'll see thame na mair[3].

Half o'er, half o'er to Aberdour[4],
It's fifty fadom[5] deep,
And their lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires

This is one of Robin Hood's most famous exploits. The essence of the ballad is that Robin disguises himself to rescue wrongfully condemned men. Robin meets an old woman lamenting that her sons will be hanged for poaching the king's deer. He persuades an old man to trade his ragged clothing for Robin's fine clothes, and in this disguise, offers to be the sheriff's hangman. In the last stanza, the sheriff is hanged.

The rhyme of the ballad is accurate, and the diction is colloquial and direct. There is a good deal of repetition with change (lines 13-20, 37-48) as well as a good deal of rhetorical repetition (lines 73-74, 77-79, 89-92), both of which suggest an oral context of some kind.



Robin Hood memorial statue in Nottingham

1 kems: combs.
2 ain: own.
3 see thame na mair: see them no more.
4 half o'er to Aberdour: halfway over to Aberdeen, a city in the north of Scotland.
5 fadom: fathoms.

There are twelve months in all the year,
As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year
Is the merry month of May.[1]

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,[2]
And there he met a silly[3] old woman,
Was weeping on the way.

"What news? what news, thou silly old woman?
What news hast thou for me?"
Said she, "There's three squires in Nottingham town
Today is condemned to dee[4]."

"O have they parishes burnt?" he said,
"Or have they ministers[5] slain?
Or have they robbed any virgin,
Nor with other men's wives have lain?"

"They have no parishes burnt, good sir,
Nor yet have ministers slain,
Nor have they robbed any virgin,
Nor with other men's wives have lain."

"O what have they done?" said bold Robin Hood,
"I pray thee tell to me."
"It's for slaying of the king's fallow deer,

Robin Hood text
Title page of "A Gest of Robyn Hode" (1510-1515) in *The Chepman and Myllar Prints*, pp.197-220. One of the earliest surviving Robin Hood texts. The trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

1 The first stanza serves as a chorus, referring to the late May connections of Robin Hood activities.
2 *With a link a down and a day*: this is a refrain, sung by the audience together with the ballad singer.
3 silly: the word here has resonances of its meaning as simple, blessed, in modern British English, "poor".
4 to dee: to die.
5 ministers: clergymen.

Bearing their long bows with thee.[1]"

"Dost thou not mind,[2] old woman," he said,
"Since thou made me sup and dine?
By the truth of my body," quoth[3] bold Robin Hood,
"You could not tell it in better time."

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met with a silly old palmer[4],
Was walking along the highway.

"What news? what news, thou silly old man?
What news, I do thee pray?"
Said he, "Three squires[5] in Nottingham town
Are condemned to die this day."

"Come change thy apparel with me, old man,
Come change thy apparel for mine;
Here is forty shillings in good silver[6],
Go drink it in beer or wine."

"O thine apparel is good," he said,
"And mine is ragged and torn;
Wherever you go, wherever you ride,
Laugh ne'er an old man to scorn"[7].

"Come change thy apparel with me, old churl[8],
Come change thy apparel with mine;

1 Bearing their long bows with thee: being your men with long bows.
2 Dost thou not mind: don't you remember.
3 quoth: said.
4 palmer: a pilgrim who has been to Jerusalem and so wears either a palm leaf or a badge representing a palm.
5 The three squires are associates of Robin and his band.
6 forty shillings in good silver: a very substantial sum equivalent to many days' work.
7 Laugh ne'er an old man to scorn: never scorn an old man.
8 old churl: old fellow.

Here are twenty pieces of good broad gold,
Go feast thy brethren with wine."

Then he put on the old man's hat,
It stood full high on the crown:
"The first bold bargain that I come at,
It shall make thee[1] come down."

Then he put on the old man's cloak,
Was patched black, blue and red;
He thought no shame all the day long
To wear the bags of bread[2].

Then he put on the old man's breeks[3],
Was patched from ballup[4] to side;
"By the truth of my body," bold Robin can say,
"This man loved little pride."

Then he put on the old man's hose[5],
Were patched from knee to wrist;
"By the truth of my body," said bold Robin Hood,
"I'd laugh if I had any list[6]."

Then he put on the old man's shoes,
Were patched both beneath and aboon;
Then Robin Hood swore a solemn oath,
"It's good habit that makes a man."[7]
Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a down,

1 thee: the hat.
2 bags of bread: the torn, patched cloak looks like bags to contain bread.
3 breeks: (*Scottish use*) breeches.
4 ballup: centre.
5 hose: a covering for the leg and feet.
6 had any list: had any desire.
7 habit: clothing. The authenticity and pretence of the hero's identification makes a recurring theme in the tradition, which can be taken as the disguise motif.

And there he met with the proud sheriff,
Was walking along the town.

"O save, O save, O sheriff," he said,
"O save, and you may see!
And what will you give to a silly old man
To-day will your hangman be?" [1]

"Some suits, some suits," the sheriff he said,
"Some suits, I'll give to thee;
Some suits, some suits, and pence thirteen
To-day's a hangman's fee." [2]

Then Robin he turns him round about,
And jumps from stock[3] to stone;
"By the truth of my body," the sheriff he said,
"That's well jumped, thou nimble old man."

"I was ne'er a hangman in all my life,
Nor yet intends to trade;
But curst be he," said bold Robin,
"That first a hangman was made.

"I've a bag for meal, and a bag for malt,
And a bag for barley and corn;
A bag for bread, and a bag for beef.
And a bag for my little small horn.

"I have a horn in my pocket,
I got it from Robin Hood,
And still when I set it to my mouth,
For thee it blows little good."

1 Here Robin is actually accepted as an agent of town authority.
2 It was traditional for the executioner to receive the clothes of the condemned person.
3 stock: tree stump.

"O wind thy horn[1], thou proud fellow,
Of thee I have no doubt;[2]
I wish that thou give such a blast
Till both thy eyes fall out."

The first loud blast that he did blow,
He blew both loud and shrill;
A hundred and fifty of Robin Hood's men
Came riding over the hill.

The next loud blast that he did give,
He blew both loud and amain[3],
And quickly sixty of Robin Hood's men
Came shining over the plain.

"O who are you," the sheriff he said,
"Come tripping over the lea[4]?"
"They're my attendants," brave Robin did say,
"They'll pay a visit to thee."

They took the gallows from the slack[5],
They set it in the glen[6];
They hanged the proud sheriff on that,
Released their own three men.

Critical Points

The Robin Hood Legend and Its Formation

The Robin Hood tale reveals some common factors: Robin Hood was a legendary hero who was supposed to have lived during the reign of Richard the

1 wind thy horn: blow your horn.
2 Of thee I have no doubt: I have no fear of you.
3 amain: forcefully.
4 the lea: the grassland.
5 slack: small shallow dell.
6 glen: deep, narrow valley.

Lion Heart (1189-1199). He and his men lived in the forest of Sherwood. They fought against oppressors and were righteous defenders of the poor and the oppressed.

Historically Robin Hood stories are different in every period of their formation. The stories appeared in the 1190s, the period in which King Richard was absent from his throne, fighting in the crusades. From then on, the legend of Robin Hood is often used to promote the hereditary ruling class, romance, and religious piety. The earliest surviving Robin Hood text is "Robin Hood and the Monk", which was written shortly after 1450. Printed versions of the Robin Hood ballads appeared in the early 16th century. Later in that century Robin Hood was given a specific historical setting and is promoted to the level of nobleman. The 17th century is the era in which the character of Robin became fixed as stealing from the rich to give to the poor. The idea of Robin Hood as a high-minded Saxon fighting Norman Lords originates in the 19th century. One of the most notable contributions to this idea of Robin is Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819).

Robin Hood is a character continually reshaped and redrawn, made to exemplify those values deemed important by the storyteller at the time. Thomas Percy, Robert Harley, Francis James Child, Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg were early collectors and publishers of the Robin Hood ballads from the oral tradition, broadsheets and previous anthologies.

Questions

1 What image in the first stanza of "Sir Patrick Spens" foreshadows a tragedy? How do the words in stanzas 6 and 7 create a feeling of impending doom?
2 What is your impression of Robin Hood? Summarise some common features of Robin Hood stories.
3 What are the reasons for the popularity of Robin Hood? What are your comments on the reshaping of Robin Hood legend?

Class Activities

Robin Hood Story Telling:

Do some research to find more stories of Robin Hood, and share the stories with the class.

QUOTATIONS

It is in justice that the ordering of society is centred.

—Aristotle

Dignity consists not in possessing honours, but in the consciousness that we deserve them.

—Aristotle

Unit 4

Geoffrey Chaucer (ca.1343-1400)

Geoffrey Chaucer *was the most significant poet of the Middle English. He is best remembered for* The Canterbury Tales. *Chaucer is credited with being the first author to demonstrate the artistic legitimacy of the vernacular English language. John Dryden called him the "father of English poetry".*

Life and Writing

Geoffrey Chaucer

Both Chaucer's life and writing reflect the change of the age, when England underwent large political and social changes: the development in feudalism, the growth of cities and the middle class along with the increase in foreign trade, and constant wars among feudal lords. Life was harsh for both the common people and the aristocrats. Religious belief thus served an essential means to sustain hardship. This was the historical context which the potential poet would deal with in his works.

Chaucer was born in the rising middle class family, the son of a well-to-do wine merchant. In his early teens he was sent to serve as a page in one of the great aristocratic households of England. Since then Chaucer was in close association with the ruling nobility of the kingdom for the rest of his life.

In 1359-1360, a period of the Hundred Years' War (see Unit 3), he was with the army of Edward III in France, where he was captured by the French but ransomed. He married Philippa, who was a member of the households

of Edward's queen and of John Gaunt's[1] second wife, Constance of Castile. Chaucer enjoyed Gaunt's patronage throughout his life. He held different positions at court and in the king's service, and he travelled abroad on many occasions on diplomatic missions, and missions to France. In 1374 he was appointed Controller of Customs in the port of London. He was knight of the shire for Kent in 1386 and probably lived there for most of the rest of his life. His last official position was Deputy Forester in the King's Forest at Petherton in Somerset.

In his final years, he rented a house in the garden of Westminster Abbey, within a stone's throw of Westminster Hall, the ancient seat of English government. He was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey where a monument was erected to him in 1555.

Chaucer's writing career is generally divided into three periods: first a French period, then an Italian period and finally an English period, with Chaucer being influenced by those national literatures in turn.

The first period of his literary activity is that of French influence in the late 1360s. His best work of this period was *The Book of the Duchess*. Among his earliest works was a translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, a 13th-century French poem that exercised a profound influence on Chaucer's work. While Chaucer follows his specific poetic models from French writers in the first years of his writing, his Latin knowledge benefits him tremendously. His favourite Latin writer was Boethius, and Chaucer's own philosophical attitude is at least partially a legacy from Boethius.

The middle period was under the influence of both French and Italian literature. In 1372 Chaucer made a journey to Italy, which proved a milestone in his literary development. He read attentively the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Chaucer published *The House of Fame* in the 1370s, a lighthearted imitation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. Many of *The Canterbury Tales* are indebted to one or another of Boccaccio's works. His longest poem, *Troilus and Criseyde* (1385), is adapted from Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* (*The Love-Striken*) with its reliance on the forms of Italian poetry, little known in England at the time.

1 John Gaunt (1340-1399): duke of Lancaster, the fourth son of Edward III and the father of Henery IV. He was the dominant figure in English politics during much of Richard's reign. He was the patron of Chaucer whose *Book of the Duchess* is commonly believed to be an elegy for the death of Gaunt's duchess Blanche in 1369. He is a major figure in Shakespeare's *Richard II*.

In the last period of his life Chaucer focused on English subjects, and wrote most of *The Canterbury Tales* and his short lyrics.

The Canterbury Tales

This is Chaucer's most celebrated work, composed between 1387 and 1400 in 17,000 lines of prose and verse of various metres.

The pilgrimage

The Tales is a collection of stories told by a group of 29 pilgrims on a pilgrimage from Southwark to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral, where the famous Saint Thomas Becket was assassinated.[1]

"The General Prologue" describes the meeting of the pilgrims in the Tabard Inn in Southwark. Twenty-one of them are vividly described. The host proposes that the pilgrims should shorten the road by telling four stories each, two on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back; he will accompany them and award a free supper on their return to the teller of the best story.

The work leaves unfinished; only 23 pilgrims tell their stories, and there are only 24 stories told altogether with two stories told by Chaucer, and not all of them are finished.

The sequence of the tales is not clearly determined by Chaucer, so the order of the tales may vary in different versions. Here is a universally accepted order of the tales followed in the most complete edition of Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer* (ed. L. D. Benson *et al.*, 1988):

(1) The Knight's Tale. (2) The Miller's Tale. (3) The Reeve's Tale. (4) The Cook's Tale. (5) The Man of Law's Tale. (6) The Wife of Bath's Tale. (7)

1 During the Middle Ages, pilgrimages to the shrines were made by all classes. Canterbury and the shrine of St. Thomas Becket was an important shrine. Canterbury is a town southeast of London, in the county of Kent. Thomas Becket was Chancellor of England and Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of Henry II. In Canterbury Cathedral, as he prayed on 29 December 1170, he was killed by four knights because he was opposed to the king who wanted to break with the power of the church and reduce the benefit of the clergy. He was canonised in 1172. His tomb in Canterbury Cathedral became a popular destination for pilgrims to come to pray for forgiveness and ask for healing.

The Friar's Tale. (8) The Summoner's Tale. (9) The Clerk's Tale. (10) The Merchant's Tale. (11) The Squire's Tale. (12) The Franklin's Tale. (13) The Physician's Tale. (14) The Pardoner's Tale. (15) The Shipman's Tale. (16) The Prioress's Tale. (17) Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas. (18) The Tale of Melibeus. (19) The Monk's Tale. (20) The Nun's Priest's Tale. (21) The Second Nun's Tale. (22) The Canon's Yeoman's Tale. (23) The Manciple's Tale. (24) The Parson's Tale.

The pilgrims cover a wide range of characters in the England of the time, and the tales are realistic and rich in characterisation and description, revealing a picturesque panorama of the 14th century society. The most anthologised parts are "The General Prologue", the tales of "The Knight", "The Miller", "The Franklin", "The Pardoner", "The Nun's Priest", "The Wife of Bath", and "The Parson".

A striking feature of *The Tales* is the encyclopaedic diversity of its genres, from courtly romance (The Knight's Tale and Chaucer's own Tale of Sir Thopas) to bawdy fabliau or story (The Reeve's Tale, The Merchant's Tale); from miraculous legend (The Prioress's Tale, The Second Nun's Tale) to sermon (The Pardoner's Tale, The Parson's Tale). The tales suit their tellers.

Chaucer's favourite metre is the heroic couplet, which he uses to write "The Prologue" and most of the tales. A **heroic couplet** is a traditional form for English poetry, commonly used for epic and narrative poetry; it refers to poems constructed from a sequence of rhyming pairs of iambic pentameter lines. **Iambic pentameter** means a line consisting of five iambic feet, and one foot comprises of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

The General Prologue

"The General Prologue" is at the beginning of the poem, serving as an introductory sketch of the character and background of each pilgrim, and providing a framework for the diverse stories.

The pilgrims are people from various parts of England, representing various ranks of medieval society. They ride out on a fine spring morning. After a classically poetic introduction, which describes the renewed reproductive energy of spring after a long winter, Chaucer introduces the pilgrims one by one. Chaucer's philosophical attitude, that of living wholeheartedly in the world while remaining spiritually detached from it, is clearly felt in the narration of the tales, marked by his gentle satire and mild irony.

The General Prologue

When the sweet showers of April fall and shoot
Down through the drought of March to pierce the root,[1]
Bathing every vein in liquid power
From which there springs the engendering of the flower, [2]
When also Zephyrus[3] with his sweet breath
Exhales an air in every grove and heath
Upon the tender shoots, and the young sun
His half-course in the sign of the Ram has run,[4]
And the small fowls[5] are making melody
That sleep away the night with open eye
(So nature pricks them and their heart engages[6])
Then people long to go on pilgrimages
And palmers long to seek the strange strands[7]
Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry lands[8],
And specially, from every shire's end[9]
In England, down to Canterbury they wend[10]
To seek the holy blissful martyr[11], quick
In giving help to them when they were sick.

It happened in that season that one day

1 When the sweet...to pierce the root: the gentle spring rain of April penetrates the root of plants, which experienced a dry March.
2 Bathing every vein in liquid power/From which there springs the engendering of the flower: the spring rain moisten every vein of the leaves, and the power of the rain generating the flower and making them blossom.
3 Zephyrus: the west wind, the wind of spring.
4 the young sun/His half-course in the sign of the Ram has run: the sun is young because it has run only half way through the Ram. The Ram is the first sign of the Zodiac. Through the sign of the Ram the sun runs annually from March 21st to April 21st.
5 fowls: birds.
6 ...pricks them and their heart engages: ...stimulates them and attracts their hearts.
7 the strange strands: shores which they have not visited.
8 hallowed in sundry lands: honoured as saints in different places.
9 from every shire's end: from the furtherest part of every county.
10 wend: go.
11 the holy blissful martyr: St. Thomas Becket.

In Southwark, at The Tabard,[1] as I lay
Ready to go on pilgrimage and start
For Canterbury, most devout at heart,
At night there came into that hostelry[2]
Some nine and twenty in a company
Of sundry folk happening then to fall
In fellowship, and they were pilgrims all
That towards Canterbury meant to ride.
The rooms and stables of the inn were wide;
They made us easy, all was of the best.
And shortly, when the sun had gone to rest,
By speaking to them all upon the trip
I was admitted to their fellowship
And promised to rise early and take the way
To Canterbury, as you heard me say.

But nonetheless, while I have time and space,
Before my story takes a further pace[3],
It seems a reasonable thing to say
What their condition[4] was, the full array
Of each of them, as it appeared to me,
According to profession and degree[5],
And what apparel they were riding in;
And at a Knight I therefore will begin.

1 Southwark: a place situated in the southeast of London, and now is the area of London immediately south of London Bridge; The Tabard: an inn at Southwark.
2 hostelry: an inn.
3 my story takes a further pace: I tell more of the story.
4 condition: social position.
5 degree: social state, rank.

The Prioress[1]

There also was a *Nun*, a Prioress,
Simple her way of smiling was and coy.
Her greatest oath was only "By St. Loy!"[2]
And she was known as Madam Eglantyne[3].
And well she sang a service[4], with a fine
Intoning through her nose, as was most seemly,[5]
And she spoke daintily[6] in French, extremely,
After the school of Stratfford-atte-Bowe[7];
French in the Paris style she did not know.
At meat her manners were well taught withal;
No morsel from her lips did she let fall,
Nor dipped her fingers in the sauce too deep;
But she could carry a morsel up and keep
The smallest drop from falling on her breast.
For courtliness she had a special zest.
And she would wipe her upper lip so clean
Upon the cup when she had drunk; to eat,
She reached a hand sedately for the meat.

1 The Prioress was a superioress in a medieval convent, which is a monastic community for women. She was not dedicated to active service outside the cloister, but was expected to live her entire life in reverential solitude. Chaucer describes in details the Prioress's physical features, clothing and jewelry, and manners in order to describe her character. Her pretensions of nobility imply that she cares more about her high reputation among others than about a humble, solitary search for God's will.
2 "By St. Loy": St. Eligius, the patron saint of goldsmiths and hay and dung carters in the sixth century of France. Here shows the poet's gentle satire. A nun should not swear, and she does not swear by god, but "By St. Loy".
3 Madam Eglantyne: the name suggests the word "elegance", a quality the Prioress strives for, although it is not a quality most people expect of a nun. This is an example to show how the poet uses a name to develop the character.
4 sang a service: sang hymns in a church service.
5 Intoning through her nose, as was most seemly: she sings hymns with a nasal sound which was an improper way for a nun to sing, since it could be understood as a way to please man.
6 daintily: of delicate taste and sensibility.
7 Stratfford-atte-Bowe: a monastery near London. Here it is inferred that she speaks French with a London accent.

She certainly was very entertaining,
Pleasant and friendly in her ways, and straining
To counterfeit[1] a courtly kind of grace,
A stately bearing fitting to her place,
And to seem dignified in all her dealings.
As for her sympathies and tender feelings,
She was so charitably solicitous
She used to weep if she but saw a mouse
Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bleeding.
And she had little dogs she would be feeding
With roasted flesh, or mild, or fine white bread.
Sorely she wept if one of them were dead
Or someone took a stick and made it smart;
She was all sentiment and tender heart.
Her veil was gathered in a seemly way,
Her nose was elegant, her eyes glass-grey;
Her mouth was very small, but soft and red,
And certainly she had a well-shaped head,
Almost a span across the brows,[2] I own;
She was indeed by no means undergrown.
Her cloak, I noticed, had a graceful charm.
She wore a coral trinket on her arm,
A set of beads, the gaudies tricked[3] in green,
Whence hung a golden brooch of brightest sheen
On which there first was graven a crowned A,
And lower, *Amor vincit omnia*[4].

1 counterfeit: pretend. The prioress pretends she has courtliness, stateliness, dignity and an air of properness like those of the upper classes.
2 Almost a span across the brows: the forehead of a nun is not supposed to be exposed, but her headdress is folded and her forehead is a span broad.
3 tricked: decorated.
4 *Amor vincit omnia: (Latin)* Love conquers all. It seems unusual for a nun to wear a large gold brooch, and the words graven on it make people to think what kind of love she means.

The Wife of Bath[1]

Wife of Bath

A worthy *woman* from beside Bath city[2]
Was with us, somewhat deaf, which was a pity.
In making cloth she showed so great a bent[3]
She bettered those of Ypres and of Ghent[4].
In all the parish not a dame dared stir
Towards the altar steps in front of her,
And if indeed they did, so wrath was she
As to be quite put out of charity. [5]
Her kerchiefs were of finely woven ground[6];
I dared have sworn they weighted a good ten pound,
The ones she wore on Sunday, on her head.
Her hose were of the finest scarlet red
And gartered tight; her shoes were soft and new.
Bold was her face, handsome, and red in hue.[7]
A worthy woman all her life, what's more
She'd had five husbands, all at the church door,
Apart from other company in youth;[8]
No need just now to speak of that, forsooth.[9]

1 This vivid sketch is one of the most striking in "The General Prologue". We learn of the Wife's physical appearance, her dress, her way of life and her character, while Chaucer introduces hints he intends to amplify later in the narrative. The Wife is not beautiful, but forceful and vivacious.
2 Bath city: the city is located in Somersetshire in southwestern England.
3 bent: a natural skill.
4 Ypres and of Ghent: cities in Belgium known for cloth-making in Chaucer's age.
5 And if indeed they did, so wrath was she/As to be quite put out of charity: she will get angry if anyone tries to get in front of her at the altar in the church. out of charity: out of temper.
6 ground: texture.
7 Her bright clothes and elaborate headdress are ostentatious rather than elegant. Her hat is broad. Her clothes are of good quality and her shoes are "soft and new". The effect seems to advertise herself and her wealth rather than attempt uncharacteristic finesse.
8 She'd had five husbands, all at the church door, /Apart from other company in youth: this means that she has been five times widowed because there was no divorce for women in 14th-century England. This is rather surprising, but seems less so since three of the husbands were old men.
9 She has had five husbands, about which readers certainly wish to know more, but Chaucer prefers telling it later. forsooth: truly.

And she had thrice been to Jerusalem,
Seen many strange rivers and passed over them;
She'd been to Rome and also to Boulogne,
St. James of Compostella and Cologne,[1]
And she was skilled in wandering by the way.
Easily on an ambling horse she sat
Well wimpled up, and on her head a hat
As broad as is a buckler or a shield;
She had a flowing mantle that concealed
Large hips, her heels spurred sharply under that.
In company she liked to laugh and chat
And knew the remedies for love's mischances,
An art in which she knew the oldest dances.[2]

The Parson[3]

A holy-minded man of good renown
There was, and poor, the *Parson* to a town,
Yet he was rich in holy thought and work.
He also was a learned man, a clerk,
Who truly knew Christ's gospel and would preach it
Devoutly to parishioners, and teach it.
Benign and wonderfully diligent,
And patient when adversity was sent
(For so he proved in great adversity).

1 Boulogne,/St. James of Compostella and Cologne: Boulogne, a seaside city in France; Compostella, a city in Spain; Cologne, a city in Germany; all the places were pilgrimage attractions then. Her habit of going on pilgrimages suggests a devout woman, but her real reasons for such travel as indicated later are a love of adventure, and the social opportunities these trips bring.

2 An art in which she knew the oldest dances: she knew all the old tricks of the art of love. The last part of the description tells of her social skills, especially her knowledge of "remedies of love", an "art" which she well understands.

3 The Parson is a village priest. The Parson described here is poor but "rich in holy thought and work". He is a learned man and devoted to teaching his parishioners. He is diligent and patient. Instead of demanding donation from the poor, he gives what he has to them. He is holy and virtuous, and he practises what he preaches.

He much disliked extorting tithe[1] or fee,
Nay rather he preferred beyond a doubt
Giving to poor parishioners round about
From his own goods and Easter[2] offerings.
He found sufficiency in little things.
Wide was his parish, with houses far asunder,
Yet he neglected not in rain or thunder,
In sickness or in grief, to pay a call
On the remotest whether great or small
Upon his feet, and in his hand a stave.
This noble example to his sheep he gave,
First following the word before he taught it,
And it was from the gospel he had caught it.
This little proverb he would add thereto
That if gold rust, what then will iron do?[3]
For if a priest be foul in who we trust
No wonder that a common man should rust;
And shame it is to see—let priests take stock[4]—
A shitten shepherd and a snowy flock[5].
The true example that a priest should give
Is one of cleanness, how the sheep should live.
He did not set his benefice to hire
And leave his sheep[6] encumbered in the mire[7]

1 tithe: a one-tenth part of something, paid as a (usually) voluntary contribution or as a tax or levy, usually to support a Jewish or Christian religious organization.
2 Easter: also known as Passover and Pascha, the Feast of the Resurrection, Easter is the most important religious feast of the Christian liturgical year, observed between late March and late April (early April to early May in Eastern Christianity). It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, which occurred after his death by crucifixion in AD 27-33. In the Catholic Church, Easter is actually an eight-day feast called the Octave of Easter.
3 if gold rust, what then will iron do: if the leaders in the church (gold) are corrupt, then what can be expected from the parishioners (iron)?
4 take stock: take notice.
5 A shitten shepherd and a snowy flock: a befouled priest and virtuous parishioners.
6 his sheep: his parishioners. Shepherd and sheep are typical Christian images of Jesus and his followers.
7 He did not set his benefice to hire/And leave his sheep encumbered in the mire: he did not rent his position to another, and leave his parishioners struck fast in the swamp of sin.

Or run to London to earn easy bread
By singing masses for the wealthy dead,
Or find some Brotherhood and get enrolled[1].
He stayed at home and watched over his fold[2]
So that no wolf should make the sheep miscarry.
He was a shepherd and no mercenary.
Holy and virtuous he was, but then
Never contemptuous of sinful men,
Never disdainful, never too proud or fine,
But was discreet in teaching and benign.
His business was to show a fair behaviour
And draw men thus to Heaven and their Saviour,
Unless indeed a man were obstinate;
And such, whether of high or low estate,
He put to sharp rebuke to say the least.
I think there never was a better priest.
He sought no pomp or glory in his dealings,
No scrupulosity had spiced his feelings[3].
Christ and His Twelve Apostles and their lore[4]
He taught, but followed it himself before[5].

The Plowman[6]

There was a *Plowman* with him there, his brother.
Many a load of dung one time or other
He must have carted through the morning dew.
He was an honest worker, good and true,

1 Or find some Brotherhood and get enrolled: or to be employed by a parish guild as its chaplain and earn more money.
2 watched over his fold: the parson acted as a shepherd and he carried out his duty to take care of his parishioners.
3 No scrupulosity had spiced his feelings: nor made himself a special, spiced conscience.
4 lore: teaching.
5 before: first.
6 The Plowman here is an honest person who lives "in peace and perfect charity". He loves God and his neighbour. He works hard, and helps the poor and tithes to the church.

Living in peace and perfect charity,
And, as the gospel bade him, so did he,
Loving God best with all his heart and mind
And then his neighbour as himself, repined
At no misfortune, slacked for no content[1],
For steadily about his work he went
To thrash his corn, to dig or to manure
Or make a ditch; and he would help the poor
For love of Christ and never take a penny
If he could help it, and, as prompt as any,
He paid his tithes in full when they were due,
On what he owned, and on his earnings too.
He wore a tabard smock and rode a mare.

The Pardoner[2]

He and a gentle *Pardoner* rode together,
A bird from Charing Cross of the same feather[3],
Just back from visiting the Court of Rome[4].
He loudly sang "*Come hither, love, come home*!"
The Summoner sang deep seconds to this song[5],
No trumpet ever sounded half so strong.
This Pardoner had hair as yellow as wax
Hanging down smoothly like a hank[6] of flax.

1 slacked for no content: he did not become lazy and relaxed when contented.
2 A pardoner's job was to pardon the sins of those who were truly contrite. The Pardoner here is a person who is licensed by the Pope to sell religious pardons or indulgences. pardon: a document granting remission of sin issued by the Roman Catholic Church. This parson sells his pardons and fake religious relics. He is deceitful and corrupt.
3 A bird from Charing Cross of the same feather: a person of the same behaviour. The summoner and the pardoner are alike in their deceit and corruption, and both from Charing Cross, which is a district in London, within the city of Westminster.
4 the Court of Rome: the Court of the Pope in Rome.
5 The Summoner sang deep seconds to this song: the summoner joined the pardoner's singing in low-pitched and resonant sound. summoner: a church official whose job is to summon offenders to appear before the court.
6 a hank: a coil.

In driblets[1] fell his locks behind his head
Down to his shoulders which they overspread;
Thinly they fell, like rat-tails, one by one.
He wore no hood upon his head, for fun;
The hood inside his wallet had been stowed,
He aimed at riding in the latest mode;
But for a little cap his head was bare
And he had bulging eye-balls, like a hare.
He'd sewed a holy relic on his cap;
His wallet lay before him on his lap,
Brimful of pardons come from Rome all hot.
He had the same small voice a goat has got.
His chin no beard had harboured, nor would harbour,
Smoother than ever chin was left by barber.
I judge he was a gelding, or a mare.
As to his trade, from Berwick down to Ware[2]
There was no pardoner of equal grace,
For in his trunk he had a pillow-case
Which he asserted was Our Lady's veil.
He said he had a gobbet of the sail[3]
Saint Peter had the time when he made bold
To walk the waves, till Jesus Christ took hold.
He had a cross of metal set with stones
And, in a glass, a rubble of pigs' bones.[4]
And with these relics, any time he found
Some poor up-country[5] parson to astound,
In one short day, in money down, he drew
More than the parson in a month or two,
And by his flatteries and prevarication[6]

1 In driblets: in wisps or small quantity.
2 from Berwick down to Ware: probably two towns near London.
3 a gobbet of the sail: a piece of the sail.
4 a rubble of pigs' bones: broken fragments of pig bones. Notice the kinds of relics he carries: a pillowcase which he says is Mary's veil, a piece of cloth which he says comes from Saint Peter's boat's sail, a metal cross, and pigs' bones which he says are the bones of a saint.
5 up-country: from the inner parts of the country.
6 prevarication: the act of deviating from the truth, or lying.

Made monkeys of[1] the priest and congregation.
But still to do him justice first and last
In church he was a noble ecclesiast[2].
How well he read a lesson or told a story!
But best of all he sang an Offertory[3],
For well he knew that when that song was sung
He'd have to preach and tune his honey-tongue
And (well he could) win silver from the crowd.
That's why he sang so merrily and loud.

Now I have told you shortly, in a clause[4],
The rank, the array, the number and the cause
Of our assembly in this company
In Southwark, at that high-class hostelry
Known as *The Tabard*, close beside *The Bell*[5].
And now the time has come for me to tell
How we behaved that evening; I'll begin
After we had alighted at the Inn,
Then I'll report our journey, stageby stage,
All the remainder of our pilgrimage.
But first I beg of you, in courtesy, not to condemn me as unmannerly
If I speak plainly and with no concealings
And give account of all their words and dealings,
Using their very phrases as they fell.
For certainly, as you all know so well,
He who repeats a tale after a man
Is bound to say, as nearly as he can,
Each single word, if he remembers it,
However rudely spoken or unfit,
Or else the tale he tells will be untrue,
The things invented and the phrases new.
He may not flinch although it were his brother,

1 made monkeys of: made fool of.
2 ecclesiast: a clergyman.
3 Offertory: prayers made by a priest when making offerings.
4 in a clause: briefly.
5 *The Bell*: another tavern in Southwark.

If he says one word he must say the other.
And Christ Himself spoke broad in Holy Writ[1],
And as you know there's nothing there unfit,
And Plato says, for those with power to read,
"The word should be as cousin to the deed."
Further I beg you to forgive it me
If I neglect the order and degree
And what is due to rank in what I've planned.
I'm short of wit as you will understand.

Our *Host* gave us great welcome; everyone
Was given a place and supper was begun.
He served the finest victuals you could think,
The wine was strong and we were glad to drink,
A very striking man our Host withal,
And fit to be a marshal in a hall.
His eyes were bright, his girth a little wide;
There is no finer burgess in Cheapside[2].
Bold in his speech, yet wise and full of tact,
There was no manly attribute he lacked,
What's more he was a merry-hearted man.
After our meal he jokingly began
To talk of sport, and, among other things
After we'd settled up our reckonings,
He said as follows: "Truly, gentlemen,
You're very welcome and I can't think when
—Upon my word I'm telling you no lie—
I've seen a gathering here that looked so spry[3],
No, not this year, as in this tavern now.
I'd think you up some fun if I knew how.
And, as it happens, a thought has just occurred
And it will cost you nothing, on my word.
You're off to Canterbury—well, God speed[4]!

1 Holy Writ: the Bible.
2 Cheapside: a street in the City of London.
3 spry: lively.
4 God speed: may God bring you success!

Blessed St. Thomas answer to your need![1]
And I don't doubt, before the journey's done
You mean to while the time in tales and fun.
Indeed, there's little pleasure for your bones
Riding along and all as dumb as stones.
So let me then propose for your enjoyment,
Just as I said, a suitable employment.
And if my notion suits and you agree
And promise to submit yourselves to me
Playing your parts exactly as I say
Tomorrow as you ride along the way,
Then by my father's soul (and he is dead)
If you don't like it you can have my head!
Hold up your hands, and not another word."

Well, our consent of course was not deferred,
It seemed not worth a serious debate;
We all agreed to it at any rate
And bade him issue what commands he would.
"My lords," he said, "now listen for your good,
and please don't treat my notion with disdain.
This is the point. I'll make it short and plain.
Each one of you shall help to make things slip[2]
By telling two stories on the outward trip
To Canterbury, that's what I intend,
And, on the homeward way to journey's end
Another two, tales from the days of old;
And then the man whose story is best told,
That is to say who gives the fullest measure
Of good morality and general pleasure[3],

1 Blessed St. Thomas answer to your need: may St. Thomas Becket help you in your difficulty!
2 help to make things slip: help to pass the time.
3 who gives the fullest measure/Of good morality and general pleasure: who tells the best story that is both moralising and entertaining. The best tale should provide both morality and pleasure, which are two standards set by the host, which may suggest Chaucer's thought of good literary works.

He shall be given a supper, paid by all,
Here in this tavern, in this very hall,
When we come back again from Canterbury.
And in the hope to keep you bright and merry
I'll go along with you myself and ride
All at my own expense and serve as guide.
I'll be the judge, and those who won't obey
Shall pay for what we spend upon the way.
Now if you all agree to what you've heard
Tell me at once without another word,
And I will make arrangements early for it."
Of course we all agreed, in fact we swore it
Delightedly, and make entreaty too
That he should act as he proposed to do,
Become our Governor[1] in short, and be
Judge of our tales and general referee,
And set the supper at a certain price.
We promised to be ruled by his advice
Come high, come low;[2] unanimously thus
We set him up in judgement over us.
More wine was fetched, the business being done;
We drank it off and up went everyone
To bed without a moment of delay.

Early next morning at the spring of day
Up rose our Host and roused us like a cock,
Gathering us together in a flock,
And off we rode at slightly faster pace
Than walking to St. Thomas' watering-place[3];
And there our Host drew up, began to ease
His horse, and said, "Now, listen if you please,
My lords! Remember what you promised me.

1 Governor: commander.
2 Come high, come low: in matters important or unimportant.
3 St. Thomas' watering-place: a watering place near Southwark.

If evensong and matins will agree[1]
Let's see who shall be first to tell a tale.
And as I hope to drink good wine and ale
I'll be your judge. The rebel who disobeys,
However much the journey costs, he pays.
Now draw for cut[2] and then we can depart;
The man who draws the shortest cut shall start[3]."
"My Lord the Knight," he said, "step up to me
and draw your cut, for that is my decree.
And come you near, my Lady Prioress,
And you, Sir Cleric[4], drop your shamefastness[5],
No studying now! A hand from every man!"
Immediately the draw for lots began
And to tell shortly how the matter went,
Whether by chance or fate or accident,
The truth is this, the cut fell to the Knight,
Which everybody greeted with delight.
And tell his tale he must, as reason was
Because of our agreement and because
He too had sworn. What more is there to say?
For when the good man saw how matters lay,
Being by wisdom and obedience driven
To keep a promise he had freely given,
He said, "Since it's for me to start the game,
Why, welcome be the cut in God's good name!
Now let us ride, and listen to what I say."
And at the word we started on our way
And in a cheerful style he then began
At once to tell his tale, and thus it ran.

1 If evensong and matins will agree: if you will abide by what you promised yesterday evening.
2 draw for cut: draw straws.
3 The man who draws the shortest cut shall start: the man who draws the shortest straw shall tell the first story.
4 Sir Cleric: an Oxford student who was among the pilgrims.
5 shamefastness: modesty and shyness.

Critical Points

1 *The Tales*: Characterisation, Social Significance, and Structure

The collection of portraits of the characters is one of the distinguishing parts of *The Tales*. Chaucer puts in details about their physiognomy, a familiar short-cut for medieval people in understanding a character. Each character is not only a typical representative of the class to which he or she belongs, but also has an individual character of his or her own. From the tales and the way the tales are told, various characters are vividly described.

The order the pilgrims are introduced places them in a social scale, placing the nobility in front, the craftsmen in the middle, and the peasants at the end. A canon and his yeoman later join the pilgrimage and tell one of the tales. Chaucer accurately mirrors the class system and representation of the various components that make up his current society in his tales.

The poem is also highly praised for its carefully designed structure. All the tales are linked by narrative exchanges between the pilgrims and by prologues and epilogues to the tale. The previous story is usually used as an initiator of the next story. The Wife of Bath's prologue initiates a quarrel between the Friar and the Summoner, and each tells a story to hurt the other's feeling. The host plays a most important part in keeping the tale-telling going on by drawing out the shy ones and smoothing over the differences with his frankness, his rough manner, his unconscious improper use of words about God, and his good will.

Different personalities and social background of the tellers are presented with the help of the idea of a pilgrimage, which appears a useful device to get such a diverse collection of people together for literary purposes.

2 Chaucer's Contribution to the English Language

By the use of London dialect as his written language, Chaucer greatly increased the prestige of the English language, and contributed to the founding of the English literary language in an age when French was the language of the court and the upper classes, and Latin was the language of the learned and the church.

Moreover, Chaucer is known for metrical innovation. He was one of the first English poets to use the iambic pentameter in his works. The arrangement of these five-stress lines into rhyming couplets was used in many of his later works and became one of the standard poetic forms in English. His influence as

a satirist is also important with the common humourous device and the funny accent of a regional dialect.

Chaucer is recorded in *The Oxford English Dictionary* as the first author to use many common English words in his writings. These words were probably frequently used at the time but Chaucer is the earliest manuscript source. Such quotations as "Time and tide wait for no man", "Love is blind" are under the name of Chaucer.

Questions

1 Where and when does the pilgrimage start? What is the significance of the setting?
2 Based on the Prioress's portrait, can you deduce a possible reason why she is undertaking this pilgrimage? What are the possible reasons you could deduce for the pilgrimage being undertaken by the Wife of Bath, the Parson, the Plowman and Pardoner?
3 Read "The Wife of Bath's Tale", or "The Pardoner's Tale", compare Chaucer's portrait of the character in "The General Prologue" and the tale, and cite specific examples to prove how the tale confirms the poet's description of the character.

Class Activities

Writing Practice:

Choose one of your favourite characters from "The General Prologue", and rewrite the part of introduction in the form of narrative.

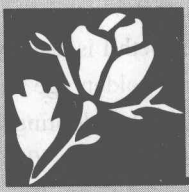
QUOTATIONS

People can die of mere imagination.

—Geoffrey Chaucer

First he wrought, and afterward he taught.

—Geoffrey Chaucer



Part II

The Sixteenth Century (1485-1603)

Key Words

the Elizabethan Age	English Renaissance
English drama	Spenserian stanza
blank verse	sonnet
eclogue	Utopia

1 The Elizabethan Age

If Henry VII brought some measure of political stability to England so that the Renaissance could take root in England, the succession of Henry VIII made the Renaissance began to flower. It is during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603), that the English Renaissance reached its peak.

The period associated with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I is usually named the Elizabethan Age, which is often considered to be a golden age in English history. Elizabeth came to the throne at the age of 25. By adopting a policy of tolerance, she wisely chose a middle ground when dealing with sensitive religious issues, and successfully maintained a balance of power between the feudal lords and the rising burghers when handling political affairs. England during this period had a centralised, well-organised, and effective government, even the centuries-long conflict between France and England was largely suspended in most of Elizabeth's reign.

The Elizabethan Age is an age of economic development and cultural prosperity at home, and of expansion and exploration abroad. Sir Francis Drake (ca. 1540-1596) circumnavigated the globe during the years from 1577 to 1581; Martin Frobisher (ca. 1535-1594) explored the Arctic. The first attempt at English settlement on the Eastern seaboard of North America also occurred in this era.

One great rival was Spain, with which England conflicted both in Europe and Americas. In 1588, the English navy defeated the Spanish Armada, a fleet believed to be invincible. This was a historic event which greatly strengthened the power of the monarch and accelerated the national consciousness. After the battle, England gradually became a mighty naval power, and the country began to benefit greatly from the new trans-Atlantic trade.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, England enjoyed a long period of peace and prosperity, and saw the flowering of English philosophy and literature. Many intellectuals and writers appeared and glittered on the scene.

2 The Origin and Ideal of the Renaissance

The Renaissance is a cultural and intellectual movement which first flourished in the 14th century in Italy and later spread to France, Spain, the Netherlands, and England in the 15th and 16th centuries. The French word "renaissance" means "rebirth" in English.

The movement involved the rebirth of letters and arts stimulated by the

recovery and study of texts of ancient Greece and Rome, and the development of new aesthetic norms based on classical models. In such texts people found a desire to improve and perfect their worldly knowledge, which is an entirely different sentiment to the transcendental spirituality stressed by medieval Christianity.

It also unleashed new ideas and new social, political, and economic forces, emphasising the dignity and potential of the individual and the worth of life in this world. Artists strove to portray the human form realistically, developing techniques to render perspective and light more naturally. Political philosophers sought to describe political life as it really was, and to improve government on the basis of reason.

The central ideal of the Renaissance was humanism. Humanists advocated education based on the study of poetry, grammar, ethics and rhetoric, and asserted "the genius of man", the unique and extraordinary ability of the human mind. In addition to studying classical Latin and Greek, intellectuals also began increasingly to use vernacular languages in their writings.

In all, the Renaissance could be viewed as an attempt by intellectuals to study and improve the secular and worldly, both through the revival of ideas from antiquity, and through novel approaches to thought. The ideas are best reflected in the poetry of Petrarch, the tales of Boccaccio and the art of Michelangelo, da Vinci, Raphael, and Titian. Italian writers and artists made the most brilliant contribution in the Renaissance.

In the 15th century the Renaissance spread with great speed from its birthplace Florence, first to the entire Italy, and soon to the rest of Europe. The invention of the printing press allowed the rapid transmission of these new ideas. As it spread, its ideas diversified and changed, being adapted to local culture.

3 The English Renaissance

The first major exponent of the English Renaissance was Sir Thomas More (?1477-1535). More was the Lord Chancellor to Henry VIII. His masterpiece, *Utopia*, is a description of an imaginary land, written in Latin and published in 1516. *Utopia* is about the search for the best possible form of government, and serves as a critique of European social, political, and religious institutions and practices. The work at once became popular, and was translated into English in 1551, and into French, German, Italian and Spanish later on. The name "Utopia", with the meaning of "no place", is coined by Thomas More, and

Sir Thomas More

Sir Philip Sidney

passed into general usage to describe fictions, fantasies and blueprints for the future. The later works of the successive use of the idea include Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Morris's *News from Nowhere*, and satirical Utopias include Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Samuel Butler's *Erehwon*.

The outstanding lyrical and epic poets of the time were Sir Walter Ralegh and Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586). Sir Philip Sidney's major poem is *Astrophel and Stella* (1591), a sequence of 108 sonnets and a love romance. Sidney's another piece of important writing is *Defence of Poesy* (1595), a prose essay that describes the nature of poetry and defends it against contemporary objections to imaginative literature. In the *Defence*, Sidney expounds the antiquity of poetry in all cultures, "whose milk by little and little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges". He demonstrates its superiority to philosophy or history as a means of teaching virtue. In Sidney's own words, "Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done; neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden." Sidney's essay is one of the first important critical works on poetry written in English.

At the end of the century the great English scientist and philosopher Francis Bacon wrote his famous philosophical and literary works.

English humanism was vitally concerned with Christianity as well as with classical learning. Edmund Spenser and John Milton, two of the monumental epic writers of the age, are both Christian humanists. The former was the author of *The Faerie Queene*; the latter, the author of *Paradise Lost*.

The humanist reverence for the classics and English pride in the vernacular language gave rise to many distinguished translations throughout the century.

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* were all translated into English during this period.

4 The Flourishing of English Drama

The epoch of the Renaissance witnessed a particular development of English drama. In ancient Greece and Rome, drama was one of the most popular forms of entertainment. But the Roman Catholic Church prohibited dramatic performances. It was not until the nineth and tenth century that some of dramatic performances were allowed to be used as part of religious services.

By the 14th century mystery plays and miracle plays were developed; the former are chiefly based on stories from the Bible, and the latter on the lives of Christian saints.

The last 30 years of the 16th century saw a flourishing of drama which England had never seen before, and also a great renovation of the drama as a literary genre. Previously, the morality plays were the most common forms of popular theatre, in which the characters are personified moral attributes. The characters are symbolic rather than realistic. Meanwhile, at the universities, academic plays were being staged, often in Latin, using an exact and academically respectable poetic style, valuing lengthy speeches over physical action.

As the English Renaissance took hold, the popularity of morality and academic plays waned. Playwrights like Christopher Marlowe began to revolutionise theatre. Their plays blended the old morality drama with academic theatre to produce a new secular form. The new drama had the poetic grandeur and philosophical depth of the academic play. However, it was more ambiguous and complex in its meanings, and less concerned with simple moral allegories.

All these had provided cultural, historical and social background for the birth of the most brilliant literary figure of the age, William Shakespeare.

Unit 5

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

Edmund Spenser *is one of the greatest poets of the English Renaissance, best known for* The Faerie Queene, *an epic poem celebrating, through fantastical allegory, the Tudor dynasty and Elizabeth I.*

Life and Writing

Edmund Spenser

Spenser was born in London, the elder son of a journeyman of cloth-making. He received fine education at the Merchant Taylors' School, where he came to know Edmund Grindal, an examiner at the school and later Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1569, he went to Cambridge as a sizar, instructed by Dr. John Young, who later became Bishop of Rochester. Spenser served as personal secretary and aide to several prominent men, including Dr. John Young and the earl of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth's favourite. During his employment in Leicester's household he came to know Sir Philip Sidney, to whom Spenser dedicated his first important work *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579).

After the publication of *The Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser spent the rest of his life mainly in Ireland as secretary and aide to Lord Grey of Wilton, Lord Deputy of Ireland. There he completed his great work *The Faerie Queene*. Through his poetry Spenser hoped to secure a place at court. However, he boldly antagonised the queen's principal secretary, Lord Burghley, and all he received in recognition of his work was a pension in 1591, when it was proposed that he receive the payment of 100 pounds.

Back in Ireland, the nation was in revolt and civil war. Spenser was driven out of his home by Irish rebels during the war, and his castle of Kilcolman

was burnt in October 1598. He first moved to his second holding to the south, at Rennie, and he was then compelled to leave for England with his wife and three children. He died in London in distress at a lodging, aged 46. It was arranged for his coffin to be carried by other poets, upon which they threw many pens and pieces of poetry into his grave with many tears. He was buried near his favourite Chaucer in Westminster Abbey. His monument was set up some 20 years later, and he is described as "The Prince of Poets in his Tyme". He has been admired in later periods, having special influence upon the poetry of Milton and Keats.

The Shepheardes Calender

The Shepheardes Calender is a pastoral poem in 12 eclogues. Each eclogue is titled for the month of the year, and prefaced by an illustrative woodcut representing the characters or theme of the poem and picturing the appropriate sign of the zodiac for that month in the clouds above.

The eclogues are divided into three groups: plaintive, recreative and moral, giving descriptions of the English countryside at the particular time of the year, and forming discussions of themes of love, religion, poetry and other contemporary affairs. Since April is the finest of all, it gives an elegantly artful pastoral song praising Elisa, Queen of Shepherds (Queen Elizabeth).

The **eclogue** is a classical form in the tradition of Virgil. It presents the moods and feelings and attitudes of the simple, rural life, usually in dialogues between shepherds and shepherdesses who adopt classical, French, or English peasant names.

The Shepheardes Calender demonstrates Spenser's skillful mastery of a variety of metres, and set the pastoral fashion in English literature.

The Faerie Queene

The Faerie Queene is the greatest work by Edmund Spenser, published first in three books in 1590, and later in six books in 1596. It is an allegorical work, written in praise of Queen Elizabeth I. *The Faerie Queene* is the first work written in Spenserian stanza.

The general scheme of the work is proposed in the author's introductory letter addressed to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1589, in which Spenser describes the allegorical presentation of virtues through Arthurian knights in the mythical "Faerieland". Presented as a preface to the epic in most published editions, this letter outlines plans for 24 books: 12 based each on a different knight who

The Faerie Queene

exemplified one of 12 "private virtues", and 12 more centring on King Arthur displaying 12 "public virtues". Spenser names Aristotle as his source for these virtues. The influence of Thomas Aquinas can be observed as well.

The epic presents the following virtues: Book I: Holiness; Book II: Temperance; Book III: Chastity; Book IV: Friendship; Book V: Justice; Book VI: Courtesy; In addition to these six virtues, the letter to Raleigh suggests that Arthur represents the virtue of Magnificence, which ("according to Aristotle and the rest") is "the perfection of all the rest, and conteineth in it them all"; and that the Faerie Queene herself represents Glory (hence her name Gloriana).

The poem is written in the stanza invented by Spenser, now known as **Spenserian stanza**. It consists of eight five-foot iambic lines, followed by an iambic line of six feet. The rhyme scheme is "ababbcbcc".

The selection is from Book I of *The Faerie Queene*. Book I illustrates the virtue of Holiness, telling the tale of Red Cross Knight of Holiness, who reveals his virtue through adventures to protect the Virgin Una, and relieves her kingdom from a menacing dragon.

It centres upon the adventures of the Red Cross Knight. He sets out on the orders of the Glorious Queen of Faerie to kill the dragon who has imprisoned Una's parents. Una accompanies him on the way. She conceals her face behind a veil to keep her dazzling beauty from ordinary eyes. She mounts on a donkey and is led by a cord a milk-white lamb. First they are made victims by the subtle tricks of the devil himself. The Red Cross Knight killed Sansfoy (without faith), but is deceived by false Fidessa, whose real name is Duessa, symbol of sin. He manages to escape her seduction of wanton loves. Meanwhile, Una is taken prisoner by Sansloy (without law) and left for a moment at the mercy of his rage and lust. At the mansion of Lucifera, daughter of Pluto and Porserpina, the Red Cross Knight fights a fierce battle with Sansjoy (without joy) and is tricked by Duessa into a luckless combat with the giant Orgoglio (representing fleshly and irrational presumption and diabolical vainglory). At this crucial moment King Arthur comes. He rescues the Knight from the dragon's place. Book I ends with the happy marriage between Una and the

Red Cross Knight.

The selection is a vivid description of the Court of Lucifera, Princess of Pride. The six wizard counselors represent six sins. Together with Pride, they form the seven deadly sins that Christianity teaches people to guard against. The seven sins are drawn in strikingly living images and expressed the full allegorical power of the poem.

Book I Canto IV

16

Suddein[1] upriseth from her stately place
The royall Dame[2], and for her coche[3] doth call:
All hurtlen[4] forth, and she with Princely pace,
As faire Aurora[5] in her purple pall[6],
Out of the East the dawning day doth call:
So forth she comes: her brightnesse brode[7] doth blaze;
The heapes of people thronging in the hall,
Do ride each other, upon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitterand[8] light doth all mens[9] eyes amaze.

17

So forth she comes, and to her coche does clyme[10],
Adorned all with gold, and girlonds gay,
That seemd as fresh as Flora[11] in her prime,
And strove to match, in royall rich array,
Great Junoes golden chaire, the which they say
The Gods stand gazing on, when she does ride

1 Suddein: suddenly.
2 The royall Dame: Lucifera who symbolizes Pride.
3 coche: coach, carriage.
4 hurtlen: rush.
5 Aurora: the ancient Greek goddess of the dawn. Aurora is the Latin word for "dawn".
6 pall: cloak.
7 brode: abroad.
8 glitterand: glittering.
9 mens: men's.
10 clyme: similar cases in the following stanza being "ryde", "applyde", and "guyde".
11 Flora: the goddess of flowers in Roman mythology.

To Joves high house through heavens bras-paved way
Drawne of faire Pecocks, that excell in pride,
And full of Argus eyes[1] their tailes dispredden wide.

18

But this was drawne of six unequall beasts,
On which her six sage Counsellours did ryde,
Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts,
With like conditions to their kinds[2] applyde:
Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde,
Was sluggish Idlenesse the nourse of sin;
Upon a slouthfull Asse he chose to ryde,
Arayd in habit blacke, and amis[3] thin,
Like to an holy Monck, the service to begin.

19

And in his hand his Portesse[4] still he bare,
That much was worne, but therein little red,
For of devotion he had little care,
Still drownd in sleepe, and most of his dayes ded;
Scarse could he once uphold his heavie hed,[5]
To looken, whether it were night or day:
May seeme the wayne was very evill led,
When such an one had guiding of the way,
That knew not, whether right he went, or else astray.

20

From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne[6],
And greatly shunned manly exercise,
From every worke he challenged essoyne[7],

1 Argus: a giant with a hundred eyes in Greek mythology. The word "Argus" means "all eyes".
2 kinds: natures.
3 amis: hood.
4 Portesse: breviary.
5 ded: dead; hed: head.
6 esloyne: withdraw.
7 challenged essoyne: pleaded exemption.

For contemplation sake: yet otherwise,
His life he led in lawlesse riotise;
By which he grew to grievous malady;
For in his lustlesse[1] limbs through evill guise[2]
A shaking fever raignd continually:
Such one was Idlenesse, first of this company.

21

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
Deformed creature, on a filthie swyne,
His belly was up-blowne with luxury,
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne,
And like a Crane his necke was long and fyne[3],
With which he swallowd up excessive feast,
For want whereof poore people oft did pyne[4];
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spued up his gorge,[5] that all did him deteast.

22

In greene vine leaves he was right fitly clad;
For other clothes he could not weare for heat,
And on his head an yvie girland had,
From under which fast trickled downe the sweat:
Still as he rode, he somewhat[6] still did eat,
And in his hand did beare a bouzing can[7],
Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat
His dronken corse he scarse upholden can,
In shape and life more like a monster, than man.

1 lustlesse: feeble.
2 guise: living.
3 fyne: scrawny.
4 pyne: waste away.
5 He spued up his gorge: he vomited up what he had swallowed.
6 somewhat: something.
7 a bouzing can: a drinking cup.

23

Unfit he was for any worldy thing,
And eke unhable once[1] to stirre or go[2],
Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drinke was drowned so,
That from his friend he seldome knew his fo:
Full of diseases was his carcas blew[3],
And a dry dropsie[4] through his flesh did flow:
Which by misdiet daily greater grew:
Such one was Gluttony[5], the second of that crew.

24

And next to him rode lustfull Lechery[6],
Upon a bearded Goat, whose rugged haire,
And whally eyes[7] (the signe of gelosy,)
Was like the person selfe, whom he did beare:
Who rough, and blacke, and filthy did appeare,
Unseemely man to please faire Ladies eye;
Yet he of Ladies oft was loved deare,
When fairer faces were bid standen by[8]:
O who does know the bent of womens fantasy?

25

In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire,
Which underneath did hide his filthinesse,
And in his hand a burning hart he bare,
Full of vaine follies, and new fanglenesse:

1 once: at all.
2 go: walk.
3 blew: livid (colour).
4 a dry dropsie: a dropsy produced by thirst.
5 Gluttony: over-indulgence and over-consumption of food, drink, or intoxicants to the point of waste. In Christianity, it is considered one of the seven deadly sins.
6 Lechery: the Old English term for "Lust", an erotic arousal and wish, or intense physical or sexual attraction or craving. It is considered a vice by Christianity, and is listed as one of the seven deadly sins.
7 whally eyes: staring eyes.
8 by: away.

For he was false, and fraught with ficklenesse[1],
And learned had to love with secret lookes,
And well could daunce, and sing with ruefulnesse,
And fortunes tell, and read in loving bookes[2],
And thousand other wayes, to bait his fleshly hookes.

26

Inconstant man, that loved all he saw,
And lusted after all, that he did love,
Ne would his looser life be tide to law,
But joyd weake wemens hearts to tempt, and prove
If from their loyall loves he might them move;
Which lewdnesse fild him with reprochfull paine
Of that fowle evill[3], which all men reprove,
That rots the marrow, and consumes the braine:
Such one was Lecherie, the third of all this traine.

27

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Upon a Camell loaden all with gold;
Two iron coffers hong on either side,
With precious mettall full, as they might hold,
And in his lap an heape of coine he told[4];
For of his wicked pelfe[5] his God he made,
And unto hell him selfe for money sold;
Accursed usurie was all his trade,
And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide[6].

28

His life was nigh unto deaths doore yplast,

1 fraught with ficklenesse: filled with emotional change.
2 loving bookes: books on the art of love or eroticism.
3 that fowle evill: syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection.
4 told: counted.
5 pelfe: wealth.
6 And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide: made no distinction between right and wrong.

And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes he ware,
Ne scarse good morsell all his life did tast,
But both from backe and belly still did spare,
To fill his bags, and richesse to compare[1];
Yet chylde ne kinsman living had he none
To leave them to; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,
He led a wretched life unto him selfe unknowne.

29

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffise,
Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store,
Whose need had end, but no end covetise[2],
Whose wealth was want, whose plenty made him pore,
Who had enough, yet wished ever more;
A vile disease, and eke in foote and hand
A grievous gout tormented him full sore,
That well he could not touch, nor go, nor stand:
Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this faire band.

30

And next to him malicious Envie[3] rode,
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
Betweene his cankred[4] teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his chaw[5];
But inwardly he chawed his owne maw[6]
At neighbours wealth, that made him ever sad;
For death it was, when any good he saw,
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had,

1 compare: acquire.
2 covetise: covetousness, greed. Greed is a desire to obtain more than one needs. Greed is listed as one of the Christian seven deadly sins, usually by the synonym of avarice.
3 Envie: Envy, one of the Christian seven deadly sins. It is considered sinful because envious people ignore their own blessings, and focus on others' status rather than their own spiritual growth.
4 cankred: infected.
5 chaw: jaw.
6 maw: internal organs collectively.

But when he heard of harme, he wexed wondrous glad.

31

All in a kirtle of discolourd say[1]
He clothed was, ypainted full of eyes;
And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hatefull Snake, the which his taile uptyes[2]
In many folds, and mortall sting implyes.
Still as he rode, he gnasht his teeth, to see
Those heapes of gold with griple[3] Covetyse,
And grudged at the great felicitie
Of proud Lucifera, and his owne companie.

32

He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds,
And him no lesse, that any like did use,
And who with gracious bread the hungry feeds,
His almes for want of faith he doth accuse;
So every good to bad he doth abuse[4]:
And eke the verse of famous Poets witt
He does backebite, and spightfull poison spues
From leprous mouth on all, that ever writt:
Such one vile Envie was, that fifte in row did sitt.

33

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath[5],
Upon a Lion, loth for to be led;
And in his hand a burning brond[6] he hath,
The which he brandisheth about his hed;
His eyes did hurle forth sparkles fiery red,

1 All in a kirtle of discolourd say: in a multicoloured woollen outer garment.
2 uptyes: coils.
3 griple: greedy.
4 abuse: deviate from what is considered orthodox or normal.
5 Wrath: anger. Causeless, excessive, or protracted anger is treated as sinful, and unbridled wrath is one of the seven deadly sins.
6 brond: sword.

And stared sterne on all, that him beheld,
As ashes pale of hew and seeming ded;
And on his dagger still his hand he held,
Trembling through hasty rage, when choler[1] in him sweld.

34

His ruffin raiment[2] all was staind with blood,
Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent[3],
Through unadvized rashnesse woxen wood[4];
For of his hands he had no governement[5],
Ne cared for[6] bloud in his avengement:
But when the furious fit was overpast,
His cruell facts he often would repent;
Yet wilfull man he never would forecast,
How many mischieves should ensue his heedlesse hast.

35

Full many mischiefes follow cruell Wrath;
Abhorred bloudshed, and tumultuous strife,
Unmanly[7] murder, and unthrifty scath[8],
Bitter despight, with rancours rusty knife,
And fretting griefe the enemy of life;
All these, and many evils moe[9] haunt ire[10],
The swelling Splene[11], and Frenzy raging rife,
The shaking Palsey, and Saint Fraunces fire[12]:

1 choler: anger.
2 ruffin raiment: disarranged clothing.
3 yrent: torn.
4 wood: mad.
5 governement: control.
6 cared for: shrank from.
7 Unmanly: inhuman.
8 scath: harm.
9 moe: more.
10 ire: another name for anger or wrath.
11 Splene: hatred or disrespect.
12 Saint Fraunces fire: erysipelas, an acute streptococcus bacterial skin infection, resulting in inflammation and characteristically extending into underlying fat tissue.

Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly tire[1].

36

And after all, upon the wagon beame
Rode Sathan, with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lasht the laesie teme,
So oft as Slowth still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs[2] of people did about them band,
Showting for joy, and still before their way
A foggy mist had covered all the land;
And underneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead sculs and bones of men, whose life had gone astray.

37

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort,
To take the solace[3] of the open aire,
And in fresh flowring fields themselves to sport;
Emongst the rest rode that false Lady faire,
The fowle Duessa, next unto the chaire
Of proud Lucifera, as one of the traine:
But that good knight would not so nigh repaire[4],
Him selfe estraunging from their joyaunce vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far unfit for warlike swaine.

Critical Points

The Faerie Queene: A Book of Allegory, Courtesy, Romance and Reality

The poem, first of all, is deeply allegorical and allusive. In "A Letter of the Author's" at the beginning of the poem, Spencer claims that "the general end therefore of all books is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous

1 tire: possession.
2 routs: crowds.
3 solace: pleasure.
4 repaire: approach.

and gentle discipline", and he invites readers to interpret the characters and adventures in different books in terms of particular virtues and vices: e.g. the Red Cross Knight in Book I is the knight of Holiness, Sir Guyon in Book II is the knight of Temperance.

However, far from being static embodiments of their respective virtues, each advances in the understanding and practice of the virtue in question in the course of his or her book. The meaning of the various characters, episodes and places is dense and complex. The poem may be enjoyed as a fascinating story with multiple meanings.

In some respects, *The Faerie Queene* is, a "courtesy book", intended to "fashion a gentleman or noble person" by exhibiting the qualities such a person should have (Abrams: *The Norton Anthology* 269). The six books completed relate the adventures of the knights who represent the qualities of holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice, and courtesy.

In other respects, *The Faerie Queene* is a romantic epic, full of adventures and marvels, dragons, witches, enchanted trees, giants, jousting knights, and castles. It fulfills the expectation that a romance will produce wonder, that it will enthrall readers with its intricate plots, amazing episodes, heroic characters, elaborate descriptions. It also fulfills the common Elizabethan expectation that poetry should teach by delighting.

Furthermore, the poem displays Spenser's thorough familiarity with literary history and pictorial traditions. Although the world of *The Faerie Queene* is based on English Arthurian legend, entire episodes are adopted either from Italian romantic epics or from Homer, Virgil, or Ovid. Spencer also draws various resources as from the classics, folk tales and emblem books. The connections of the poem with the resources are interesting topics of literary criticism.

The poem can also be interpreted from a realistic view. Many prominent Elizabethans could have found themselves—or one another—partially represented by one or more of Spenser's figures. Elizabeth herself is the most prominent example: she appears many times as different roles in different places in the poem, although most prominently in her guise as Gloriana, the Faerie Queene herself.

Questions

1 The poem is deeply allegorical and allusive. Cite examples from the selection to give allegorical interpretations of each character.

2 *The Faerie Queene* can be read as an allegory as well as a romantic epic. What features can you find in the poem to make it a romantic epic?

Class Activities

Group Discussion:

Step 1 Group division and task assignment

There are 22 stanzas in the selection. Divide the class into several groups. Each group respectively needs seven students: a discussion leader, a summariser, a line pointer, a connection maker, two vocabulary highlighters, and an illustrator.

Step 2 Group discussion

Step 3 Class presentation

1) Reading the assigned parts of the poem;
2) Paraphrasing important words and lines;
3) Interpreting the allegorical meanings;
4) Demonstrating the illustrations.

QUOTATIONS

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away;
Agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tyde and made my paynes his prey.

—Edmund Spenser

The poets' scrolls will outlive the monuments of stone. Genius survives; all else is claimed by death.

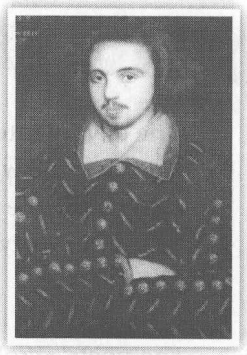
—Edmund Spenser

Unit 6

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)

Christopher Marlowe *was a dramatist and poet of the Elizabethan era. He is generally acknowledged as the greatest tragedy writer before Shakespeare, and the most prominent figure among "the University Wits". He reformed the genre and perfected the language and verse of dramatic works. Most important of all, Marlowe made blank verse the principal vehicle of expression in drama.*

Life and Writing



Christopher Marlowe

Marlowe was born two months before William Shakespeare was born. He was the son of a Canterbury shoemaker. He received education at Cambridge on a scholarship which was ordinarily awarded to students preparing for the ministry. He held the scholarship for six years but did not take holy orders. In 1587 the university hesitated to award him his master's degree because of a rumour that he had converted to Roman Catholicism and intended to go to the English college at Rheims to prepare for the priesthood. However, his degree was awarded on schedule. Rumour often had it that Marlowe was possibly a government spy.

Marlowe began to write plays at the university. Marlowe's first known play performed on the London stage was *Tamburlaine* (1587), a story of the conqueror Timur, who rose from a lowly shepherd to the king of the world, and conquered much of the known world. It was one of the first popular English plays in blank verse, and it is generally considered the beginning of the mature phase of the Elizabethan theatre. It is an expression of boundless energy and ambition, the impulse to strive constantly upward to absolute power.

In the following six years, he wrote five more plays. *The Jew of Malta*

depicts a Maltese Jew's barbarous revenge against the city authorities. *The Massacre at Paris*, a short, sketchy play, portrays the events surrounding the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, an event that English Protestants frequently invoked as the blackest event of Catholic treachery. This play, along with *Faustus*, is believed to have been Marlowe's last play, dealing with living monarchs and politicians, which was regarded as a very dangerous treasonable act at the time. It even addresses Elizabeth I herself in the last scene.

Marlowe was also the author of an unfinished minor epic, *Hero and Leander* (1598), and a popular lyric *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*. His translations include Ovid's *Amores* and the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*.

With the exception of the two parts of *Tamburlaine*, which were published in 1590, all Marlowe's other works were published posthumously. In 1599, his translation of Ovid was banned and copies publicly burned as part of Archbishop Whitgift's crackdown on offensive material. *Doctor Faustus* was first published in 1604, 11 years after Marlowe's death and at least 12 years after the first performance of the play.

On 30 May 1593, in a tavern in Deptford, Marlowe was killed by a dagger thrust after a quarrel over the bill. The jury concluded that the killing was an act in self-defence, and within a month the man was pardoned. Marlowe was buried in an unmarked grave in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Deptford, on 1 June 1593.

Marlowe is one of the first dramatists to use blank verse in English dramas, later the chief verse form is used by Shakespeare. **Blank verse** consists of lines of unrhymed iambic pentameter. Of all English metrical forms it is closest to the natural rhythms of English speech, and at the same time flexible and adaptive to diverse levels of discourse. It becomes the standard metre for Elizabethan and later poetic drama.

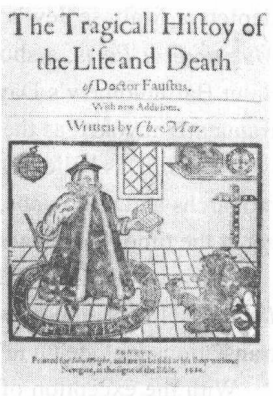
The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus

The tragedy is adapted from an old German legend, in its English translation, *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus* ("Faustus" is Latin for "Faust"). It was the first dramatic version of the Faust legend of a man selling his soul to the devil for power and knowledge.

Faustus is a man of vast knowledge, he has studied all the major academic subjects of his time, and now he turns to learn magic. To get the infinite power of knowledge, Faustus makes a deal with the devil. The devil agrees to give the

magic power and satisfy every demand of Faustus for a period of 24 years in exchange for the eternal damnation of Faustus' soul. Faustus signs the contract with the devil in his own blood.

With the magic power of knowledge he makes a series of impossible things happen: He plays tricks upon the Pope; he visits the spirit of Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia (356-323 BC); he even succeeds in having Helen, the most beautiful woman of ancient Troy, as his wife. The tragedy concludes that though his desire to live grows ever stronger at the appearance of heavenly Helen, he will soon be sent to hell.



Title page to a 1620 printing of *Doctor Faustus* showing Faustus studying and Mephistophilis rising through a stage trap door

The play is in blank verse and prose in 13 scenes (1604) or 20 scenes (1616). Blank verse is largely reserved for the main scenes while prose is used in the comic scenes. As in many Elizabethan plays, there is a chorus who provides an introduction and conclusion to the play and gives a hint to the events that have unfolded at the beginning of some acts.

Prologue

[Chorus.]
Not marching now in fields of Trasimene[1]
Where Mars[2] did mate the Carthaginians[3],
Nor sporting in the dalliance of love
In courts of kings where state is overturned,
Nor in the pomp of proud audacious deeds,

1 The Battle of Lake Trasimene (24 June 217 BC) was a Roman defeat in the Second Punic War between the Carthaginians under Hannibal and the Romans under the consul Gaius Flaminius. Hannibal was victorious. Lake Trasimenus was in central Italy.
2 Mars: the Roman god of war.
3 mate: join in battle with. Carthaginians: the army of Carthage, an ancient city of the northern shore of Africa.

Intends our Muse[1] to vaunt his heavenly verse:
Only this, gentles, we must perform
The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad.
To patient judgments we appeal our plaud[2]
And speak for Faustus in his infancy.
Now is he born, his parents base of stock,
In Germany, within a town called Rhodes[3];
Of riper years to Wittenberg he went,
Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up;
So soon he profits in divinity,
The fruitful plot of scholarism graced[4],
That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
Excelling all those sweet delight disputes
In heavenly matters of theology,
Till swollen with cunning[5], of a self-conceit,
His waxen wings[6] did mount above his reach
And melting, heavens conspired his overthrow.
For, falling to a devilish exercise
And glutted [now] with learning's golden gifts,
He surfeits upon cursed necromancy.
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss—
And this the man that in his study sits. [*Exit.*]

1 Muse: in Greek mythology, the Muses (Greek Μουσαι, Mousai: from a root meaning "mountain") are nine goddesses who embody the right evocation of myth, inspired through remembered and improvised songs and traditional music and dances. They have served as aids to an author, or as the true speaker, for which an author is only a mouthpiece. Originally, the invocation of the Muse was an indication that the speaker was working inside the poetic tradition, according to the established formulae.
2 plaud: applause.
3 town called Rhodes: a German town called Roda, in the Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg, near Jena.
4 The fruitful plot of scholarism graced: the garden of scholarship being adorned by him.
5 cunning: knowledge.
6 His waxen wings: an allusion to the myth of Icarus, who flew with the waxen wings, trying to escape from the Crete island. But he flew too near the sun and the wax melted, then he fell into the sea.

Act I
Scene I

[FAUSTUS in his study.]

Faust. Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess[1].
Having commenced[2], be a divine in show[3],
Yet level[4] at the end of every art
And live and die in Aristotle's works:
Sweet Analytics[5], 'tis thou hast ravished me! [*Reads.*]
Bene disserere est finis logices—[6]
Is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?
Affords this art no greater miracle?
Then read no more; thou hast attained the end.
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit:
Bid on kai me on[7] farewell, Galen[8] come,
Seeing *ubi desinit philosophus ibi incipit medicus*[9];
Be a physician, Faustus, heap up gold
And be eternized for some wondrous cure. [*Reads.*]
Summum bonum medicinæ sanitas—[10]
The end of physic is our body's health.
Why, Faustus, hast thou not attained that end?
Is not thy common talk sound aphorisms[11]?
Are not thy bills[12] hung up as monuments
Whereby whole cities have escaped the plague

1 profess: teach publicly.
2 commenced: graduated, i.e., received the doctor's degree.
3 show: external appearance.
4 level: aim.
5 Analytics: logic.
6 *Bene disserere est finis logices*: (*Latin*) to argue well is the end of logic.
7 *Bid on kai me on*: (*Greek*) being and not being.
8 Galen (AD 129-200): an ancient Greek physician.
9 *ubi desinit philosophus ibi incipit medicus*: where the philosopher leaves off, there the physician begins.
10 *Summum bonum medicinæ sanitas*: good health is the object of medicine. This and the previous quotation are from Aristotle.
11 sound aphorisms: reliable medical maxims.
12 bills: announcements, prescriptions for medical pronouncement.

And thousand desperate maladies been cured?
Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
Couldst thou make men to live eternally
Or, being dead, raise them to life again,
Then this profession were to be esteemed.
Physic, farewell. Where is Justinian[1]? [*Reads.*]
Si una eademque res legatur duobus,
Alter rem, alter valorem rei, etc.—[2]
A pretty case of paltry legacies! [*Reads.*]
Exhereditare filium non potest pater nisi —.[3]
Such is the subject of the Institute[4]
And universal body of the law[5].
His[6] study fits a mercenary drudge
Who aims at nothing but external trash,
Too servile and illiberal for me.
When all is done, divinity is best.
Jerome's Bible[7], Faustus, view it well: [*Reads.*]
Stipendium peccati mors est—Ha! *Stipendium, etc.*
The reward of sin is death? That's hard. [*Reads.*]
Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis veritas—
If we say that we have no sin
We deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us.
Why then belike
We must sin and so consequently die,
Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
What doctrine call you this, *Che sera, sera*[8]:

1 Justinian (AD 483-565): Eastern Roman Emperor, and he is best remembered for his reform of the legal code.
2 *Si una eademque res legatur duobus, Alter rem, alter valorem rei, etc.*: if one and the same thing is bequeathed to two person, one gets the thing and the other the value of the thing.
3 *Exhaereditare filium non potest pater nisi*: a father cannot disinherit the son except, etc.
4 of the Institute: of Justinian, under whom the Roman law was codified.
5 universal body of the law: church.
6 His: its.
7 Jerome's Bible: The Vulgate, Latin Bible formerly used by Catholics, based on the translation of St. Jerome in AD 405.
8 *Che sera, sera*: (*Spanish*) see next line.

What will be, shall be? Divinity, adieu!
These metaphysics[1] of magicians
And necromantic books are heavenly:
Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters—
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
O what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence
Is promised to the studious artisan[2]!
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command. Emperor and kings
Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds;
But his dominion that exceeds[3] in this
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man.
A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here Faustus, try thy brains[4] to gain a deity.

[*Enter WAGNER.*]
Wagner!
Commend me to my dearest friends,
The German Valdes and Cornelius;
Request them earnestly to visit me.
Wag. I will, sir. [*Exit.*]
Faust. Their conference[5] will be a greater help to me
Than all my labours, plod I ne'er so fast.

[*Enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.*]
Good Angel. O Faustus, lay that damned book aside,
And gaze not upon it lest it tempt thy soul,
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head.
Read, read the Scriptures; that is blasphemy.
Evil Angel. Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art,

1 metaphysics: basic principles.
2 artisan: here referring to practitioner of magic.
3 exceeds: excels.
4 try thy brains: tire my brains.
5 conference: discussion.

Wherein all nature's treasure is contained:
Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements. [*Exeunt Angels.*]
Faust. How am I glutted with conceit[1] of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.
I'll have them read me strange philosophy
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass[2],
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg;
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk[3],
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad.
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma[4] from our land,
And reign sole king of all the provinces.
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war
Than was the fiery keel[5] at Antwerp's bridge,
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.
Come, German Valdes and Cornelius,
And make me blest with your sage conference.

1 conceit: idea.
2 wall all Germany with brass: this reminds one of the stories about Roger Bacon (ca. 1214–1294), who placed considerable emphasis on empiricism, and has been presented as one of the earliest advocates of the modern scientific method in the West. He was intimately acquainted with the philosophical and scientific insights of the Arab world. Many writers of earlier times have been attracted to Roger Bacon as the epitome of a wise and subtle possessor of forbidden knowledge, similar to Faustus. This has a central role in the play *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* written by Robert Greene in about 1589. He planned to wall England with brass, according to Robert Greene's play.
3 silk: skill.
4 the Prince of Parma: the Spanish governor of the Netherlands.
5 the fiery keel: a ship filled with explosives used to blow up a bridge built by Parma in 1585 at the siege of Antwerp.

[*Enter VALDES and CORNELIUS*[1].]
Valdes, sweet Valdes, and Cornelius,
Know that your words have won me at the last
To practise magic and concealed arts;
Yet not your words only, but mine own fantasy,
That will receive no object[2], for my head,
But ruminates on necromantic skill.
Philosophy is odious and obscure,
Both law and physic are for petty wits;
Divinity is basest of the three,
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vile.
'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me.
Then, gentle friends, aid me in this attempt,
And I, that have with concise syllogisms
Gravelled[3] the pastors of the German church,
And made the flowering pride of Wittenberg
Swarm to my problems, as the infernal spirits
On sweet Musaeus[4], when he came to hell,
Will be as cunning as Agrippa was,
Whose shadows made all Europe honour him.
Vald. Faustus, these books, thy wit, and our experience
Shall make all nations to canonize us.
As Indian Moors[5] obey their Spanish lords,
So shall the subjects[6] of every element
Be always serviceable to us three.
Like lions shall they guard us when we please,
Like Almaine rutters[7] with their horsemen's staves,

1 Cornelius: the famous Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), a German magician and occult writer, astrologer, and alchemist, author of *The Vanity and Uncertainty of Arts and Science*, popularly supposed to have the power of calling up shades of the dead. He may also be considered an early feminist.
2 That will receive no object: that will pay no attention to physical reality.
3 Gravelled: confused.
4 Musaeus: the first Musaeus was a mythical seer and priest, the pupil or son of Orpheus, and is said to have been the founder of priestly poetry in Attica, Greece.
5 Indian Moors: American Indians.
6 the subjects: spirits.
7 Almaine rutters: troops, German horsemen.

Or Lapland giants, trotting by our sides;
Sometimes like women or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love.
From Venice shall they drag huge argosies,
And from America the golden fleece
That yearly stuffs old Philip's[1] treasury,
If learned Faustus will be resolute.
Faust. Valdes, as resolute am I in this
As thou to live; therefore object it not.
Corn. The miracles that magic will perform
Will make thee vow to study nothing else.
He that is grounded in astrology,
Enriched with tongues, well seen[2] in minerals,
Hath all the principles magic doth require:
Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renowned
And more frequented for this mystery
Than heretofore the Delphian oracle[3].
The spirits tell me they can dry the sea,
And fetch the treasure of all foreign wrecks,
Ay, all the wealth that our forefathers hid
Within the massy entrails of the earth.
Then tell me, Faustus, what shall we three want?
Faust. Nothing, Cornelius. O this cheers my soul!
Come show me some demonstrations magical,
That I may conjure in some lusty[4] grove,
And have these joys in full possession.
Vald. Then haste thee to some solitary grove,

1 Philip: King Philip II of Spain.
2 well seen: versed, well instructed.
3 the Delphian oracle: the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. Delphi is an archaeological site in Greece. In ancient times it was the site of the most important oracle of the god Apollo. Delphi was revered throughout the Greek world as the site of the (omphalos) stone, the centre of the universe. As the patron of Delphi ("Pythian Apollo") Apollo is an oracular god. He was the son of Zeus and Leto, and was regarded as the archer-god of medicine and healing and also a bringer of death-dealing plague; as the leader of the Muses and director of their choir, he is also god of music and poetry.
4 lusty: pleasant.

And bear wise Bacon's and Albanus'[1] works,
The Hebrew Psalter, and New Testament;
And whatsoever else is requisite
We will inform thee ere our conference cease.
Corn. Valdes, first let him know the words of art,
And then, all other ceremonies learned,
Faustus may try his cunning by himself.
Vald. First, I'll instruct thee in the rudiments,
And then wilt thou be perfecter than I.
Faust. Then come and dine with me, and after meat
We'll canvass every quiddity[2] thereof:
For ere I sleep, I'll try what I can do.
This night I'll conjure[3], though I die therefore. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene II

[*Before FAUSTUS' house.*]
[*Enter two SCHOLARS.*]
1st Schol. I wonder what's become of Faustus that was wont to make our schools ring with *sic probo*[4].
2nd Schol. That shall we know, for see here comes his boy.

[*Enter WAGNER.*]
1st Schol. How now, sirrah! Where's thy master?
Wag. God in heaven knows.
2nd Schol. Why, dost not thou know?
Wag. Yes, I know. But that follows not.
1st Schol. Go to, sirrah, leave your jesting, and tell us where he is.
Wag. That follows not necessary by force of argument, that you, being licentiate[5], should stand upon't; therefore, acknowledge your error, and be attentive.
2nd Schol. Why, didst thou not say thou knew'st?

1 Albanus': perhaps refers to Pietro d'Abano, a medieval alchemist.
2 quiddity: essential feature.
3 conjure: call upon spirits.
4 *sic probo*: "thus I prove"—a common formula in scholastic discussions.
5 being licentiate: as graduates.

Wag. Have you any witness on't?

1st Schol. Yes, sirrah, I heard you.

Wag. Ask my fellow if I be a thief.

2nd Schol. Well, you will not tell us.

Wag. Yes, sir, I will tell you; yet if you were not dunces, you would never ask me such a question; for is not he *corpus naturale*? And is not that *mobile*?[1] Then wherefore should you ask me such a question? But that I am by nature phlegmatic, slow to wrath, and prone to lechery—to love, I would say—it were not for you to come within forty feet of the place of execution[2], although I do not doubt to see you both hanged the next sessions. Thus having triumphed over you, I will set my countenance like a precisian[3], and begin to speak thus: Truly, my dear brethren, my master is within at dinner, with Valdes and Cornelius, as this wine, if it could speak, would inform your worships; and so the Lord bless you, preserve you, and keep you, my dear brethren, my dear brethren. [*Exit.*]

1st Schol. Nay, then, I fear he has fallen into that damned art, for which they two are infamous through the world.

2nd Schol. Were he a stranger, and not allied to me, yet should I grieve for him. But come, let us go and inform the Rector[4], and see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim him.

1st Schol. Aye, but I fear me nothing can reclaim him.

2nd Schol. Yet let us try what we can do. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene III

[*A Grove.*]

[*Enter FAUSTUS to conjure.*]

Faust. Now that the gloomy shadow of the earth,
Longing to view Orion's[5] drizzling look,

1 *corpus naturale*? And is not that *mobile*: *Corpus naturale et mobile* (natural, movable matter) was the current scholastic expression for the subject-matter of physics. Wagner is parodying the language of learning he hears around the university.
2 the place of execution: the dining room.
3 a precisian: a Puritan. The following speech of his is in the style of the Puritans.
4 the Rector: the head of a university.
5 Orion: a rainy constellation (猎户座), appearing at the beginning of winter.

Leaps from the antarctic world unto the sky,
And dims the welkin[1] with her pitchy breath,
Faustus, begin thine incantations,
And try if devils will obey thy hest,
Seeing thou hast prayed and sacrificed to them.
Within this circle is Jehovah's name,
[*He draws the circle on the ground.*]
Forward and backward anagrammatised;
The abbreviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct[2] to the Heavens,
And characters of signs and erring[3] stars,
By which the spirits are enforced to rise.
Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute,
And try the uttermost magic can perform. [*Thunder.*]

Sint mihi Dei Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen triplex Jehovae! Ignei, aerii, aquatani spiritus, salvete! Orientis princeps Belzebub, inferni ardentis monarcha, et Demogorgon, propitiamus vos, ut appareat et surgat Mephistophilis. Quid tu moraris? Quid tu moraris? Per Jehovam, Gehennam et consecratam aquam quam nunc spargo, signumque cruces quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse nunc surgat nobis dicatus Mephistophilis! [4]

[*Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS in shape of a dragon.*]
I charge thee to return and change thy shape;
Thou art too ugly to attend on me.
Go, and return an old Franciscan friar;
That holy shape becomes a devil best. [*Exit MEPH.*]
I see there's virtue in my heavenly words.

1 the welkin: (*poetic*) the sky.
2 adjunct: heavenly body.
3 erring: wondering.
4 *Sint mihi Dei...Mephistophilis!*: be propitious to me, gods of Acheron! May the triple deity of Jehovah prevail! Spirits of fire, air, water, hail! Belzebub, Prince of the East, monarch of burning hell, and Demogorgon, we propitiate ye, that Mephistophilis may appear and rise. Why dost thou delay? By Jehovah, Gehenna, and the holy water which now I sprinkle, and the sign of the cross which now I make, and by our prayer, may Mephistophilis now summoned by us arise! Mephistophilis: a name given to one of the chief demons of Christian mythology in European literary traditions, and is frequently used as an alternative form of Satan or the Devil.

Who would not be proficient in this art?
How pliant is this Mephistophilis,
Full of obedience and humility!
Such is the force of magic and my spells.
Now, Faustus, thou art conjuror laureate,
Thou canst command great Mephistophilis:
Quin regis Mephistophilis, fratris imagine![1]

[*Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS like a Friar.*]
Meph. Now, Faustus, what would'st thou have me to do?
Faust. I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.
Meph. I am a servant to great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave;
No more than he commands must we perform.
Faust. Did not he charge thee to appear to me?
Meph. No, I came hither of mine own accord.
Faust. Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? Speak.
Meph. That was the cause, but yet *per accidens*[2];
For when we hear one rack[3] the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come, unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damned:
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity,
And pray devoutly to the Prince of Hell.
Faust. So Faustus hath
Already done; and holds this principle,
There is no chief but only Belzebub,
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.

1 *Quin regis Mephistophilis, fratris imagine*: for indeed thou hast power in the image of thy brother Mephistophilis.
2 *per accidens*: by the immediate, not absolute cause.
3 rack: twist in anagrams.

This word "damnation" terrifies not him,
For he confounds hell in Elysium[1]:
His ghost be with the old philosophers.
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me what is that Lucifer thy lord?
Meph. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.
Faust. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?
Meph. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly loved of God.
Faust. How comes it then that he is Prince of devils?
Meph. O, by aspiring pride and insolence;
For which God threw him from the face of Heaven.
Faust. And what are you that you live with Lucifer?
Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damned with Lucifer.
Faust. Where are you damned?
Meph. In hell.
Faust. How comes it then that thou art out of hell?
Meph. 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?
O Faustus! leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.
Faust. What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate[2]
For being deprived of the joys of Heaven?
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.
Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer,
Seeing Faustus hath incurred eternal death
By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity:
Say, he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four and twenty years,

1 confounds hell in Elysium: Heaven and Hell are indifferent to him.
2 passionate: sorrowful.

Letting him live in all voluptuousness,
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will.
Go and return to mighty Lucifer,
And meet me in my study at midnight,
And then resolve me of thy master's mind[1].
Meph. I will, Faustus. [*Exit.*]
Faust. Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.
By him I'll be great Emperor of the world,
And make a bridge through the moving air,
To pass the ocean with a band of men;
I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,
And make that [country] continent to Spain,
And both contributory to my crown.
The Emperor shall not live but by my leave,
Nor any potentate of Germany.
Now that I have obtained what I desire,
I'll live in speculation[2] of this art
Till Mephistophilis return again. [*Exit.*]

Critical Points

Doctor Faustus: Religious and Historical Interpretations

The tragedy tells a story in which a man sells his soul to the devil for power and knowledge. It shows the decay of a person who chooses material gains over spiritual belief. A religious interpretation is that Faustus' fall is caused by the same pride and ambition that caused the fall of the angels in Heaven, and of humanity in the Garden of Eden. The aspirations are doomed to a failure,

1 resolve me of thy master's mind: inform me of his decision.
2 speculation: study.

but Marlowe makes such aspirations magnificent.

Almost all of Marlowe's tragedies depict heroes who passionately seek power. Each of the heroes is striving beyond the bounds of human capacity, or the limits imposed upon human achievement. Tamburlaine aims at the sweet fruition of an earthly crown; the Jew of Malta lusts for infinite riches in a little room; Faustus, a typical of Marlowe's heroes, seeks the power of knowledge.

Faustus, as a man in the Renaissance, is a product of the environment he is in. The Renaissance encouraged the new discovery of the world and man. It made it possible for a man of humble origin to carve out a status of power and affluence. In this sense, Faustus' versatile genius and endless exploration for the new boundary of human potential represents the spirit of the age.

Questions

1 What do you learn from the opening speech uttered by the chorus? What is the function of the speech in the structure of the whole play?
2 What is forbidden knowledge? Why does Faustus want to study this type of knowledge after reviewing all of his achievements? What a price will he have to pay if he pursues the knowledge? Evaluate the deal and give your comments.
3 What does Mephistophilis tell Faustus about Lucifer and Hell? How is Mephistophilis' description related to the theme of the play?
4 How do you interpret the minor characters (e.g., Good Angel, Bad Angel, Wagner, Valedes and Cornelius) in relation to the theme of the play?

Class Activities

Contrast the difference of the relationship of Faustus 1) with Good and Bad Angels, Valedes and Cornelius; 2) with Mephistophilis.

Step 1 Group division and discussion

Divide the class into four groups. Each group has at least four students. Each group focuses the discussion on one of those relationships.

Step 2 Presentation by representatives

Each group chooses one representative to present their findings in the discussion.

QUOTATIONS

Honour is purchas'd by the deeds we do.

—Christopher Marlowe

What are kings, when regiment is gone,
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?

—Christopher Marlowe

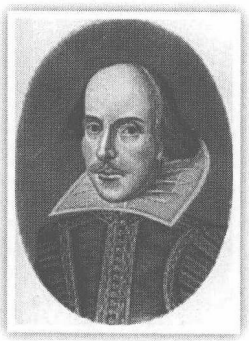
Unit 7

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

William Shakespeare *was the greatest English dramatist, widely regarded as the greatest writer of the English language, and as the world's preeminent dramatist. He wrote approximately 38 plays and 154 sonnets, as well as a variety of other poems. Already popular in his own lifetime, Shakespeare became more famous after his death and his works were admired by many prominent cultural figures through the centuries.*

Life Experience

Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, a charming little village in Warwickshire. His father was a glover and alderman; his mother, a daughter of the gentry. At the age of seven, he was sent to the local grammar school which he attended for six years and may have learned "little Latin and less Greek". When he was 14, his father fell into debt, and he left school to be a country schoolmaster to help support his family. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway at her 26. They had three children. It is said that Shakespeare once had poached on the lands of a local rich landlord, stealing venison and rabbits. He was caught by the keepers and severely punished. Later he was compelled to leave Stratford and seek refuge in London.



Shakespeare
Image of Shakespeare from the *First Folio* (1623), the first collected edition of his plays

Shakespeare arrived in London in 1586, at the age of 22. At that time the drama was rapidly gaining popularity among the people. He kept horses for the gentlemen outside the theatre. Then he became an actor of some dramatic troupe, playing minor roles. Gradually he established long and fruitful connection with the most successful troupe, the Lord Chamberlain's

Men, which later became King's Men. He not only acted with this company, but eventually became a leading shareholder and the principal playwright.

William Shakespeare's birthplace

Shakespeare grew rich enough during his stay in London to buy a property in London and own the second largest house in Stratford. He gradually abandoned the active dramatic work in London for the quiet life of a country gentleman. In about 1610, he retired to his native town. He died on 23 April, the anniversary of his birth, in 1616. His son Hamnet had died in the Black Plague in 1596. There are no direct descendants of the poet and playwright alive today.

He was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon. A monument on the wall nearest his grave features a bust showing Shakespeare posed in the act of writing. Each year on his claimed birthday, a new quill pen is placed in the writing hand of the bust. He may have written the epitaph on his tombstone:

> Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear,
> To dig the dust enclosèd here.
> Blest be the man that spares these stones,
> And cursed be he that moves my bones.

His contemporary poet and playwright Ben Jonson (1572-1637) wrote in his poem entitled "To the Memory of My Beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us":

> Triumph, my Britain; thou hast one to show
> To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
> He was not of an age, but for all time!

Major Works

Shakespeare's dramatic career can be divided into four periods.

The first period is the period of his apprenticeship in playwriting and his rise to the summit of his craft. During this period from 1590 to 1594 he wrote four chronicle history plays and four comedies, among which are *Henry VI,*

Part I, II, III (1590-1592), *Richard III* (1593); *The Comedy of Errors* (1592), *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1594) and *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594).

The second period sees a rapid growth and development from 1595 to1600. Some famous plays of this period are *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595), *Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice, Much Ado About Nothing* (1598), *The Merry Wives of Windsor, As You Like It* (1599), and some history plays: *King John* (1595), *Richard II* (1595), *Henry IV, Part I, II* (1597), *Julius Caesar* and *Henry V* (1599). They show more careful and artistic work, better plot, and a marked increase in the insight of human nature.

Besides playwriting, the period also witnesses Shakespeare's creation of his two long narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) and some sonnets. His third narrative poem is *A Lover's Complaint.*

In Shakespeare's comedies, the heroes and heroines fight against destiny itself and mould their own fate according to their own free will. The general spirit of the comedies is optimism.

Shakespeare's history plays dramatise two centuries of English history from Richard II to Henry VIII. They show the horrors of civil war, the necessity for national unity, the responsibilities of an efficient ruler, and the importance of legitimate succession to the throne. These ideas were of vital interest to the audience of the age.

The third period is a period of great tragedies, from 1601 to 1608. Four of his greatest tragedies are completed in this period. They are: *Hamlet* (1601), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* and *Macbeth* in the same year 1605. Other plays in this period include: *All's Well That Ends Well* (1602), *Measure for Measure* in the same year with *Othello, Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), and *Timon of Athens* (1607). The economic and social crises began at the end of the reign of Elizabeth. The cooperation between the Crown and the bourgeoisie was now over. The crown tended to be absolutist and the bourgeoisie struggled for free development. It was in this atmosphere of general unrest that Shakespeare created his great tragedies.

The fourth period from 1608 to 1612 is his last period of creative life, with three comedies and a minor history play: *Cymbeline* (1609), *The Winter's Tale* (1610), *The Tempest* and *Henry VIII* (1612). This is called the period of "romances" or "tragicomedies".

Among the most famous and critically acclaimed of Shakespeare's plays are *Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Othello, The Tempest, Twelfth Night, The*

Merchant of Venice, Richard III and *Macbeth,* of which *King Lear, Hamlet, Othello*, and *Macbeth* are regarded as his four greatest tragedies.

In his lifetime, Shakespeare seems to have made no attempt to collect and publish his works, or even to save his manuscripts, which were carelessly left to the stage managers of the theatres. He only got his sonnets published in 1609. After his death, two members of Shakespeare's company, John Heminges and Henry Condell, collected 37 plays and published them in one volume in 1623. This edition is known as *The First Folio.*

There are two sets of complete works in Chinese translation, one by Zhu Shenghao (朱生豪), and the other by Liang Shiqiu (梁实秋).

Shakespeare's Sonnets

A **sonnet** is a lyric poem consisting of a single stanza of 14 iambic pentameter lines with various rhyme schemes. There are two major patterns of rhyme in sonnets written in the English language: the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet and English or Shakespearean sonnet. First written by the Italian poet Petrarch (1304-1374), **Petrarchan sonnet** falls into two main parts: an octave (eight lines) rhyming *abbaabba* followed by a sestet (six lines) rhyming *cdecde* or some variant, such as *cdccdc*. There was one notable variant, the **Spenserian sonnet**, in which Spenser linked each quatrain to the next by a continuing rhyme: *abab bcbc cdcd ee.* Shakespeare's sonnet falls into three quatrains and a concluding couplet with the rhyme scheme *abab cdcd efef gg*. This form is now known as the **Shakespearean sonnet**. In the three quatrains the theme is put forward and developed, and in the couplet the sonnet ends with a surprise conclusion or a shift of ideas.

Shakespeare's sonnets are a collection of 154 poems that deal with such themes as love, beauty, and mortality. The sonnets were written over a number of years, probably beginning in the early 1590s.

Most of them were probably addressed to an unnamed young man as in sonnets 1-126; some are addressed to a woman commonly known as the "Dark Lady" because her hair is said to be black and her skin "dun" as in sonnets 127-152. It is not known whether the characters are fictional or autobiographical.

The writing of sonnets either to one's love, patron or a friend, is a fashion then. In many of them Shakespeare deals with the problem of time passing, sometimes optimistically, sometimes in a mood of despair.

Sonnet 18

This is a conventional theme in Elizabethan sonnets: immortality of beauty. The poem is a monologue in the form of an address.

The poem starts with a question, in which the poet compares his beloved to summer. In the second line the poet says his beloved is more beautiful and less extreme than summer both in outward appearance and character. The next four lines describe the less pleasant aspects of summer. In the seventh and eighth lines the poet complains that every beauty will become less one day. The ending couplet explains and summarises the theme, that is, poetry is immortal and makes beauty immortal.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? [1]
Thou art[2] more lovely and more temperate[3].
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date[4].
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven[5] shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair[6] sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed[7];
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st[8];
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade[9],
When in eternal lines[10] to time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

1 The first line is a rhetorical question: I'd like to compare you to the summer season, which is the most lovely of the year.
2 Thou art: you are.
3 temperate: moderate.
4 Summer's lease is the use of personification, indicating that summer lasts for too short a duration.
5 the eye of heaven: the sun.
6 every fair from fair: the beauty of every beautiful thing.
7 untrimmed: stripped of beauty.
8 thou ow'st: you own.
9 Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade: death can not brag to bring you to the underworld.
10 eternal lines: lines of poetry and lines of your shape.

Sonnet 29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,[1]
I all alone beweep my outcast state[2],
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless[3] cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope[4],
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,[5]
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,[6]
With what I most enjoy contented least;[7]
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply[8] I think on thee, and then my state[9],
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state[10] with kings.

Sonnet 66

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,[11]

1 When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes: when I am in bad luck and disfavoured.
2 beweep my outcast state: weep over my condition of being rejected by society.
3 bootless: useless, unfruitful.
4 more rich in hope: hope to be more rich.
5 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed: I hope to have the same appearance as this man and have friends of that man's. "Him" here indicates different persons.
6 art: skill, learning; scope: range of opportunity or ability.
7 With what I most enjoy contented least: I felt least happy with what I have.
8 Haply: on occasion.
9 state: condition.
10 state: the use of pun, with the meaning of either "condition" or "throne".
11 As, to behold desert a beggar born: such as, to see a meritorious person born to be a beggar. desert: a deserving person, a worthwhile person. In each succeeding line either praiseworthy or degenerate qualities are personified. Thus needy nothing, purest faith, gilded honour, maiden virtue, right perfection, etc., all refer to the person or persons endowed with such characteristics.

And needy nothing trimmed in jollity[1],
And purest faith unhappily forsworn[2],
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced[3],
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted[4],
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced[5],
And strength by limping sway disabled[6],
And art made tongue-tied by authority[7],
And folly doctor-like controlling skill[8],
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:[9]
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone[10],
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

Romeo and Juliet

Romeo and Juliet, based on a poem *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), is one of Shakespeare's earliest theatrical plays. The characters' tragic suicides end a long-running family feud, which is thought to be the most archetypal love story of the Renaissance.

The play begins with a prologue by a Chorus in the form of a Shakespearean sonnet. The Chorus explains to the audience that the story concerns two

1 needy nothing trimmed in jollity: a nonentity dressed up in fine clothes. needy nothing: one who is needy because he is lacking in all good qualities; trimmed in jollity: undeservingly done up in frivolous and expensive clothes and ornaments.
2 purest faith: one who exhibits trust and trustworthiness; one who is pure in heart; unhappily: unluckily; wretchedly; forsworn: betrayed.
3 gilded honour shamefully misplaced: great honour shamefully assigned to a mean position. gilded honour: the pomp and paraphernalia of office and authority.
4 maiden virtue rudely strumpeted: an innocent maiden forced to become a whore. Figuratively, virtue is forced into evil ways.
5 right perfection: genuine, honest perfection; disgraced: banished from favour.
6 strength by limping sway disabled: a person of strength made weak by influence and corruption of a feeble leader. limping sway: influence, which is typified by a crippled figure working behind the scenes.
7 art: skill, knowledge; authority: censorship operated in Elizabethan time.
8 And folly doctor-like controlling skill: a person flaunting academic dress controls those who are more knowledgeable than him.
9 captive: having been captured, enslaved; attending: serving in a menial capacity; taking instruction from; captain ill: an evil person in a position of authority.
10 from these would I be gone: I wish to escape from it all.

noble families of Verona, the Capulets and the Montagues, that have feuded for generations. The prologue also explains that the lovers' tragic suicides "bury their parents' strife". At a feast given by Capulet, which Romeo attends disguised by a mask, he sees and falls in love with Juliet, Capulet's daughter. In the famous balcony scene, the two eloquently declare their love for each other. The young lovers decide to marry without informing their parents, with the Nurse as an intermediary.

Romeo and Juliet
In the famous balcony scene, by Ford Madox Brown

With the help of Friar Laurence, they are wedded the next day. A quarrel between Mercutio, a friend of Romeo, with Tybalt, of the Capulet family, becomes a fight. Romeo attempts to reason with Tybalt, but when Mercutio falls, Romeo draws and Tybalt is killed. Romeo is banished; Juliet's parents propose to marry her to Count Paris. Juliet consults Friar Laurence, who suggests a daring scheme to relieve her from the forced marriage and to give Romeo an opportunity to take her away. On the night before the wedding Juliet drinks a sleeping drug that will make her appear dead for 42 hours. She is taken to the tomb. Romeo, informed of Juliet's funeral, hastens back and goes to the tomb. After a last kiss on Juliet's lips, he drinks the poison he prepares beforehand and dies. Finally Juliet wakes, only to find Romeo dead, and she chooses to end her life beside her lover. Montague and Capulet are reconciled at the sacrifice of the two young lives.

Despite victims of feudal families, Romeo and Juliet are praised as images of true love, symbols of faithfulness. Though a tragedy, the play is optimistic in spirit. It is a song of the youth and love, wit and courage of the young men and women, against the drab background of feudalism. The play is full of poetry and romance.

Act II Scene II

Capulet's Orchard

[*Enter ROMEO.*]

ROMEO He jests at scars that never felt a wound.
[*JULIET appears above at a window.*]
But, soft[1]! what light through yonder[2] window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery[3] is but sick and green[4]
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business[5], do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres[6] till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright[7]
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,

1 soft: (*exclamation*) be silent.
2 yonder: there, a distance the person or thing indicated can be seen.
3 vestal livery: virginal dress.
4 sick and green: pale and sickly. Green was the colour associated with maids.
5 business: mission.
6 spheres: orbits.
7 stream so bright: the brightness of her eyes would flow through the sky.

That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET Ay me!

ROMEO She speaks.
O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes[1]
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?[2]
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO [*Aside.*]
Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes[3]
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name[4],
And for that name[5] which is no part of thee
Take all myself[6].

ROMEO I take thee at thy word:

1 Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes: people turn upward their eyes to look at the angel with wonder.
2 wherefore art thou Romeo: why the person I fall in love is Romeo? Or why is your name Romeo? "Wherefore" here means "why" not "where"—Juliet is lamenting that Romeo is a Montague, and thus her enemy.
3 owes: owns.
4 doff thy name: discard your name.
5 And for that name: in return for giving up your name.
6 Take all myself: I'd rather give you all myself.

Call me but love, and I'll be new baptised;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.
JULIET What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night[1]
So stumblest on my counsel[2]?
ROMEO By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.
JULIET My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?
ROMEO Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.
JULIET How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.
ROMEO With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do, that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.
JULIET If they do see thee, they will murder thee.
ROMEO Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity[3].
JULIET I would not for the world they saw thee here.
ROMEO I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And but thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued[4], wanting of thy love.
JULIET By whose direction found'st thou out this place?
ROMEO By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.

1 bescreen'd in night: hid in darkness.
2 stumblest on my counsel: come unexpectedly upon my inner thought.
3 enmity: hatred, hostility.
4 prorogued: delayed; postponed.

I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.[1]

JULIET Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say "Ay,"
And I will take thy word: yet if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries[2]
Then say, Jove[3] laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond[4],
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light:
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange[5], I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion: therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROMEO Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

JULIET O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

1 I am no pilot...would adventure for such merchandise: Romeo compares Juliet as the vast shore on the farthest sea, he himself as a merchant venturer, one who would make risky voyages to be with Juliet.
2 perjuries: the breaking of promises.
3 Jove: also known as Jupiter, the head of the Roman gods. In Roman mythology, Jove holds the same role as Zeus in the Greek pantheon.
4 fond: tender and affectionate in a foolish or overly indulgent way.
5 strange: reserved, aloof.

ROMEO What shall I swear by?
JULIET Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry[1],
And I'll believe thee.
ROMEO If my heart's dear love—
JULIET Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night;
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say "It lightens." Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!
ROMEO O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?
JULIET What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?
ROMEO The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.
JULIET I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.
ROMEO Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?
JULIET But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.
[*Nurse calls within.*]
I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu![2]
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.
[*Exit, above.*]
ROMEO O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard.
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

1 the god of my idolatry: the object of my excessive devotion. idolatry: worship.
2 adieu: (*French*) goodbye.

[*Re-enter JULIET, above.*]

JULIET Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee, my lord, throughout the world.
Nurse [*Within.*]
Madam!
JULIET I come, anon.—But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee—
Nurse [*Within.*]
Madam!
JULIET By and by, I come:—
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:
To-morrow will I send.
ROMEO So thrive my soul—
JULIET A thousand times good night!
[Exit, above.]
ROMEO A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.
Love goes towards love, as schoolboys from their books,
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.
[*Retiring.*]
[*Re-enter JULIET, above.*]
JULIET Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle[1] back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;[2]
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

1 tassel-gentle: a falconry term for a male hawk, especially the male peregrine. Falconry, or hawking is the art or sport involving birds of prey to hunt or pursue game.
2 Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud: this explains Juliet's condition at home. She is under her father's strict discipline and must whisper as though she is hoarse to avoid detection.

ROMEO It is my soul that calls upon my name:
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!
JULIET Romeo!
ROMEO My dear?
JULIET At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?
ROMEO At the hour of nine.
JULIET I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.
ROMEO Let me stand here till thou remember it.
JULIET I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.
ROMEO And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.
JULIET 'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone:
And yet no further than a wanton's bird[1];
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.
ROMEO I would I were thy bird.
JULIET Sweet, so would I:
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.
[*Exit above.*]
ROMEO Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,
His help to crave, and my dear hap[2] to tell.
[*Exit.*]

1 a wanton's bird: the pet of an undisciplined, spoiled child.
2 hap: good luck or news.

Critical Points

Shakespeare's Contribution to English Drama and Language

Shakespeare is a genius of versatile literary genres. He is a master of comedy, tragedy and history plays; he was skilled in many poetic forms: the song, the sonnet, the couplet, and the dramatic blank verse.[1]

He is a great master of the English language. He commanded a vocabulary larger than any other English writers. He used 16,000 words in his works. Many of his coinages and turns of phrase have become everyday usage in English life.

His eternal charm comes from his profound understanding of human behaviour under different circumstances, and excellent application of poetic and dramatic means to present a lively panorama of human life.

Shakespeare's poetic artistry helped raise the status of popular theatre, permitting it to be admired by intellectuals as well as by those seeking pure entertainment. The popularity of Shakespeare is not confined to the English people and to his own age. He is now generally accepted as the greatest English dramatist.

Questions

1 Do research on the historical background of *Romeo and Juliet*. Why is the story thought to be the most archetypal love story of the Renaissance?

2 What is the eternal charm you find in the language, characters and the

1 The complete works of William Shakespeare in genres:
Tragedies: *Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, King Lear, Hamlet, Othello, Titus Andronicus, Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Troilus and Cressida, Timon of Athens;*
Comedies: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, Cymbeline, Love's Labour's Lost, Measure for Measure, The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Taming of the Shrew, The Comedy of Errors, The Tempest, Twelfth Night,* or *What You Will, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Two Noble Kinsmen, The Winter's Tale;*
Histories: *King John, Richard II, Henry IV, Part 1, Henry IV, Part 2, Henry V, Henry VI, Part 1, Henry VI, Part 2, Henry VI, Part 3, Richard III, Henry VIII;*
Poems and Sonnets: *Sonnets, Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, The Passionate Pilgrim, The Phoenix and the Turtle, A Lover's Complaint.*

theme of the play? Why does the play still win the favour of modern youth?

Class Activities

Writing Practice:

Step 1 Rewrite the story of *Romeo and Juliet* in the mood of different characters and settings, each story focusing on different themes.

Step 2 Suppose you were Romeo, write a letter to Juliet to express your feelings for her after the first sight of her at the party.

Julius Caesar

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, more commonly known simply as *Julius Caesar*, is a tragedy written in 1599. It portrays the conspiracy against the Roman dictator, Julius Caesar, his assassination and its aftermath. It is the first of Shakespeare's Roman plays, based on true events from Roman history.

Marcus Brutus is Caesar's close friend; his ancestors were famed for driving the tyrannical King Tarquin from Rome. Brutus allows himself to be cajoled into joining a group of conspiring senators because of a growing suspicion that Caesar intends to turn republican Rome into a monarchy under his own rule.

After ignoring the soothsayer as well as his wife's premonitions, Caesar comes to the Senate. The conspirators create a superficial motive for the assassination by means of a petition. As Caesar, predictably, rejects the petition, Casca grazes Caesar in the back of his neck, and the others follow in stabbing him; Brutus is the last. At this point, Caesar utters the famous line, "Et tu, Brute?" ("And you, Brutus?") The conspirators make clear that they did this act for Rome, not for their own purposes and do not attempt to flee the scene but act victoriously.

After Caesar's death, however, Mark Antony, with a subtle and eloquent speech over Caesar's corpse turns public opinion against the assassins by manipulating the emotions of the common people, in contrast to the rational tone of Brutus' speech. Antony rouses the mob to drive the conspirators from Rome.

Things go badly for the conspirators during the battle with Mark Antony and Caesar's adopted son, Octavius; both Brutus and Cassius choose to commit suicide rather than to be captured. The play ends with a tribute to Brutus by Antony, who has remained "the noblest Roman of them all" and hints at the friction between Mark Antony and Octavius which will characterise another of Shakespeare's Roman plays, *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Act III Scene II

The same. The Forum[1]

[*Enter Brutus and Cassius, with a throng of Citizens.*]

1 The Forum: the Roman Forum, an open public space in the middle of a Roman city.

CITIZENS: We will be satisfied[1]; let us be satisfied.

BRUTUS: Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.—
Cassius, go you into the other street
And part the numbers[2].—
Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;
Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;
And public reasons shall be rendered
Of Caesar's death.

FIRST CITIZEN: I will hear Brutus speak.

SECOND CITIZEN: I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons,
When severally we hear them rendered.

[*Exit Cassius, with some of the Citizens. Brutus goes into therostrum.*]

THIRD CITIZEN: The noble Brutus is ascended: silence!

BRUTUS: Be patient till the last[3].

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! Hear me for my cause; and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom; and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer,—Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all freemen? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman[4]? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

1 satisfied: informed.
2 part the numbers: divide the crowd.
3 till the last: till the end of the speech.
4 a bondman: a slave.

CITIZENS: None, Brutus, none.

BRUTUS: Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus.[1] The question of his death is enroll'd in the Capitol[2], his glory not extenuated[3], wherein he was worthy; nor his offenses enforced, for which he suffered death.

[*Enter Antony and others, with Caesar's body.*]

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony, who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth[4]; as which of you shall not? With this I depart—that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

CITIZENS: Live, Brutus! live, live!

FIRST CITIZEN: Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

SECOND CITIZEN: Give him a statue with his ancestors[5].

THIRD CITIZEN: Let him be Caesar.

FOURTH CITIZEN: Caesar's better parts
Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

FIRST CITIZEN: We'll bring him to his house with shouts and clamours.

BRUTUS: My countrymen,—

SECOND CITIZEN: Peace! silence! Brutus speaks.

FIRST CITIZEN: Peace, ho!

BRUTUS: Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:
Do grace to[6] Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Caesar's glory; which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allow'd to make.

1 I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus: I will allow you to do as much to me as I have done to Caesar (if you should find me as ambitious as Caesar).
2 enroll'd in the Capitol: recorded in the Temple. Capitol: the temple of Jupiter at Rome, built on the Capitoline hill, where the senators of Rome met.
3 extenuated: undervalued.
4 a place in the commonwealth: a free citizen's place in the Republic.
5 his ancestors: referring to Lucius Junius Brutus, who was the founder of the Roman Republic and traditionally one of the first Consuls in 509 BC.
6 Do grace to: show respect to.

I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

[*Exit.*]

FIRST CITIZEN: Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.
THIRD CITIZEN: Let him go up into the public chair;
We'll hear him.—Noble Antony, go up.
ANTONY: For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you[1].

[*Goes up.*]

FOURTH CITIZEN: What does he say of Brutus?
THIRD CITIZEN: He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholding to us all.
FOURTH CITIZEN: 'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.
FIRST CITIZEN: This Caesar was a tyrant.
THIRD CITIZEN: Nay, that's certain:
We are blest that Rome is rid of him.
SECOND CITIZEN: Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.
ANTONY: You gentle Romans,—
CITIZENS: Peace, ho! let us hear him.
ANTONY: Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones:[2]
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault;
And grievously hath Caesar answered it[3].
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,—
For Brutus is an honourable man;

1 beholding to you: obliged to you.
2 The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones: after their death the evil things that men did are always remembered, while the good deeds are often forgotten.
3 answered it: paid for it.

So are they all, all honourable men,—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers[1] fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff[2]:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal[3]
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once,—not without cause:
What cause withholds you, then, to mourn for him?—
O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason!—Bear with me[4];
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it comes back to me.

FIRST CITIZEN: Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

SECOND CITIZEN: If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Caesar has had great wrong.

THIRD CITIZEN: Has he not, masters?

1 the general coffers: the state treasury.
2 sterner stuff: strict nature.
3 on the Lupercal: a cave at the foot of the Palatine Hill in Rome. In the legend of Rome's foundation, Romulus and Remus were found there by the lactating female wolf who suckled them until they were found by Faustulus. The priests of Lupercus later celebrated certain ceremonies of the Lupercalia there. The Lupercalia was an annual very ancient, possibly pre-Roman pastoral festival, held on 15 February to honour Faunus, god of fertility and forests.
4 Bear with me: be patient with me.

I fear there will a worse come in his place.

FOURTH CITIZEN: Mark'd ye His words? He would not take the crown;
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

FIRST CITIZEN: If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

SECOND CITIZEN: Poor soul! His eyes are red as fire with weeping.

THIRD CITIZEN: There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

FOURTH CITIZEN: Now mark him; he begins again to speak.

ANTONY: But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world: now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.
O masters, if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,[1]
I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honourable men:
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself, and you,
Than I will wrong such honourable men.
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar,—
I found it in his closet[2],—'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament,—
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read,—
And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds,
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood;
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

FOURTH CITIZEN: We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.

CITIZENS: The will, the will! We will hear Caesar's will.[3]

ANTONY: Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;
It is not meet[4] you know how Caesar loved you.

1 if I were disposed to stir/Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage: Antony is stirring up the emotions of the citizens and driving them to riot.
2 closet: private room.
3 The will, the will! We will hear Caesar's will: Antony tactically delays the reading of the will in order to rouse the crowd's curiosity, and increase their impatience.
4 meet: suitable; fitful.

You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;
And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad.
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;
For if you should, O, what would come of it!

FOURTH CITIZEN: Read the will! we'll hear it, Antony;
You shall read us the will,—Caesar's will!

ANTONY: Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it: [1]
I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar; I do fear it.

FOURTH CITIZEN: They were traitors: honourable men!

CITIZENS: The will! The testament!

SECOND CITIZEN: They were villains, murderers. The will! Read the will!

ANTONY: You will compel me, then, to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar,
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?

CITIZENS: Come down.

SECOND CITIZEN: Descend.

[*He comes down.*]

THIRD CITIZEN: You shall have leave.

FOURTH CITIZEN: A ring! Stand round.

FIRST CITIZEN: Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

SECOND CITIZEN: Room for Antony!—most noble Antony!

ANTONY: Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.

CITIZENS: Stand back; room! Bear back.

ANTONY: If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle: I remember
The first time ever Caesar put it on;
'Twas on a Summer's evening, in his tent,

1 I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it: I've gone too far by telling you about this.

That day he overcame the Nervii[1].
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it, —
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved[2]
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face[3],
Even[4] at the base of Pompey's statua[5],
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
O, now you weep; and, I perceive, you feel
The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,

1 the Nervii: one of the most powerful Belgic tribes living east of the Scheldt in north-eastern Gaul in the first century BC. The Nervii were part of the Belgic alliance that resisted Julius Caesar in 57 BC. Julius Caesar defeated them, and considered them the most warlike of the Belgic tribes.
2 to be resolved: to be relieved form doubts.
3 in his mantle muffling up his face: covering up his face with his gown. Antony is dramatically describing the death of Caesar.
4 Even: (*for emphasis*) exactly.
5 Pompey (106–48 BC): a distinguished military and political leader of the late Roman republic. Hailing from an Italian provincial background, he went on to establish a place for himself in the ranks of Roman nobility. Pompey was a rival and an ally of Marcus Licinius Crassus and Gaius Julius Caesar. The three politicians dominated the late Roman Republic through a political alliance called the First Triumvirate. After the death of Crassus, Pompey and Caesar disputed the leadership of the entire Roman state.

Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

FIRST CITIZEN: O piteous spectacle!

SECOND CITIZEN: O noble Caesar!

THIRD CITIZEN: O woeful day!

FOURTH CITIZEN: O traitors, villains!

FIRST CITIZEN: O most bloody sight!

SECOND CITIZEN: We will be revenged.

CITIZENS: Revenge,—about,—seek,—burn,—fire,—kill,—slay,—let not a traitor live!

ANTONY: Stay, countrymen.

FIRST CITIZEN: Peace there! Hear the noble Antony.

SECOND CITIZEN: We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

ANTONY: Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny[1].
They that have done this deed are honourable:
What private griefs they have,[2] alas, I know not,
That made them do it; they're wise and honourable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:
I am no orator, as Brutus is;
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,
That love my friend; and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him:
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor dumb mouths[3],
And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits[4], and put a tongue
In every wound of Caesar, that should move

1 mutiny: a rebellion, mainly in the military, against the authority.
2 What private griefs they have: Antony here purposely says that it is for personal reasons that the conspirators kill Ceasar. private griefs: personal reasons.
3 poor dumb mouths: the wounds.
4 ruffle up your spirits: arouse your anger.

The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

CITIZENS: We'll mutiny.

FIRST CITIZEN: We'll burn the house of Brutus.

THIRD CITIZEN: Away, then! Come, seek the conspirators.

ANTONY: Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

CITIZENS: Peace, ho! Hear Antony; most noble Antony!

ANTONY: Why, friends, you go to do you know not what.
Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?
Alas, you know not; I must tell you then:
You have forgot the will I told you of.

CITIZENS: Most true; the will!—Let's stay, and hear the will.

ANTONY: Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal.
To every Roman citizen he gives,
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.[1]

SECOND CITIZEN: Most noble Caesar!—We'll revenge his death.

THIRD CITIZEN: O, royal Caesar!

ANTONY: Hear me with patience.

CITIZENS: Peace, ho!

ANTONY: Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
His private arbors, and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber: he hath left them you,
And to your heirs forever; common pleasures[2],
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Caesar! When comes such another?

FIRST CITIZEN: Never, never.—Come, away, away!
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Take up the body.

SECOND CITIZEN: Go, fetch fire.

THIRD CITIZEN: Pluck down benches.

FOURTH CITIZEN: Pluck down forms, windows, any thing.

[*Exeunt Citizens, with the body.*]

1 drachmas: silver coins.
2 common pleasures: common pleasure grounds.

ANTONY: Now let it work.—Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt!—

[*Enter a Servant.*]

How now, fellow?
SERVANT: Sir, Octavius[1] is already come to Rome.
ANTONY: Where is he?
SERVANT: He and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.
ANTONY: And thither will I straight to visit him:
He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,
And in this mood will give us any thing.
SERVANT: I heard 'em say Brutus and Cassius
Are rid[2] like madmen through the gates of Rome.
ANTONY: Belike they had some notice of the people,
How I had moved them.[3] Bring me to Octavius.

[*Exeunt.*]

Critical Points

Julius Caesar: Characters and Themes

The central protagonist of the play is Marcus Brutus and the central psychological drama is his struggle between the conflicting demands of honour, patriotism, and friendship. Brutus believes himself to be acting on the people's will, so he forges ahead with the murder of Caesar the leader, the imminent dictator, despite their close friendship.

Julius Caesar also raises many questions about force of fate in life versus the capacity for free will, public self versus private self and other themes as leadership, friendship, belief, democracy, dictatorship, etc.

1 Octavius: son of Caesar's niece, later Caesar had adopted Octavius as his son, and made his heir.
2 rid: escaping.
3 Belike they had some notice of the people, /How I had moved them: it is likely that they were informed about how I had moved the people. belike: likely; probably.

Questions

1 Examine the characters of Brutus and Cassius, and write an essay comparing their characteristics, focusing on which of the two characters is the more politically suitable to lead the assassination plot.

2 What is your interpretation of Brutus' motivation of the assassination? How do you explain Antony's speech and the mass response to the speech?

Hamlet

Hamlet is one of Shakespeare's canon, and it is universally included in the list of the world's greatest works.

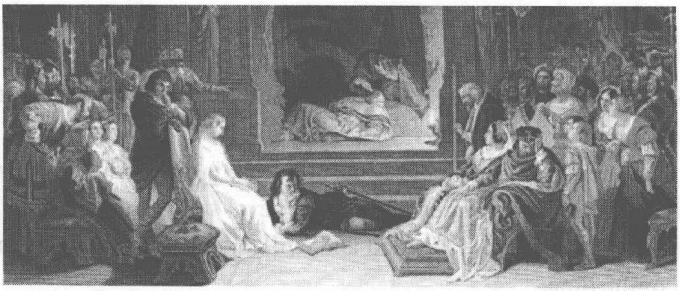
The story, coming from an old Danish legend, is a tragedy of the "revenge" genre. Shakespeare incorporates into the medieval story other major humanistic themes, including love, justice, good and evil, and most notably, madness, and the spirit of the time.

Plot Summary

At the beginning of the play, old Hamlet, the king of Denmark, is dead, and his brother Claudius has assumed the throne and married his widow Gertrude. Young Hamlet, returning from university, learns form the ghost of his father that Claudius has murdered him by pouring poison into his ear. Hamlet takes a solemn oath to revenge the wrong of murder, usurpation and incest. He pretends to be mad, and seeks opportunity to revenge. Ophelia, whom Hamlet has loved, is sent to spy on him by Claudius and her father Polonius. Unexpectedly, Hamlet repudiates her. He welcomes a troupe of visiting players to the court, and arranges a performance of a play about fratricide to allude to Claudius' murder of the old king.

Hamlet gets the chance to take the revenge but accidentally kills the old counselor Polonius. Claudius sends Hamlet to England with sealed order that he should be killed on arrival. Hamlet discovers the trick and then manages to return to Danmark.

During his absence Ophelia has gone mad with grief from Hamlet's rejection and her father's death, and later she is found drowned. Her brother Laertes returns from France, determines to avenge the death of his father and sister. Claudius arranges a fencing match between the two young men, giving Laertes a poisoned foil and puting a cup of poison within Hamlet's reach in case that Hamlet becomes thirsty. Hamlet is fatally wounded, but they exchange their weapons, and Laertes receives a mortal stab. Gertrude, who knows nothing of Claudius' treachery, drinks the poison and dies. The dying Hamlet kills Claudius. The prince of Norway appears from wars and gives Hamlet a military funeral.



The play-scene in *Hamlet*, portraying the moment when the guilt of Claudius is revealed. A detail of the engraving of Daniel Maclise's 1842 painting

Act I Scene II

A room of state in the castle.

Flourish.

[*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTEMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.*]

KING CLAUDIUS Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green[1], and that it us befitted[2]
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe[3],
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature[4]
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress[5] to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,

1 green: new, fresh.
2 that it us befitted: though it befitted us.
3 in one brow of woe: everyone in the kingdom ought to mourn. woe: sadness, sorrow.
4 discretion fought with nature: conflict between mind and heart, reason and affection.
5 The imperial jointress: joint possessor of the throne. jointress: a woman who has been given an interest for life in her deceased husband's estate.

With an auspicious and a dropping eye[1],
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barred
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras[2],
Holding a weak supposal of our worth[3],
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not failed to pester us with message,
Importing[4] the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself[5] and for this time of meeting:
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
His further gait herein;[6] in that the levies,
The lists and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject:[7] and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope

1 a dropping eye: a weeping eye.
2 young Fortinbras: prince of Norway.
3 Holding a weak supposal of our worth: underestimating our state. weak supposal: poor opinion.
4 Importing: concerning.
5 ourself: royal plural, used throughout the King's speeches.
6 to suppress/His further gait herein: prevent his further actions. gait: progress; herein: (in) here.
7 the levies,/The lists and full proportions, are all made/Out of his subject: he levies and collects soldiers from his people, and the army is made up of all the forces. levy: imposition of an army.

Of these dilated articles[1] allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS In that and all things will we show our duty.

KING CLAUDIUS We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.
[*Exeunt VOLTEMAND and CORNELIUS.*]
And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit, what is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice:[2] what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES My dread lord,
Your leave and favour[3] to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation[4],
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon[5].

KING CLAUDIUS Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

POLONIUS He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING CLAUDIUS Take thy fair hour,[6] Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!

1 dilated articles: detailed provisions set forth in their instructions.
2 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane, /And lose your voice: if the requests you made to the king of Denmark are reasonable, he will consider them.
3 leave and favour: favourite leave, permission.
4 coronation: a ceremony marking the investment of a monarch with regal power through, amongst other symbolic acts, the placement of a crown upon his or her head.
5 pardon: permission.
6 Take thy fair hour: enjoy yourself.

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—

HAMLET A little more than kin, and less than kind.[1]

KING CLAUDIUS How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.[2]

QUEEN GERTRUDE Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted[3] colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN GERTRUDE If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not "seems".
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration[4] of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river[5] in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage[6],
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly[7]: these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within which passeth show[8];
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING CLAUDIUS 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:

1 A little more than kin, and less than kind: a little too much related with no kinship in nature. The saying indicates Hamlet's dislike of the new relationship between himself and his uncle.
2 sun: a pun on son, again indicating Hamlet's dislike of the new relationship between himself and his uncle.
3 nighted: black, signifying deep mourning.
4 windy suspiration: deep sighs.
5 fruitful river: tears.
6 dejected 'havior of the visage: melancholy look on the face. 'havior: behaviour.
7 denote me truly: express my feelings exactly.
8 I have that within which passeth show: what I feel in my heart is so strong that it cannot be fully shown.

But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever
In obstinate condolement[1] is a course
Of impious stubbornness;[2] 'tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect[3] to heaven,
A heart unfortified[4], a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschooled:
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd: whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse[5] till he that died to-day,
"This must be so". We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart[6] toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire[7]:
And we beseech you, bend you[8] to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

1 obstinate condolement: grief that is contrary to the will of heaven.
2 a course/Of impious stubbornness: a way of action with unfilial obstinacy.
3 incorrect: unsubmissive.
4 A heart unfortified: a heart not well prepared for too much sorrow.
5 corse: corpse, dead body.
6 impart: behave.
7 retrograde to our desire: contrary to our desire.
8 bend you: incline yourself.

QUEEN GERTRUDE Let not thy mother lose her prayers,[1] Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.
HAMLET I shall in all my best obey you, madam.
KING CLAUDIUS Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:
Be as ourself in Denmark.[2] Madam, come;
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart:[3] in grace whereof,[4]
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse[5] the heavens all bruit[6] again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder.[7] Come away.
[Exeunt all but HAMLET.]
HAMLET O, that this too too solid flesh would melt
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter![8] O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses[9] of this world!
Fie on't! ah fie![10] 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed[11]; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely[12]. That it should come to this!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,

1 Let not thy mother lose her prayers: don't let your mother pray in vain.
2 Be as ourself in Denmark: Claudius is extending to Hamlet all the special privileges and prerogatives belonging to a crowned prince.
3 Sits smiling to my heart: make me happy.
4 in grace whereof: in honour of that.
5 rouse: draught of liquor, toast.
6 bruit: proclaim.
7 Re-speaking earthly thunder: echoing like the thunder of earth.
8 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd/His canon 'gainst self-slaughter: I wish that God had not fixed the law against suicide!
9 uses: things.
10 Fie on't! ah fie: shame on it! ah, for shame!
11 grows to seed: falls into neglect.
12 merely: entirely, absolutely, altogether.

Hyperion[1] to a satyr[2]; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem[3] the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on:[4] and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body,
Like Niobe[5], all tears:—why she, even she—
O, God! A beast, that wants discourse of reason[6],
Would have mourned longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules[7]: within a month:
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes[8],
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.
[*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BARNARDO.*]

HORATIO Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET I am glad to see you well:

1 Hyperion: a Titan from Greek mythology, often identified with the sun god.
2 satyr: in Greek mythology, a woodland diety usually represented as having pointed ears, short horns, the head and body of a man, and the legs of a goat, and as being fond of riotous merriment and lechery.
3 beteem: permit.
4 As if increase of appetite had grown/By what it fed on: as if after one had tasted something delicious, his stronger appetite had grown up.
5 Niobe: a queen of Thebes in Greek mythology, Niobe boasted of her superiority to Leto because she had fourteen children, seven male and seven female, while Leto had only two (Apollo and Artemis). Apollo killed her sons, and Artemis killed her daughters. A devastated Niobe fled to Mount Sipylus of Lydia in Asia Minor and turned into stone as she wept. She stands for the image of an inconsolable woman.
6 wants discourse of reason: lacks the power of reasoning.
7 Hercules: in Greek and Roman mythology, the son of Zeus, renowned for his strength and courage, especially as shown in his performance of the twelve labours imposed on him.
8 flushing in her galled eyes: reddening of her sore eyes.

Horatio—or I do forget myself.

HORATIO The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAMLET Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:[1]
And what make you from[2] Wittenberg, Horatio? Marcellus?

MARCELLUS My good lord—

HAMLET I am very glad to see you.
[*To Barnardo*] Good even, sir—
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?

HORATIO A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HORATIO My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

HAMLET Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father!—Methinks I see my father.

HORATIO Where, my lord?

HAMLET In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

HAMLET He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET Saw? Who?

HORATIO My lord, the king your father.

HAMLET The king my father!

HORATIO Season your admiration[3] for awhile

1 I'll change that name with you: I am your servant.
2 make you from: what is the news from?
3 Season your admiration: moderate your wonder.

With an attent[1] ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

HAMLET For God's love, let me hear.

HORATIO Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encountered. A figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe[2],
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walked
By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's[3] length; whilst they, distilled
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch;
Where, as they had delivered, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

HAMLET But where was this?

MARCELLUS My lord, upon the platform where we watched.

HAMLET Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO My lord, I did;
But answer made it none: yet once methought
It lifted up its head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanished from our sight.

HAMLET 'Tis very strange.

HORATIO As I do live, my honoured lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty

1 attent: attentive.
2 cap-a-pe: fully armed from head to foot.
3 truncheon: a general's baton.

To let you know of it.
HAMLET Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?
MARCELLUS and BARNARDO We do, my lord.
HAMLET Armed, say you?
MARCELLUS and BARNARDO Armed, my lord.
HAMLET From top to toe?
MARCELLUS and BARNARDO My lord, from head to foot.
HAMLET Then saw you not his face?
HORATIO O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver[1] up.
HAMLET What, looked he frowningly?
HORATIO A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
HAMLET Pale or red?
HORATIO Nay, very pale.
HAMLET And fixed his eyes upon you?
HORATIO Most constantly.
HAMLET I would I had been there.
HORATIO It would have much amazed you.
HAMLET Very like, very like. Stayed it long?
HORATIO While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.
MARCELLUS and BARNARDO Longer, longer.
HORATIO Not when I saw't.
HAMLET His beard was grizzled—no?
HORATIO It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silvered.
HAMLET I will watch to-night;
Perchance 'twill walk again.
HORATIO I warrant it will.
HAMLET If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto concealed this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:

1 beaver: the visor of the helmet, which could be lowered in battle.

I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.
All Our duty to your honour.
HAMLET Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.
[*Exeunt all but HAMLET.*]
My father's spirit in arms! All is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.
[*Exit.*]

Act III Scene I

[*Enter HAMLET.*]

HAMLET To be, or not to be:[1] that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,[2]
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them.[3] To die: to sleep;
No more;[4] and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,[5] 'tis a consummation[6]
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance[7] to dream: ay, there's the rub;[8]

1 To be, or not to be: to live or to die; to take action or do nothing but to suffer.
2 to suffer/The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune: to be passive and let the cruel fortune inflict whatever injuries on me. slings and arrows: injuries.
3 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,/And by opposing end them: or to take up arms and fight against numerous troubles and dies in the fighting and thus ends all the troubles in life.
4 No more: death is nothing more than a sleep.
5 the thousand natural shocks/That flesh is heir to: all kinds of sufferings that a human being is bound to suffer.
6 a consummation: a final settlement of everything.
7 perchance: perhaps.
8 ay, there's the rub: yes, there's difficulty. rub: an obstacle hindrance, difficulty, or impediment.

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil[1],
Must give us pause:[2] there's the respect[3]
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time[4],
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely[5],
The pangs of despised love[6], the law's delay,
The insolence of office[7] and the spurns[8]
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,[9]
When he himself might his quietus make[10]
With a bare bodkin[11] who would fardels[12] bear,
To grunt[13] and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn[14]
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,[15]

1 shuffled off this mortal coil: relieved from the trouble of life that have been wound round us like coils.
2 Must give us pause: make us hesitate.
3 respect: consideration.
4 the whips and scorns of time: all kinds of miseries in the world.
5 contumely: haughty and contemptuous rudeness; insulting and humiliating treatment or language.
6 despised love: love in scorn.
7 insolence of office: contempt of authority or people of high rank.
8 spurns: kicks.
9 That patient merit of the unworthy takes: people of merit have to endure patiently at the hands of those who do not deserve respect.
10 his quietus make: make his quetus, end his life. quietus: removal from activity.
11 bodkin: a dagger or stiletto, a small, pointed instrument for making holes.
12 fardels: burdens; misfortune.
13 grunt: groan.
14 bourn: limit; boundery.
15 the native hue of resolution/Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought: over the natural colour of resolution, which is believed of red, is thrown the pale and sickly colour of reflection.

And enterprises of great pitch and moment[1]
With this regard their currents turn awry,[2]
And lose the name of action[3].—Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph[4], in thy orisons[5]
Be all my sins remembered.

Critical Points

1 Hamlet and the Spirit of the Renaissance

Hamlet is a humanist, that is, a man free from medieval prejudices and superstitions. He has an unbounded love for the world. He cherishes a profound reverence for man, and a firm belief in man's power over destiny: "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!" Such a delight in nature and in man is the important spirit of the Renaissance.

His intellectual genius is outstanding. He is a close observer of men and manners. He easily sees through people. He is forever unmasking his world. Through the infidelity of his mother, the falsehood of his schoolfellow, and the crime of his uncle, he discovers how wicked and unjust the world he lives in is. His observation of the world is summed up in a bitter sentence: Denmark is a prison. Hamlet is a scholar, soldier, and statesman all combined. His image reflects the versatility of the men of the Renaissance.

2 Hamlet's Melancholy

The play is full of uncertainties and characterised by Hamlet's profound

1 enterprises of great pitch and moment: actions of great importance and consequence. pitch and moment: height and importance.
2 With this regard their currents turn awry: on account of this, turn away from their original purpose.
3 lose the name of action: fail to put into action.
4 Nymph: beautiful girl; in Greek and Roman mythology, beautiful maidens representing minor deities inhabiting and sometimes personifying features of nature such as trees, waters, and mountains.
5 orisons: prayers.

melancholy and his delay in revenge.

In his repeated meditation upon the crimes of his uncle, Hamlet perceives something rotten in the state affairs, and his sense of personal wrong grows deeper and deeper until it becomes at last a total disgust for a world in which such crimes prevail. Cruel and unjust rulers are tyrannising the country and his beloved country is a prison for the people. He seems to understand that his revenge upon his uncle would in no way solve the problems that trouble and upset him. What is more important is to expose the roots of the evil and to establish a reign of justice. His responsibility is thus enlarged into a radical transformation of society and the reformation of the world as a whole.

Hamlet's melancholy expresses, in the realistic sense, the political chaos at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century. In 1600, Queen Elizabeth was 67 and had no direct heirs. A war over the succession of the throne could happen. The anxiety for the future of the state can be felt among the contemporary audience.

Hamlet's melancholy expresses, in a broader sense, the eternal questioning of human action. "To be, or not to be" has become a universal question puzzling every intellectual mind. His dilemma is gradually revealed to audience, who seem to understand him and share his puzzles. "In the perplexed figure of Hamlet, just because of our sense that his mind lacks definite boundaries, we find ourselves."[1]

Questions

1 Hamlet is characterised by his melancholic mood and delay in action. Give a character analysis of Hamlet and list the possible reasons for his melancholy and delay?

2 "To be, or not to be" is a most quoted part whenever *Hamlet* is mentioned. What is the essence of Hamlet's soliloquy? Write an essay with the same pattern of the title ("To..., or not to...") on any of the topics of your choice.

1 *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974, p. 1135.

Class Activities

1 Group Discussion (no more than five per group, no less than three):
What is tragedy or tragic hero?

Step 1 Ask the students to come to class with a definition of "tragedy" or "tragic hero". Students may look it up in a dictionary or develop a definition of their own.

Step 2 Discuss each definition and ultimately come up with one definition written on the board and will be used later.

Step 3 Ask each student to choose a tragic hero according to one's understanding of the definition, and to give reasons for the choice.

2 General Discussion:
List various reasons for Shakespeare's popularity.

QUOTATIONS

Thought is free.

—William Shakespeare

Brevity is the soul of wit.

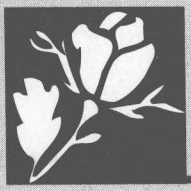
—William Shakespeare

The characteristic of Chaucer is intensity; of Spencer, remoteness; of Milton, elevation; and of Shakespeare, everything.

—William Hazlitt

The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life: Try to be Shakespeare, leave the rest to fate!

—Robert Browning



Part III

The Seventeenth Century (1603-1688)

Key Words

essay elegy metaphysical poets
cavalier poets carpe diem
allegory Paradise Lost
to justify the ways of God to Man

The 17th century in Britain was a time of political and religious turmoil. Some important events marked the period: the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, and the succession of James I, the first Stuart king; the Puritan Revolution (1640-1660); the restoration of the Catholic King James II, and the Glorious Revolution, that is, the deposition of James II and the crownation William of Orange.

1 The Puritan Revolution

Queen Elizabeth died in 1603. During the reign of her successor James I, the newly risen bourgeois class became increasingly influential in the economic and political life of the country. When Charles I came to throne in 1625, the relation between the Parliament and the monarch grew even worse. The Parliament represented the interests of the bourgeois class, who wanted free trade and more authority, while James I never intended to give. Instead, the king controlled trade and commerce tightly and imposed heavy taxes on the merchants. He even closed the Parliament for 11 years.

Besides the conflict between the throne and the Parliament, the king's persecution of the Puritans was another important cause of the revolution. The Puritans were Christians who tried to do away with the elaborate ceremonies of the Anglican Church, and demanded a simple manner of worship, and a simple manner of church organisation. They interpreted the Bible in a new way, and advocated that the common people and the king were equal in the presence of God. Charles I took strong measures against the Puritans and many of them were forced to emigrate to America to escape the persecution. Many of the members of the Parliament were Puritans, who, politically and economically, represented the interests and demand of the bourgeois class.

In 1642 the English Civil War broke out between the royal army and the Parliamentary army, and ended with the defeat of the king. Charles I was beheaded in 1649. Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the parliamentary army, became the Lord Protector of Britain in 1653, assuming the role of a military dictator. He enacted laws to severely restrict personal liberties. Theatres were shut down; Catholics and Anglicans were denied freedom of worship.

2 The Glorious Revolution

In 1688, driving out of England the Catholic Kings Charles II and James II who had restored the throne since 1660, the Parliament invited James' Protestant

daughter Mary and her Dutch husband William of Orange to take the British crown. William signed The Bill of Rights presented by the Parliament, which greatly limited the power of the English monarch and the Parliament became the actual leader of the country. This is called the Glorious Revolution. Parliamentary government was firmly established, and England becomes a country of constitutional monarchy.

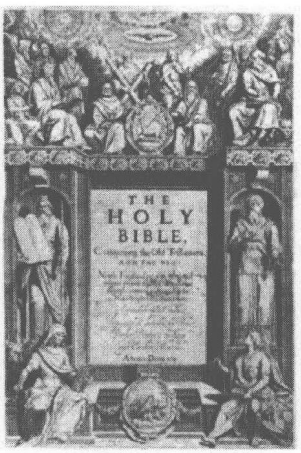
3 Literary Achievements

The dominant literary genre of the early half of the 17th century is poetry. The achievements in poetry were embodied in the creation of John Donne, Ben Jonson, John Milton, and later John Dryden.

Theatre continued to thrive in the reign of Charles I, but with new forms: satiric comedies, tragicomedies, and a kind of melodrama. The manners of the English upper class became the source of situations and the target of satire. A new element, wit, was then introduced under the influence of the French drama. The distinguished figure of drama writing of the early 17th century was Ben Johnson, whose varied and dramatic works followed classical models and was enriched by his worldly, peculiarly English wit.

Under the Puritan government, the theatres were totally closed in England for almost 20 years. When the theatres reopened in the 1660s, it sprang to life joyfully with an easygoing, theatre-loving monarchy. The drama in the late half of the 17th century has been called Restoration comedy. Women actresses began to play female roles.

Towards the end of the century, essays on literary criticism began to appear, and criticism became a kind of literature. John Dryden (1631-1700), an influential poet, literary critic, and playwright, was also a leading prose writer of the century, whose influence dominated the literary life of Restoration England. The most well-known piece of his literary criticism is *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), written in the



King James Bible
The frontispiece to the 1611 first edition of the King James Bible shows the Twelve Apostles at the top. Moses and Aaron flank the central text. In the four corners sit Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, authors of the four Gospels, with their symbolic animals. King James Bible was completed in 1611 after seven years' arduous work of 47 best scholars.

form of dialogue, with the aim to justify drama as a legitimate art form. Dryden attempted, at the same time, to move closer to the rhythms and spirit of actual speech, set a good example of a plainer, more efficient prose style. John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, best represented the achievement of the fiction prose in the 17th century.

Unit 8

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Francis Bacon *is generally regarded as the chief figure in English prose, and his essays began the long tradition of the English essay in the history of English literature. He is also a philosopher and statesman, best known as a philosophical advocate and the founder of modern science in England.*

Life and Writing

Francis Bacon

Bacon was born in London, the fifth son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal under Elizabeth I. Bacon's mother was the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, tutor to King Edward VI, and was an exceptionally gifted scholar and translator. Bacon received an education at home in his early years. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge at the age of 12, studied for three years there.

Later Bacon became one of the most successful lawyers of the time. In 1581 he became a Member of Parliament and served in every Parliament until 1621. The queen employed him in various legal offices. Under King James, Bacon obtained one important office after another until he became Lord Chancellor in 1618, whose power was second only to that of the King.

Bacon's public career ended in disgrace in 1621 for accepting bribes. He was fined and imprisoned. But the fine was never collected and the imprisonment lasted only three days. In September 1621 the King pardoned him but prohibited his return to Parliament and the court.

Bacon retired to his family residence, and devoted himself fully to study and writing. He produced in quick succession *A History of the Life and Reign of King Henry VII* (1622), a Latin expansion of *The Advancement of Learning*,

which was once published and presented to the King in 1605, the third edition of his *Essays* (1625; the first 1597, and the second 1612) and *The New Atlantis* (1626). Closing to death he said: "For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next age."

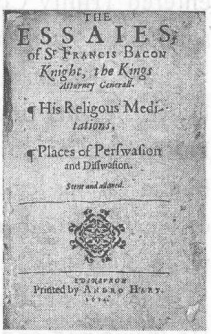
Bacon demonstrates a great majesty of his intellect in his works. As a humanist of the age, all his intellectual activities were directed toward practical ends. He outlined many schemes for reforming the laws; he wanted the universities to widen their curriculum from the three traditional professions (theology, law, medicine) to take in the "arts and sciences at large". Bacon's plan to reform the whole of natural philosophy aimed to effect a new union between "the mind and the universe".

Francis Bacon was one of the first European sinologists. He attributes three world-changing inventions to China. He says in *Novum Organum*: "Printing, gunpowder and the compass: these three have changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world; the first in literature, the second in warfare, the third in navigation; whence have followed innumerable changes, in so much that no empire, no sect, no star seems to have exerted greater power and influence in human affairs than these mechanical discoveries."

Bacon's Essays

Francis Bacon is the first English essayist. In an age of poetry, when men around him were composing songs, sonnets, and plays in verse, he introduces to England a form of writing that was easy to understand, precise in language, and diversified in topics. His pioneering efforts made essay a popular form in England.

Bacon's *Essays* was first published in 1597, together with the "Christian Meditations" and "Of the Colours of Good and Evil", consisted of 10 short essays. The second edition (1612) contained 38 essays, in a more varied style, and on a wider range of topics. The final version, now called *Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral* (1625), included 58 essays, dealing with both civil and public life, and the morals or behaviour of individuals.


THE
ESSAIES
of Sr Francis Bacon
Knight, the Kings
Attorney Generall.
His Religious Medi-
tations,
Places of Perswasion
and Diffwasion.
Scene and allowed.
EDINBURGH
Printed by Andro Hart.
Bacon's *Essays*, 1614

Of Marriage and Single Life

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune;[1] for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means, have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children, should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences[2]. Nay, there are some other, that account wife and children, but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous[3] men that take a pride, in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer. For perhaps they have heard some talk, such an one is a great rich man, and another except to it, Yea, but he hath a great charge of children; as if it were an abatement[4] to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life, is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humourous minds[5], which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters, to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives, are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground, where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be facile[6] and corrupt, you shall have a servant, five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives[7], put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks, maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because

1 He that...to fortune: he has his life controlled by fate.
2 impertinences: irrelevant concerns.
3 covetous: jealous; excessively and culpably desirous of the possessions of another.
4 an abatement: a reduction.
5 humourous minds: people of unbalanced, whimsical mind.
6 facile: pliable.
7 hortatives: exhortations; a speech or discourse that encourages, incites, or earnestly advises.

their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses[1], *vetulam suam praetulit immortalitati*[2]. Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds, both of chastity and obedience, in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do, if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses. So as a man may have a quarrel[3] to marry, when he will. But yet he was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry: "A young man not yet, an elder man not at all."[4] It is often seen that bad husbands, have very good wives; whether it be, that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness, when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience. But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

Of Great Place[5]

Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state; servants of fame; and servants of business. So as they have no freedom; neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire, to seek power and to lose liberty: or to seek power over others, and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious; and by pains[6], men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base; and by indignities, men come

1 Ulysses: the name Odysseus in the Latin language, who is the central character of Homer's *Odyssey*, renowned for his guile and resourcefulness, and a major character in *Iliad*. Ulysses is a recurring topic in literature, e.g., *Ulysses*, a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson, and also James Joyce's influential 1922 novel.

2 *vetulam suam praetulit immortalitati*: (*Latin*) he preferred his old wife to immorality.

3 a quarrel: an excuse; pretext.

4 "A young man not yet, an elder man not at all": when one is too young, he is not ready to get married yet; when one is too old, he does not need to get married at all. This is one of the famous sayings by Thales of Miletus (ca. 624–546 BC), also known as Thales the Milesian, who is a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher and one of the Seven Sages of Greece. Many regard him as the first philosopher in the Greek tradition as well as the father of science.

5 Of Great Place: on high position.

6 by pains: by efforts.

to dignities. The standing[1] is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse[2], which is a melancholy thing. *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere.*[3] Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they, when it were reason; but are impatient of privateness[4], even in age and sickness, which require the shadow; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions, to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling, they cannot find it; but if they think with themselves, what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be as they are[5], then they are happy as it were by report[6]; when perhaps they find the contrary within. For they are the first, that find their own griefs, though they be the last, that find their own faults. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves[7], and while they are in the puzzle of business, they have no time to tend their health, either of body or mind. *Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.*[8]

In place, there is license to do good, and evil; whereof the latter is a curse: for in evil, the best condition is not to win; the second, not to can.[9] But power to do good, is the true and lawful end of aspiring. For good thoughts (though God accept them) yet, towards men, are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be, without power and place, as the vantage, and commanding ground.

Merit and good works is the end of man's motion; and conscience of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest. For if a man can be partaker of God's theatre[10], he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera quae fecerunt manus suae, vidit quod omnia essent bona*

1 standing: the position.
2 an eclipse: here means partly loss of splendour.
3 *Cum non...vivere*: (*Latin*) when a man feels that he is no longer what he was, he has no reason to live longer. (Cicero, *Epist*)
4 impatient of privateness: intolerant of retiring.
5 fain be as they are: be glad to be in their position.
6 as it were by report: as said by others.
7 strangers to themselves: unfamiliar with their personal affairs.
8 *Illi mors...sibi* (*Latin*): it is a sad fate for a man to die too well known to everybody else, and still unknown to himself. (Seneca, *Thyestes*)
9 for in evil, the best condition is not to win; the second, not to can: in evil the best thing is not to think of doing evil, the second thing is not to be able to do evil.
10 God's theatre: what God saw.

nimis;[1] and then the Sabbath[2].

In the discharge of thy place, set before thee the best examples; for imitation is a globe of precepts.[3] And after a time, set before thee thine own example; and examine thyself strictly, whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples, of those that have carried themselves ill[4] in the same place; not to set off thyself by taxing their memory,[5] but to direct thyself what to avoid. Reform therefore, without bravery[6], or scandal of former times and persons; but yet set it down to thyself, as well to create good precedents, as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein, and how, they have degenerate; but yet ask counsel of both times; of the ancient time, what is best; and of the latter time, what is fittest.

Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know beforehand, what they may expect; but be not too positive and peremptory; and express thyself well when thou digressest from thy rule[7]. Preserve the right of thy place; but stir not questions of jurisdiction; and rather assume thy right, in silence and de facto[8], than voice it with claims, and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places; and think it more honour, to direct in chief, than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps and advices, touching the execution of thy place; and do not drive away such, as bring thee information, as meddlers; but accept of them in good part.

The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility[9].

For delays: give easy access; keep times appointed; go through with that

1 *Et conversus...nimis*: (*Latin*) and God turned to look upon the works which his hands had made, and saw that all were very good.
2 the Sabbath: in the Bible, the Sabbath is a weekly religious day of rest, originally denoting Saturday, the seventh day of the week.
3 In the discharge of...a globe of precepts: in the performance of the position, by imitating the best examples, you are practicing a complete body of rules. precepts: maxims; best rules; globe: a complete body; a collection.
4 those that have carried themselves ill: those who do not do their duty well.
5 not to set off thyself by taxing their memory: not to show off yourself by bringing their evil doings into notice and accuse them. taxing: censuring.
6 bravery: boastfulness.
7 when thou digressest from thy rule: when you change your regular course of action.
8 and de facto: and as a matter of fact.
9 facility: being easily led.

which is in hand, and interlace not business, but of necessity[1].

For corruption: do not only bind thine own hands, or thy servants' hands, from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also, from offering. For integrity used doth the one; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other.[2] And avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption. Therefore always, when thou changest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly, and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change; and do not think to steal[3] it. A servant or a favorite, if he be inward, and no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly thought, but a by-way to close corruption[4].

For roughness: it is a needless cause of discontent: severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority, ought to be grave, and not taunting.

As for facility: it is worse than bribery. For bribes come but now and then; but if importunity, or idle respects[5], lead a man, he shall never be without. As Solomon[6] saith: *To respect persons is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread.*

It is most true, that was anciently spoken, *A place showeth the man*[7]. And it showeth some to the better, and some to the worse. *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset,*[8] saith Tacitus of Galba; but of Vespasian he saith, *Solus imperantium, Vespasianus mutatus in melius*;[9] though the one was meant of sufficiency, the other of manners, and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, whom honor amends. For honor is, or should be,

1 and interlace not business, but of necessity: unless necessary, do not let your business be entangled by other things.
2 For integrity...doth the other: for honesty, when it is really practiced, does bind from take bribery; but when it is openly declared and shown to the public with a hatred for bribery, does bind the suitors form offering bribery.
3 steal: do secretly.
4 close corruption: secret corruption.
5 idle respects: considerations.
6 Solomon: a Biblical figure described as a wise ruler of an empire on former Canaan, living perhaps around 1000 BC.
7 *A place showeth the man*: (Aristotle) a high position reveals the nature of a man.
8 *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset*: (*Latin*) a man whom everybody would have thought fit for empire if he had not been emperor. (Tacitus, *Historiae*)
9 *Solus imperantium, Vespasianus mutatus in melius*: (*Latin*) Vespasian was the only emperor whom the possession of power changed for the better. Vespasian (AD 9-79) was emperor of Rome from 69 to 79.

the place of virtue; and as in nature, things move violently to their place, and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding star; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self, whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor, fairly and tenderly; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them, and rather call them, when they look not for it, than exclude them, when they have reason to look to be called. Be not too sensible, or too remembering, of thy place in conversation, and private answers to suitors; but let it rather be said, *When he sits in place, he is another man.*

Of Studies

Studies serve for delight[1], for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring[2]; for ornament, is in discourse[3]; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business[4]. For expert men[5] can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling[6] of affairs, come best, from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour[7] of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning[8], by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large[9], except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies,[10] simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use;[11] but that is

1 delight: personal satisfaction.
2 privateness and retiring: solitude and retreat.
3 discourse: conversation.
4 disposition of business: dealing with realistic affairs.
5 expert men: men of practical experience.
6 plots and marshalling: plans and arrangement.
7 humour: temperament.
8 proyning: pruning; cultivating.
9 too much at large: too general.
10 crafty men contemn studies: men of certain skills despise studies.
11 for they teach not their own use: because studies do not tell one how to use them.

a wisdom without them[1], and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things[2]. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man;[3] and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit:[4] and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know, that he doth not[5]. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile[6]; natural philosophy[7] deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores.*[8] Nay, there is no stond or impediment[9] in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering[10], let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations[11], if his wit be called away never so little[12], he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let

1 that is a wisdom without them: how to use studies is a wisdom that is to be gained outside studies.
2 flashy things: brilliant but empty things.
3 conference a ready man: conversation makes one prompt in action. conference: conversation and meetings.
4 if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: if he makes little conversation with others, he would need to have quick wit. a present wit: quick wit; lively intelligence.
5 that he doth not: what he does not know.
6 subtile: subtle.
7 natural philosophy: science.
8 *Abeunt studia in mores*: (*Latin*) studies culminate in manners; studies form character. (Ovid, *Heroides*)
9 stond or impediment: hindrance or obstacle.
10 if a man's wit be wandering: if a man's mind cannot concentrate on something.
11 demonstrations: mathematic process.
12 never so little: ever so little.

him study the Schoolmen[1]; for they are *cymini sectores*[2]. If he be not apt to beat over matters,[3] and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind, may have a special receipt[4].

Critical Points

Bacon's Essays: Contents and Style

Essay as a form of literature originated from the French philosopher Montaigne, who first called his short prose pieces "Essais" in 1580, which were translated into English by John Florio in 1583. Bacon borrowed the title for his collection of terse prose writings. Both writers relied upon quotations, examples and figures of speech. Montaigne's essays are distinguished by their conversational tone and intimate approach while Bacon's style is more formal and more tightly organised, almost purely expositive.

Bacon's essays cover a wide variety of subjects, ranging from abstract subjects such as "the meaning of truth" and "the composition of beauty" to concrete matters such as love, friendship, marriage, parents and children, studies, death, and many others.

The essays came at a time of great intellectual and social changes, a time when the English people were readjusting their visions and moral standards. These changes included a vast number of matters such as a new attitude toward life and death, a stronger desire to explore the unknown fields of knowledge, and a better understanding of one's self in relation to the outside world.

The essays are full of wisdom, and elegantly phrased. They offer people useful and practical advice, and encourage people to play more active roles in social life. Bacon's essays are compact in style, clear in expression and profound in thoughts. Dr. Johnson said that the essays were "the observations of a strong mind operating upon life; and in consequence you find what you seldom find in other books".

1 Schoolmen: scholastic philosophers.
2 *cymini sectores*: (*Latin*) splitters of cumin seed; hairsplitters.
3 If he be not apt to beat over matters: if he is not good at making thorough study of matters.
4 receipt: recipe; prescription.

Questions

There are many frequently quoted lines in Bacon's essays. Underline your favourites, connect the quotations with your experience and develop the ideas. Examples:

1 "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested..."
What is your reading habit? How do you define the different readings of different books?

2 "Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend."
Do you believe "poets make men witty" as Bacon says? How and why? Cite examples to prove that different branches of studies really improve your character, and add more branches of studies to fully develop the idea.

Class Activities

Group Contest:

Step 1 Group division according to different teaching targets
Divide the class into three groups (no less than six students in each group). Each group focuses on one essay or different parts of the same essay.

Step 2 Role assignment and group discussion
Assign different roles among the group members. Each group needs a discussion leader, a summariser, a line pointer, and three vocabulary highlighters.

Step 3 Group presentation
One group gives a presentation of its discussion, explaining the main ideas and the organisation of the essay, and paraphrasing some important lines.

QUOTATIONS

Our humanity is a poor thing, except for the divinity that stirs within us.

—Francis Bacon

The poets did well to conjoin music and medicine, because the office of medicine is but to tune the curious harp of man's body.

—Francis Bacon

Unit 9

Metaphysical Poets and Cavalier Poets

Metaphysical Poets

Metaphysical poets were a loose group of British lyric poets in the 17th century, who shared an interest in metaphysical concerns and a common way of investigating them. Important metaphysical poets are: John Donne, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell.

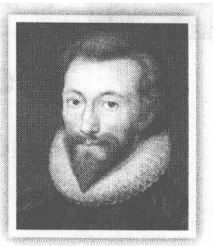
The label was first used by Dr. Johnson in his "Life of Cowley", a famous metaphysical poet, where he identified the group of poets as a race of writers who display their learning, use far-fetched comparisons, and lack feeling. The label is misleading. These poets themselves did not form a school or start a movement, and no one of the poets was seriously interested in metaphysics.

Their rigorous verse appeals to the reader's intellect rather than emotions. Their style is characterised by wit, subtle argumentations, muscular rhythms, giving the effect of a speaking voice, and the use of **conceits**, or the "metaphysical conceits", that is, an extended metaphor that combines two vastly different ideas, such as in Andrew Marvell's comparison of the soul with a drop of dew.

John Donne (1572-1631)

John Donne *was a Jacobean poet and preacher, representative of the metaphysical poets of the period. His poetry is noted for vibrancy of language and immediacy of metaphor.*

Life and Writing


John Donne

Donne was born into a Catholic family. He was educated at home by Catholic tutors. At the age of 11, Donne went to Oxford. After three years at Oxford he was admitted to Cambridge, where he studied for another three years. He was unable to obtain a degree either institution because he refused to take the oath required of graduates. Later he attended Lincoln's Inn, which was a famous law school, but at a time when anti-Catholic feeling in England was near its peak and Catholics were subject to constant harassment by the Elizabethan secret police, he experienced persecution until his conversion to the Anglican Church.

He quietly abandoned Catholicism during the 1590s. In 1598 Donne was appointed chief secretary to the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Sir Thomas Egerton, and in 1601 he was elected Member of Parliament. However, his secret marriage with Anne More, Lady Egerton's 17-year-old niece, made both Egerton and the girl's father angry. Donne was dismissed from his post and briefly imprisoned.

In 1612 Donne moved to London and got the favour of the court. King James I urged him to enter the Church, and forced Cambridge to grant him a Doctor of Divinity. He was appointed Reader in Divinity at Lincoln's Inn. His wife died at the age of 33, after giving birth to their 12th child. In 1621 he was made dean of St. Paul's, a leading position in the Church of England, he held the position until his death.

Donne left behind him a body of works fiercely engaged with the emotional and intellectual conflicts of his age, including 160 of his sermons, and was recognised as one of the most celebrated preachers of his age, as well as its greatest non-dramatic poet.

Donne is considered a master of the conceit. Love, death, and religion consist of the common subjects of Donne's poems in the different periods of his life.

The Flea

It is a very clever, funny poem, exhibiting Donne's metaphysical love-poem style, and his aptitude for turning even the least likely images into elaborate symbols of love and romance. The poem uses the image of a flea that has just

bitten the speaker and his beloved to sketch an amusing conflict whether they should be a couple or not. In the second stanza, he wittily compares the flea to "our marriage bed and marriage temple".

This poem alternates metrically between lines in iambic tetrameter and in iambic pentameter, ending with two pentameter lines at the end of each stanza. The stress pattern in each stanza is 454545455. The rhyme scheme in each stanza is *aabbccddd*.

Mark[1] but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest me is;[2]
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea, our two bloods mingled be;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,[3]
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered, swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than we would do.[4]

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea, more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;[5]
Though parents grudge, and you, we are met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.[6]
Though use[7] make you apt to kill me,

1 Mark: look.
2 mark in this,/How little that which thou deniest me is: note how little is that thing that you deny me.
3 Thou know'st that...maidenhead: that mingling cannot be called sin, or shame, or loss of maidenhead.
4 And this, alas, ...we would do: the flea has joined us together in a way more than we would do.
5 Oh stay, three lives...marriage temple is: in the flea, where our blood is mingled, we are almost married—or more than married—and the flea is our marriage bed and marriage temple mixed into one. three lives in the flea: the poet's life, her life, and the flea's own life.
6 we are met, /And cloistered in these living walls of jet: we united and lived secretly in the living walls of the flea.
7 use: habit.

Let not to that self murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.[1]

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thyself, nor me, the weaker now;
'Tis true; then learn how false fears be:
Just so much honour, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.[2]

The Sun Rising

"The Sun Rising" is one of Donne's most charming and metaphysical love poems. It describes how the lover cursed the sun that just bothered the lovers and waked them with the beam.

The poem is composed of three stanzas, each of which is 10 lines long and follows a line-stress pattern of 4255445555—Lines 1, 5, and 6 are in iambic tetrameter, Line 2 is in dimeter, and Lines 3, 4, and 7 through 10 are in pentameter. The rhyme scheme in each stanza is *abbacdcdee*.

Busy old fool, unruly Sun,
Why dost thou thus
Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch,[3] go chide[4]
Late school-boys and sour prentices,

1 make you...three sins in killing three: you are apt to kill me, but not to kill yourself by killing the flea that contains you blood; to kill the flea would be sacrilege, "three sins in killing three".
2 'Tis true; ...took life from thee: it is this very fact that proves that your fears are false: if you were to yield to me, you would lose no more honour than lost when you killed the flea.
3 Saucy pedantic wretch: the sun.
4 go chide: go and bother.

Go tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride[1],
Call country ants to harvest offices[2];
Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams so reverend, and strong
Why shouldst thou think?[3]
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long;
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and to-morrow late tell me,
Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine[4]
Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She's all states, and all princes I,
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compared to this,
All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.[5]
Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,
In that the world's contracted thus;[6]
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy centre is, these walls thy sphere.[7]

1 the king will ride: it refers to King James who was addicted to hunting.
2 harvest offices: autumn chores; harvesting.
3 Thy beams so reverend, and strong/Why shouldst thou think: why should the sun think that its beams are strong?
4 th' Indias of spice and mine: the East India and West India.
5 Princes do but...all wealth alchemy: my possession of my lover is the supreme honour and greatest wealth, and it is much more valuable than the possession of a prince of a country.
6 Sun, art half...contracted thus: the sun is half as happy as we are, for the fact that the world is contracted into their bed makes the sun's job much easier.
7 This bed thy centre is, these walls thy sphere: now all it has to do is shine on the bed, and thus shines on the whole world.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

The poem was written in 1611 to his wife, Anne, to comfort her while he was in France and she remained in England. Valediction is derived from the Latin verb "valedicere", meaning to say farewell. The title means, "When we part, we must not mourn."

The theme of the poem is that real love unites not only the two bodies but also their souls. Such love is transcendent and metaphysical, keeping the lovers together intellectually and spiritually even though they may separate.

Each of the nine stanzas is rhymed *abab*. The metre is iambic tetrameter, with eight syllables in each line.

As virtuous men pass mildly away[1],
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say
The breath goes now, and some say, no:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,[2]
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.[3]

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidation of the spheres[4],
Though greater far, is innocent.

1 virtuous men pass mildly away: good men die peacefully.
2 The sentence means: we must accept our separation in the same way that virtuous dying men quietly accept the separation of their souls from their bodies. While the physical bond that unites us melts, we must not cry storms of tears. melt: part.
3 'Twere profanation...laity our love: to mourn the seperation would be to debase our love, making it depend entirely on flesh, as does the love of so many ordinary people (laity) for whom love does not extend beyond physical attraction. profanation: debasement; violation; laity: one who is not a clergyman. The poet regards love as being sacred.
4 trepidation of the spheres: the movements of the sun and other heavenly bodies.

Dull sublunary[1] lovers' love
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.[2]

But we by a love so much refined,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured[3] of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.[4]

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet[5]
A breach[6], but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.[7]

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two,[8]
Thy soul, the fixed foot,[9] makes no show
To move, but doth[10], if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,

1 sublunary: below the moon; earthly.
2 Those things which elemented it: those who unite themselves solely through the senses but not through the soul are not like the heavenly bodies. The earthly lovers cannot endure seperation. elemented: composed; constituted.
3 Inter-assured: mutually assured.
4 The stanza means: by contrast, you and I are like the heavenly bodies; our movements—our temporary separations—cause no excitement. Our love is so refined that it can still survive without the contact of eyes, lips, and hands.
5 endure not yet: yet not suffer.
6 breach: separation.
7 The stanza means: the spiritual bond that unites us actually expands; it is like gold which, when beaten with a hammer, widens and lengthens but never breaks. "airy" here refers to the buoyancy of gold leaf.
8 As stiff twin compasses are two: as stiff as the two legs of a compass.
9 The stanza means: you and I are like the legs of a compass, and you are the one that remains fixed at the centre.
10 doth: move.

And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.[1]

A few months before his death, Donne commissioned this portrait of himself. He hung the portrait on his wall as a reminder of the transience of life.

Sonnet 10 (From *Holy Sonnets*)

John Donne's religious poems are called "Divine Poems", which includes 19 Holy Sonnets, reflecting his religious thoughts and his interest in Protestant meditative procedures. This was one of his most famous holy sonnets. In the sonnet, Donne is cool and restrained to address to Death: death is not dreadful; it is like a rest or a sleep.

This is a Petrarchan sonnet. The metre is iambic pentameter with occasional

1 The stanza meas: but when the other leg, mine, moves in a circle or an arc, your leg remains fixed at the centre of my circle. Your position there helps me complete my circle so that I end up where I began.

trochaic feet (inversions). Its rhyme scheme is *abbaabbacddcee.*

Death, be not proud, though some have callèd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so;
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures[1] bee,
Much pleasure; then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee doe go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.[2]
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy[3], or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st[4] thou then?
One short sleep past, wee wake eternally
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

Andrew Marvell *was a metaphysical poet and Puritan statesman. He was the Latin Secretary to Cromwell's government.*

Marvell was born in East Yorkshire. After attending Trinity College, Cambridge, he went on the grand tour on the Continent. In 1657, Marvell succeeded Milton, who by that time had lost his sight, in the post of Latin Secretary to Cromwell's Council of State. In 1659, Marvell was elected Member of Parliament and remained in the post the rest of his life.

Andrew Marvell

Marvell's famous poems include "To His Coy Mistress", "The Garden", "An Horatian Ode", and "Upon

1 pictures: images.
2 And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,/Rest of their bones, and soules delivery: our best men die willingly, in order to rest their bones and free their souls.
3 poppy: opium.
4 swell'st: swell with pride.

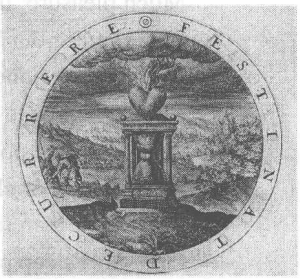
Appleton House". He also wrote prose satires anonymously criticising the monarchy and Catholicism, defending Puritan dissenters, and denouncing censorship.

To His Coy Mistress

"To His Coy Mistress" presents a familiar theme in literature, **carpe diem**, meaning "seize the day". The poem is often considered one of the finest and most concise carpe diem arguments ever put in verse.

There are three sections in the poem: the poet discusses first what would happen if the young man and young woman had unlimited time; he then points out that they do not have unlimited time, and, in the last part of the poem, he urges the young woman to seize the day and submit to his love.

The poem is in iambic tetrameter, with eight syllables per line.



Time Passes
The image above is taken from an emblem book, and speaks to the rapid passage of time, which is a frequent theme for the metaphysical poets.

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness[1], Lady, were no crime
We would sit down and think which way
To walk and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges'[2] side
Shouldst rubies[3] find: I by the tide
Of Humber[4] would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse

1 coyness: evasiveness, hesitancy, reluctance; playing hard to get.
2 Ganges: 恒河
3 rubies: 红宝石 In folklore, it is said that rubies protect and maintain virginity.
4 Humber: a river in northeastern England. It flows through Hull, Andrew Marvell's hometown.

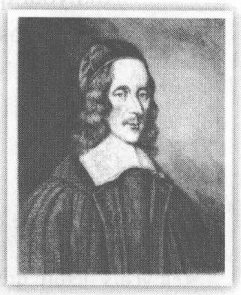
Till the conversion of the Jews.[1]
My vegetable love[2] should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, Lady, you deserve this state[3],
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot[4] hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault[5], shall sound
My echoing song: then worms[6] shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint[7] honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

1 the Flood/...Till the conversion of the Jews: resorting to hyperbole, the young man says that his love for the young lady is unbounded by time. He would love her ten years before great flood that Noah outlasted in his ark (Gen. 5:28-10:32) and would still love her until all Jews became Christians at the end of the world. The young man here suggests that the young lady could postpone her commitment to him if her youth lasted a long, long time. She could also refuse to commit herself to him until all the Jews convert to Christianity. But since youth is fleeting, she must submit herself to him now.
2 vegetable love: love cultivated and nurtured like a vegetable so that it flourishes prolifically.
3 this state: this lofty position; this dignity
4 Time's winged chariot: in Greek mythology, the sun was personified as the god Apollo, who rides his golden chariot from east to west each day. Marvell here associates the sun god with the passage of time.
5 marble vault: the young lady's tomb.
6 worms: a morbid phallic reference.
7 quaint: preserved carefully or skillfully.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires[1]
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped[2] power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough[3] the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

George Herbert (1593–1633)

George Herbert *was a poet and a priest.*


George Herbert

Herbert was born in Wales. His family was wealthy, eminent and fond of the arts. His mother was a patron and friend of John Donne and other poets. After graduating from Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge, Herbert held prominent positions at Cambridge University and Parliament. In his late thirties he gave up his secular ambitions and took holy orders in the Church of England, spending the rest of his life as a rector in Bemerton, a rural parish in Wiltshire.

Herbert's collection of poems is entitled *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, which he finished in 1633. All of Herbert's surviving poems are religious, and some have been used as hymns. They are characterised by a precision of language, a metrical versatility, and an

1 transpires: erupts, emits, gives off.
2 slow-chapped: chewing or eating slowly.
3 Thorough: through.

ingenious use of imagery or conceits that was favoured by the metaphysical school of poets.

Herbert is also a frequently quoted author, many of his sayings have become well known in daily life: "He that is not handsome at 20, nor strong at 30, nor rich at 40, nor wise at 50, will never be handsome, strong, rich or wise." "Storms make the oak grow deeper roots." "Sometimes the best gain is to lose." "One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters." "He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass if he would ever reach heaven; for everyone has need to be forgiven."

Virtue[1]

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,[2]
The bridal[3] of the earth and sky!
The dew shall weep thy fall to night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave[4],
Bids[5] the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets[6] compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes[7],
And all must die.

1 The poet's idea is that everything (e.g. day, rose and spring in Stanza 1, 2, and 3) in this world dies although each has its attraction, while virtue, the virtuous soul, is the exception.
2 Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright: the monosyllabic words and the pauses set a mournful tone that is at one with the content of the stanza. "Sweet", the word that George Herbert repeats in each stanza of this poem, has often been used to describe the effect of Herbert's poetry, both for the calm, benevolent character and for the delectable sound of the poems when read aloud.
3 bridal: wedding.
4 whose hue, angry and brave: whose colour is red and splendid.
5 Bids: invites.
6 sweets: perfumes.
7 closes: the musical ending, the final chord or chords of a piece of music.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives[1];
But though the whole world turn to coal[2],
Then chiefly lives.

Cavalier Poets

Cavalier poets is a broad description of a school of poets, who came from the classes that supported King Charles I during the English Civil War. The Cavaliers used direct and colloquial language to express a highly individual personality, and their enjoyment of the casual, the amateur, and affectionate poems written in the way.

The Cavaliers made one great contribution to the English lyrical tradition. They made poetry possible to celebrate the minor pleasures and sorrows of life in such a way as to impress the readers with a sense of ordinary humanity.

The best known of the Cavalier poets are Ben Jonson and Robert Herrick.

Benjamin Jonson (1572–1637)

Benjamin Jonson *was an English Renaissance dramatist and poet. His reputation as a playwright has traditionally been associated with Shakespeare, and his reputation as a poet has been compared to that of John Donne.*

Ben Jonson is the representative of the Cavaliers. A man of vast reading and a seemingly insatiable appetite for controversy, Jonson had an unparallelled breadth of influence on his contemporary playwrights and poets. Almost all of Cavalier poets took inspiration from his revival of classical forms and themes, his subtle melodies, and his disciplined use of wit.

Ben Jonson

Jonson's famous lyrics are notable for grace and

1 gives: yields when pressed.
2 the whole world turn to coal: according to the Christian religion, the whole world will be burned to ashes at the Last Judgement.

precision, famous titles include: "On His First Son", and "Song: To Celia".

Song: To Celia[1]

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge[2] with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine:
But might I of Jove's nectar sup[3],
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late[4] a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didst only breath,
And sent'st it back to me;
Since, when it grows and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.

Critical Points

1 John Donne: His Fame and Influence

For readers before 1660, Donne's poetry expressed a healthy attitude toward life and its pleasures, also with deep emotion. After the Restoration, when the taste for clarity and the impatience with figurative language prevailed, Donne's reputation dwindled. The Neoclassical poets regarded his

1 The poem is Jonson's well-known love lyric, written in ballad metre, i.e., with four iambic feet in the odd-numbered lines and three iambic feet in the even-numbered lines, and with rhymes on the even-numbered lines.
2 pledge: drink; toast to.
3 Jove's nectar sup: the drink of the gods. Jove: Jupiter.
4 late: recently.

conceits as abuse of the metaphor. During the 18th and 19th centuries Donne was rarely read.

The revival of John Donne's poetry occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The revaluation of metaphysical poetry exerted an immediate influence on modern poetic practice, and formed the major feature of the rewriting of English literature in the first half of the 20th century. The list of great modernist poets who owed their debts to John Donne includes Ezra Pound, William Yeats, and T. S. Eliot.

2 "To His Coy Mistress" as a Metaphysical Poem

"To His Coy Mistress", acclaimed long after Marvell's death a masterly work, is a lyrical poem that is also classified as a metaphysical poem. Metaphysical poetry, pioneered by John Donne, tends to focus on the following:

(1) Startling comparisons or contrasts of a metaphysical (spiritual, transcendent, abstract) quality to a concrete (physical, tangible, sensible) object. In "To His Coy Mistress", for example, Marvell compares love to a vegetable (Line 11) in a waggish metaphor; (2) Mockery of idealised romantic poetry through crude or shocking imagery, as in Lines 27 and 28 ("then worms shall try/That long preserved virginity"); (3) Gross exaggeration (hyperbole), as in Line 15 ("two hundred [years] to adore each breast); and (4) Expression of personal, private feelings, such as those the young man expresses in the poem.

Metaphysical poetry is also characterised with presentation of a logical argument, or syllogism. In "To His Coy Mistress" this argument may be outlined as follows: (1) We could spend decades or even centuries in courtship if time stood still and we remained young; (2) But time passes swiftly and relentlessly; (3) Therefore, we must enjoy the pleasure of each other now, without further ado. The conclusion of the argument begins at Line 33 with "Now therefore".

Questions

1 Identify examples in the poem of metaphor, alliteration, hyperbole, personification, and other figures of speech.

2 Why does Marvell use the word *echoing* in Line 27? What is Marvell's tone (or attitude) in Lines 31 and 32?

Class Activities

Group Discussion:

Step 1 Divide the class into different groups (no less than four students in each group). Each group focuses on one poem.

Step 2 Assign different roles among the group members, and carry out the team work. Each group respectively needs a discussion leader and summariser, a connection maker, a line pointer, and a vocabulary highlighter.

Step 3 Group presentation

One group gives a presentation of their discussion, explaining the theme and the rhythm of the poem, paraphrasing some key words and important lines, and connecting the description of the poem with real life experience or stories.

The presentation may be done by one representative, or by all group members according to their role assignment.

QUOTATIONS

God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice.

—John Donne

I take as metaphysical poetry that in which what is ordinarily apprehensible only by thought is brought within the grasp of feeling, or that in which what is ordinarily only felt is transformed into thought without ceasing to be feeling.

—T. S. Eliot

Unit 10

John Milton (1608-1674)

John Milton *was among the greatest of the English poets. His monumental work,* Paradise Lost, *was described by John Dryden as "one of the greatest, most noble and sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced". Milton was also a master of polemical prose as well as of subtle lyric harmony.*

Life and Writing

Milton was born in London in 1608. His father was a scrivener and composer of music, who had a large collection of good books and music that young Milton enjoyed very much. Milton was educated at Saint Paul's School and then at Christ's College, Cambridge. He received the degree of Master of Arts in 1632. He began to write poetry in Latin, Italian, and English during this period.

John Milton

In 1637 he wrote *Lycidas*, a pastoral elegy, dwelling on fears of premature death, unfulfilled ambition, and wasted dedication. By the time he was 30, Milton had established himself as a young man of letters. From 1638 to 1639 Milton spent a year touring France and Italy where he had an interview with the famous astronomer Galileo in Florence. Milton returned to England when he learned that the English Civil War was imminent.

Milton settled in London, and became tutors to his two nephews. Meanwhile he diverted his attentions to a tireless defence of religious, civil, and domestic liberties, and started to publish a series of political pamphlets. In 1642 he married Mary Powel, daughter of Royalist parents, 17 years old then. Within six weeks she went back to her parents, and did not return. In 1643 he published *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, arguing that a true marriage

was of mind as well as of body, advocating that divorce was not immoral if the couple could not love each other. It was a bold idea during those days and was not readily accepted by his fellow countrymen. The pamphlet made him notorious. In 1644 he published his most famous prose work, *Areopagitica*. He passionately pleaded for the freedom of the press. His wife returned to him in 1645.

In 1649 he was appointed Foreign Secretary by the government of the Commonwealth. His eyesight deteriorated rapidly as a result of too much reading and writing. He went completely blind about 1652, the year when his first wife died after giving birth to three daughters and a son (he died in infancy). In 1656 he married Katherine Woodcock, then aged 28, but she died two years later. Milton fulfilled his government duties until the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. On the eve of the Restoration, he boldly published *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660) to defend the "Good Old Cause".

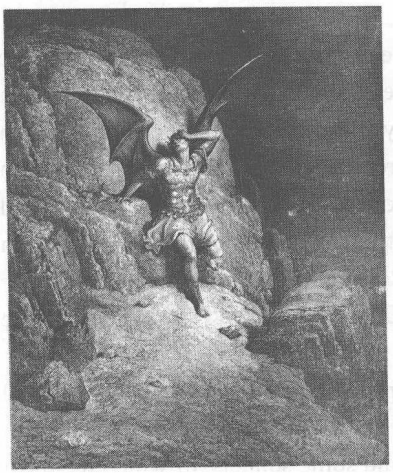
During 1640-1660, when his major preoccupations were political and social, Milton wrote little literary works, apart from some Latin and Italian pieces, a sketch of lines of *Paradise Lost*, and some sonnets, of which the most famous are "On the late Massacre in Piedmont", "On His Blindness", and "On His Deceased Wife".

The last 14 years of his life saw his suffering and the glorious achievement in his writing career. In the period of the Restoration, Milton was arrested, and released later. He married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, in 1663, who was to survive him by more than 50 years. Living in seclusion and poverty, Milton returned to poetry, and devoted all his time and energy to writing. He published *Paradise Lost* in 1667, the companion epic *Paradise Regain* in 1671, and the poetic drama *Samson Agonistes* in 1671. In 1674 Milton died and was buried beside his father in the family graveyard, remembered as one of the most significant writers and thinkers in English history.

Paradise Lost

Paradise Lost is Milton's masterpiece, an epic poem in blank verse and one of the greatest epic poems in world literature. It originally consists of 10 books, and 12 books in subsequent rearrangement; it was first printed in 1667. Milton added to later copies of the first edition an "Argument", summarising the contents of each of the books, and also as a spirited defence of his choice of blank verse.

Milton began writing the epic in 1658. Although he probably finished the work by 1664, Milton did not publish it till 1667 on account of the Great Plague and the Great Fire in London. Milton sold the copyright of *Paradise Lost* for £10.



Lucifer: "Me Miserable! Which way shall I fly?"
Paradise Lost, Plate 84 by Gustave Doré.

"So numberless were those bad Angels, Hovering on wing, under the cope of Hell"
Paradise Lost, Plate 84 by Gustave Doré.

Milton composed the entire work when he was completely blind, with the help of secretaries and friends. He claimed that a divine spirit inspired him during the night, leaving him with verses that he would recite in the morning.

Milton's purpose, stated in Book I, is "to justify the ways of God to man" (l. 26) and to elucidate the conflict between His eternal foresight and free will. Its setting is the whole universe.

Following the tradition of epics, *Paradise Lost* starts from the middle of the event. In the Hell live Satan and his followers. Satan is cast into Hell because he challenges God's decision to choose his Son as his right-hand man. Satan vows to continue his fight with God not by force but by fraud and trick. Satan awakens his legions, rouses their spirits, and summons them to a meeting.

Milton is a master of blank verse, which is characterised by its employment of long and involved sentences, achieving sometimes an oratorical and sometimes an elaborately logical effect.

Book I
The Argument

This first Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed; Then touches the prime cause of his fall, the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent, who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven with all his Crew, into the great deep. Which action past over, the poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into Hell—described here, not in the centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed) but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos: Here Satan with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunder-struck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him; they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers; array of Battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven; for that Angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers[1]. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine[2] thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the Palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal peers there sit in council.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man[3]
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire

1 Fathers: Church Fathers, the Christian writers of the first centuries.
2 what to determine: what action is to take.
3 one greater Man: Jesus Christ.

That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,[1]
In the Beginning how the Heavens and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion Hill[2]
Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook[3] that flowed
Fast[4] by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian Mount[5], while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly Thou O Spirit[6], that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument[7]
I may assert[8] the Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man.

Say first, (for Heaven hides nothing from thy view
Nor the deep tract of Hell), say first what cause
Moved our grand parents in that happy state,
Favoured of Heav'n so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his Will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?

1 Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire/That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed: the poet is asking for inspiration from the spirit that inspired Moses. Sinai: a mountain in the Holy Land; That shepherd: Moses, a legendary Hebrew liberator, leader, lawgiver, prophet, and historian, and one of the greatest figures in Biblical history, who led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and into the desert, and received the Torah from God on Mount Sinai.
2 Sion Hill: hill in Jerusalem on which stood the Temple ("the oracle of God").
3 Siloa's Brook: a stream near Jerusalem.
4 Fast: close.
5 Aonian Mount: Mount Helicon, in Greek mythology, home of the classical Muses.
6 Spirit: Holy Spirit.
7 argument: theme; subject matter.
8 assert: defend; champion.

Who first seduced them to that fowl revolt?
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious War in Heaven and Battle proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the Space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
Confounded though immortal: But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful[1] eyes
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
At once as far as Angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great Furnace flamed, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes

1 baleful: malignant and suffering.

That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious, here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre[1] thrice to th' utmost pole.
O how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns, and weltering by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beelzebub[2]. To whom th' arch-enemy,
And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence thus began:

"If thou beest he—But O how fallen! How changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope,
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest
From what height fallen, so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage

1 the centre: the earth.
2 Beelzebub: the name of a deity worshipped in the Philistine city of Ekron. In ancient contexts, there appears to have been little, if any, meaningful distinction between Beelzebub and the polytheistic Semitic god named Ba'al. Monotheistic Jewish reference to Ba'al was almost certainly pejorative, and grew to be used among other terms for Satan. Hence the name also later appears as the name of a demon or devil, often interchanged with Beelzebub.

Can else inflict do I repent or change,
Though changed in outward luster; that fixed mind
And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,
That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed
That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field[1] be lost?
All is not lost;[2] the unconquerable will,
And study[3] of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory[4] never shall his wrath or might
Extort[5] from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee[6], and deify[7] his power
Who from the terror of this arm so late
Doubted his empire,[8] that were low indeed,
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall;[9] since by fate the strength of Gods
And this empyreal substance cannot fail,[10]
Since through experience of this great event[11]

1 field: battlefield; battle.
2 All is not lost: not all is lost.
3 study: pursuit.
4 That glory: the glory of not being conquered.
5 Extort: obtain by force or threats.
6 With suppliant knee: with knee down humbly begging.
7 deify: worship.
8 Who from the terror of this arm so late/Doubted his empire: God, fearing the strength of our army lately, felt uncertain of his authority.
9 an ignominy and shame beneath/This downfall: a humiliation and shame worse than our defeat.
10 by fate the strength of Gods/And this empyreal substance cannot fail: Satan denies that their fate is dominated by God, and regards himself as a god, his followers as angels made of heavenly essence. empyreal substance: the fiery essence in the highest heaven; fail: cease to exist; perish.
11 this great event: the battle between God and Satan.

In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile[1] eternal war,
Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

So spake th' apostate Angel[2], though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer[3]:
"O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd powers[4],
That led th' embattled Seraphim[5] to war
Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King;
And put to proof his high Supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or Chance, or Fate!
Too well I see and rue the dire event[6],
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host[7]
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heavenly essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conquerour, (whom I now
Of force[8] believe Almighty, since no less
Then such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire

1 guile: treacherous cunning.
2 th' apostate Angel: Satan. apostate: a turncoat.
3 compeer: companion; here refers to Beelzebub.
4 Chief of many thronèd powers: Satan.
5 Seraphim: plural form for "seraph", one of an order of fiery six-winged angels who guard God's throne. It is the highest rank of angels.
6 rue the dire event: feel sorry for the dreadful defeat.
7 all this mighty host: the great number of fallen angels.
8 Of force: necessarily.

Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,[1]
Or do him mightier service as his thralls[2]
By right of war, whate'er his business be
Here in the heart of Hell to work in Fire,
Or do his Errands in the gloomy Deep[3];
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?"

Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-fiend replied:
"Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable
Doing or Suffering: but of this be sure,
To do aught[4] good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his Providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still[5] to find means of evil;
Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not[6], and disturb
His inmost counsels[7] from their destined aim.
But see the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit[8]
Back to the gates of Heaven; the sulphurous hail
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice

1 suffice: satisfy; ire: anger.
2 thralls: slaves.
3 in the gloomy Deep: in the dark chaos.
4 aught: anything.
5 still: always.
6 if I fail not: unless I am mistaken.
7 His inmost counsels: his most secret plan.
8 His ministers of vengeance and pursuit: the angels who were sent by God to pursue and punish us.

Of Heaven received us falling,[1] and the thunder,
Winged with red Lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts[2], and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury[3] yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves,
There rest, if any rest can harbour there,
And reassembling our afflicted powers[4],
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from Hope,
If not what resolution from despair."

When I Consider How My Light Is Spent

The poem was written soon after Milton lost his sight completely in 1652.

Milton, in this poem, writes about using his abilities in the service of God, expresses his faith, and discusses how to achieve salvation.

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere[5] half my days in this dark world and wide,

1 from the precipice/Of Heaven received us falling: that received us falling from the precipice of Heaven. the precipice: a headlong fall.
2 hath spent his shafts: has used up his lightning and thunderbolts. shaft: arrows of fire.
3 satiate fury: anger satisfied.
4 afflicted powers: stricken armies.
5 Ere: before.

And that one talent which is death to hide[1]
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly[2] ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands[3] at his bidding speed
And post[4] o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Critical Points

1 Two Factors Influencing Milton's Writing

Milton wrote under the tremendous influence of two tremendous intellectual and social movements: Renaissance humanism and Puritan Revolution.

The Renaissance is responsible for the rich and complex texture of Milton's style, the multiplicity of its classical references, its wealth of ornament and decoration. *Paradise Lost*, being an epic, undertakes to encompass the whole life of mankind—war, love, religion, Hell, Heaven, the cosmos. It is a poem vastly capacious of worldly experience.

As an active member in the Puritan Revolution, John Milton was deeply concerned for moral principles. He had a strong desire to do his nation a great service, and a profound agony over the unsuccessful revolution; these helped him create a poetic style and a unique theme of his own: grand in themes, lofty in ideas, and supreme in language power.

1 And that one talent which is death to hide: Milton alludes to the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)—the wicked, lazy servant, knowing his master was a demanding person, buried his talent in the ground. He is punished for not having done something with his talent.
2 fondly: foolishly.
3 thousands: thousands of angels.
4 post: hasten.

2 Satan: A Hero or Not

The idea that Satan in *Paradise Lost* is the hero, or at least a type of hero, is widespread. Shelley, the great Romantic poet, interpreted Satan as the true hero of *Paradise Lost*, and the God as either dull or wicked.

The idea that Satan is a hero, putting himself against an unjust God, mostly based on the picture of Satan in the first two books of *Paradise Lost*. In those books, Satan rises off the lake of fire and delivers his heroic speech challenging God. Satan tells the other rebels that they can make "a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (I, 255) and adds, "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n" (I, 263). Finally, he goes forth on his own across the Chaos and finds the Earth. It is this picture of Satan that makes him heroic in his initial introduction to the reader.

Satan appears heroic also because the first two books focus on Hell and the fallen angels. The writing of the epic, beginning in *medias res*, makes Satan the first empathetic character. While all of the other characters in the poem—Adam, Eve, God, the Son, the angels—are essentially types rather than characters, Milton spends more artistic energy on the development of Satan so that throughout the poem, Satan's character maintains the reader's interest and even sympathy.

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, William Blake expressed his famous dictum that "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it".

Satan might be the most interesting character in the poem, but it is hard to be the hero. Satan is the enemy who chooses to commit an act that goes against the basic laws of God. Satan commits this act not because of the tyranny of God but because of his own benefit.

3 Milton's Grand Style: Profound Influence and Controversial Response

The influence of Milton's poetry and personality on the literature of the Romantic era was profound. William Wordsworth began his sonnet "London, 1802" with "Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour" and modelled *The Prelude*, his own blank verse epic, on *Paradise Lost*. Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* draws heavily on *Paradise Lost*. The novel begins with a quotation from *Paradise Lost*, and the relationship between the Creator and

Frankenstein is often seen as a metaphor for the relationship between God and Adam in *Paradise Lost*.

But different opinions were also heard: Samuel Johnson praised the poem lavishly, but complained that Milton used "English words with a foreign idiom", and conceded that "none ever wished it longer than it is." Addison, although a great admirer, felt that "our language sunk under him".

Paradise Lost declined in criticism during the first half of the 20th century due to attacks by F.R. Leavis and T.S. Eliot, who disliked the "stilted, unnatural language". In "A Note on the Verse of John Milton" in 1936, Eliot described Milton as one whose sensuousness had been "withered by book-learning" and further impaired by blindness, who wrote English "like a dead language". "In fact," said Eliot, "it was an influence against which we still have to struggle."

Questions

1 Milton's purpose for writing *Paradise Lost* is to "assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to man". Do you think that he achieves his purpose? What is your understanding of the themes of *Paradise Lost*?
2 In your opinion, is Satan a hero or not? If he is, what are the essentials of a hero?
3 Milton wrote his epics under the tremendous influence of the Bible, Renaissance humanism, Puritan Revolution, Milton's own Puritan upbringing and religious perspective, Edmund Spenser, and the Roman poet Virgil. Can you focus on one of the above influences and cite from *Paradise Lost* to support your idea?

Class Activities

Theme Summarising and Character Analysing:

Step 1 Group division

Divide the class into three groups (no less than six students in each group). All groups work on the same text of the selected *Paradise Lost*.

Step 2 Role assignment and discussion

Each group respectively needs a discussion leader, a summariser, two line pointers, and two vocabulary highlighters. Work together to 1) summarise the theme of the poem; 2) analyse the character

of Satan, 3) underline the important lines and words, and give interpretations to support your summary and analysis.

Step 3 Group presentation

Each group gives a presentation of the findings of their discussion (The presentation may be done by one representative, or by all group members according to their role assignment.)

Step 4 Comments

The teacher gives a brief comment on the presentations, and a summary of the questions concerned.

QUOTATIONS

A good book is the precious lifeblood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

— John Milton

Poetry is what Milton saw when he went blind.

— Don Marquis

Unit 11

John Bunyan (1628-1688)

John Bunyan *was a Christian writer and preacher. His masterpiece,* The Pilgrim's Progress, *is one of the most famous published Christian allegories.*

Life and Writing

John Bunyan

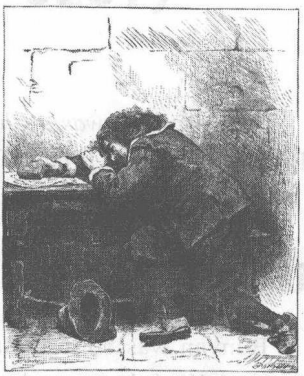
Bunyan was born at Harrowden, a small village near Bedford. His father was a brasier. He learned to read and write at the village school and early set to his father's trade. At the age of 16, he was drafted into the parliamentary army, and his military life lasted for three years. His principal readings were the Bible, the *Prayer Book*, and two religious works, *Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *Practice of Piety* introduced to him by his wife. In 1653 he joined a Nonconformist church in Bedford, and came into conflict with the Quakers, against whom he published his first writings. His wife died in 1656 and left him four children. He remarried three years later.

Bunyan was an itinerant thinker and presented his Puritan mission as apostle. The Restoration authorities viewed Bunyan as a militant subversive. He was arrested in 1660 for preaching without a licence. He wrote nine books in prison. In 1665 appeared *The Holy City, or The New Jerusalem*. In 1672 he published *A Confession of My Faith*, and *A Reason of My Practice*. After his release in 1672 he was appointed pastor at the same church, but was imprisoned again for a short period in 1677 during which he probably finished the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The whole book was finished and published in 1684. His other books are *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680) and *The Holy War* (1680).

Bunyan became a public figure in his last 10 years, preaching at a London meeting house, his down-to-earth, humourous, and impassioned style drawing hundreds of people.

The Pilgrim's Progress

The full title of the book is *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come*. It is probably the most widely-read book in the English language, and one which has been translated into more languages than any book except the Bible.



John Bunyan in Bedford Gaol.
"As I slept, I dreamed a dream."

The story is told in the form of a dream by the author. He sees Christian, with a burden on his back and reading a book, from which he learns that the city in which he and his family dwell will be burned with fire. Part 1 describes his pilgrimage through the Slough of Despond, the Interpreter's House, the House Beautiful, the Valley of Humiliation, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle, the Delectable Mountains, the Country of Beulah, to the Celestial City. On the way he encounters various allegorical personages, such as Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Faithful (who accompanies Christian on his way but is put to death in Vanity Fair), Hopeful (who next joins Christian), Giant Despair, the foul fiend Apollyon, and many others. Part 2 relates how Christian's wife Christiana, moved by a vision, sets out with her children on the same pilgrimage.

The work is a moral and religious allegory as well as a reflection of the reality of a specific historical period.

Christian Sets out for the Celestial City

Burdened Christian flees from home.

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a Den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great Burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, "What shall I do?"

In this plight therefore he went home, and refrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress, but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased: Wherefore at length he brake his mind to his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them: O my dear wife, said he, and you the children of my bowels, I your dear friend, am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me; moreover, I am for certain informed that this our city will be burned with fire from heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered. At this his relations were sore amazed; not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper[1] had got into his head; therefore, it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed: But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So, when the morning was come, they would know how he did; He told them, Worse and worse: he also set to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened: they also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages[2] to him; sometimes they would deride[3], sometimes they would chide[4], and sometimes they would quite neglect him: Wherefore he began to retire himself to his chamber, to pray for and pity them, and also to condole his own misery; he would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying: and thus for some days he spent his time.

Now, I saw upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was, as he was wont, reading in his book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, "What shall I do to be saved?"

I saw also that he looked this way and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because, as I perceived, he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist[5], coming to him, and asked, Wherefore dost thou cry? He answered, Sir, I perceive by the Book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to Judgment, and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.

1 distemper: madness.
2 harsh and surly carriages: bad behaviour.
3 deride: express contempt for; ridicule.
4 chide: scold or rebuke.
5 Evangelist: a preacher of the Gospel; literally, a bearer of good news.

Christian no sooner leaves the World but meets
Evangelist, who lovingly him greets
With tidings of another: and doth shew
Him how to mount to that from this below.

Then said Evangelist, Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils? The man answered, Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the Grave, and I shall fall into Tophet[1]. And, Sir, if I be not fit to go to Prison, I am not fit to go to Judgement, and from thence to Execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

Then said Evangelist, If this be thy condition, why standest thou still? He answered, Because I know not whither to go. Then he gave him a Parchment[2] roll, and there was written within, "Fly from the wrath to come."

The man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully[3], said, Whither must I fly? Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, Do you see yonder wicket-gate[4]? The man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining Light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto: so shalt thou see the Gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door, but his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man out his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying Life! Life! Eternal Life! So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain.

The neighbours also came out to see him run; and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and among those that did so, there were two that resolved to fetch him back by force. The name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable. Now by this time the Man was got a good distance from them; but however they were resolved to pursue

1 Tophet: (*literary*) hell. It was originally from the Hebrew name of a place near Jerusalem used in biblical times for the worship of idols, including the sacrifice of children.
2 parchment: a stiff material made from the skin of a sheep or goat, formerly used for writing on.
3 carefully: sorrowfully.
4 wicket-gate: a small gate in or beside a larger gate.

him, which they did, and in a little time they overtook him. Then said the Man, Neighbours, wherefore are you come? They said, To persuade you to go back with us. But he said, That can by no means be; you dwell, said he, in the City of Destruction, the place also where I was born, I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later, you will sink lower than the Grave, into a place that burns with Fire and Brimstone: be content, good Neighbours, and go along with me.

Obst. What, said Obstinate, and leave our friends and our comforts behind us!

Chr. Yes, said Christian, for that was his name, because that all which you shall forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of that that I am seeking to enjoy; and if you will go along with me and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there where I go, is enough and to spare: Come away, and prove my words.

Obst. What are the things you seek, since you leave all the world to find them?

Chr. I seek an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, and it is laid up in Heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my book.

Obst. Tush![1] said Obstinate, away with your Book; will you go back with us or no?

Chr. No, not I, said the other, because I have laid my hand to the Plow.

Obst. Come, then, neighbour Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him; there is a company of these crazed-headed coxcombs[2], that, when they take a fancy by the end, are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

Pli. Then said Pliable, Don't revile; if what the good Christian says is true, the things he looks after are better than ours; my heart inclines to go with my neighbour.

Obst. What! more fools still? Be ruled by me, and go back; who knows whither such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.

Chr. Come with me, neighbour Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you believe not me, read here in this book; and for the truth of what is exprest therein, behold, all is confirmed by the blood of Him that made it.

Pli. Well, neighbour Obstinate, said Pliable, I begin to come to a point: I

1 Tush: (*exclamation*) archaic expressing disapproval.
2 coxcombs: fools, vain and conceited men.

intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him: but, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?

Chr. I am directed by a man, whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little gate that is before us, where we shall receive instructions about the way.

Pli. Come, then, good neighbour, let us be going. Then they went both together.

Then I saw in my dream, that when they[1] were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair: it is kept all the year long. It beareth[2] the name of Vanity Fair because the town where it is kept is lighter than vanity; and, also because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither[3], is vanity. As is the saying of the wise, "All that cometh is vanity."

Christian enters the town of Vanity Fair. "At the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair."

This fair is no new-erected business, but a thing of ancient standing; I will show you the original of it.

Almost five thousand years agone[4], there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City[5], as these two honest persons are: and Beelzebub, Apollyon,

1 they: Christian and Faithful. Faithful, Christian's friend from the City of Destruction, who is also going on pilgrimage. Christian meets him just after he gets through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.
2 beareth: bears; "th" is used to indicate third person single in ancient English.
3 cometh thither: comes there.
4 agone: ago.
5 the Celestial City: the "Desired Country" of pilgrims, heaven, the dwelling place of the "Lord of the Hill", God. It is situated on Mount Zion.

and Legion,[1] with their companions, perceiving by the path that the pilgrims made, that their way to the city lay through this town of Vanity, they contrived here to set up a fair; a fair wherein[2], should be sold all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long: therefore at this fair are all such merchandise sold, as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments[3], titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And, moreover, at this fair there is at all times to be seen juggling cheats, games, plays, fools, apes[4], knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind.

Here are to be seen, too, and that for nothing, thefts, murders, adulteries, false swearers, and that of a blood-red colour.

And as in other fairs of less moment[5], there are the several rows and streets, under their proper names, where such and such wares are vended; so here likewise you have the proper places, rows, streets, (viz.[6] countries and kingdoms), where the wares of this fair are soonest to be found. Here is the Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row, where several sorts of vanities are to be sold. But, as in other fairs, some one commodity is as the chief of all the fair, so the ware of Rome[7] and her merchandise is greatly promoted in this fair; only our English nation, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat[8].

Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town where this lusty fair is kept; and he that will go to the city, and yet not go

1 Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion: Beelzebub, literally "Lord of the Flies", one of satan's companion archdevils who had erected a fort near the Wicket Gate from which he and his companions could shoot arrows at those who are about to enter the Wicket Gate. He is also the Lord of Vanity Fair. Apollyon, literally "Destroyer", the lord of the City of Destruction and one of satan's companion archdevils, who tries to force Christian to return to his domain and service. His battle with Christian takes place in the Valley of Humiliation, just below the House Beautiful. He appears as a dragonlike creature with scales and bat's wings. He takes darts from his body to throw at his opponents. Legion: here refers to the followers of Satan.
2 wherein: in which.
3 preferments: promotions.
4 apes: imitators.
5 of less moment: of less importance.
6 viz.: (*Latin*) namely.
7 the ware of Rome: the usage and temporal power of the Roman Catholic Church.
8 thereat: at there; at that.

through this town, "must needs[1] go out of the world." The Prince of princes himself[2], when here, went through this town to his own country, and that upon a fair day too[3]; yea, and as I think, it was Beelzebub, the chief lord of this fair, that invited him to buy of his vanities; yea, would have made him lord of the fair, would he but have done him reverence as he went through the town. Yea, because he was such a person of honour, Beelzebub had him from street to street, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a little time, that he might, if possible, allure the Blessed One[4] to cheapen and buy some of his vanities; but he had no mind to the merchandise, and therefore left the town, without laying out so much as one farthing upon these vanities. This fair, therefore, is an ancient thing, of long standing, and a very great fair.

Now these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this fair: Well, so they did; but behold even as they entered into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved, and the town itself as it were in a hubbub[5] about them; and that for several reasons: for—

First, The pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment[6] as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair, made a great gazing upon them: some said they were fools, some they were bedlams[7], and some they are outlandish[8] men.

Secondly, And as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said; they naturally spoke the language of Canaan[9], but they that kept the fair were the men of this world; so that, from one end of the fair to the other, they seemed barbarians each to the other.

Thirdly, But that which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was, that these pilgrims set very light[10] by all their wares; they cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and

1 must needs: must necessarily.
2 The Prince of princes himself: Jesus Christ.
3 that upon a fair day too: this alludes to the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.
4 the Blessed One: Jesus Christ.
5 in a hubbub: in a mixture of loud noises.
6 raiment: clothing.
7 bedlams: madmen.
8 outlandish: strange; foreign.
9 the language of Canaan: the language of true Christians. Canaan: Palestine, the Promised Land.
10 set very light: treat as of little importance.

look upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic[1] was in heaven.

One chanced mockingly, beholding the carriage[2] of the men, to say unto them, "What will ye buy?" But they, looking gravely upon him, answered, "We buy the truth." At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more; some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them. At last things came to a hubbub and great stir in the fair, insomuch that all order was confounded[3]. Now was word presently brought to the great one of the fair, who quickly came down, and deputed some of his most trusty friends to take these men into examination, about whom the fair was almost overturned. So the men were brought to examination; and they that sat upon[4] them, asked them whence[5] they came, whither they went, and what they did there, in such an unusual garb? The men told them that they were pilgrims and strangers in the world, and that they were going to their own country, which was the heavenly Jerusalem[6], and that they had given no occasion to the men of the town, nor yet to the merchandisers, thus to abuse them, and to let them in their journey, except it was for that, when one asked them what they would buy, they said they would buy the truth. But they that were appointed to examine them did not believe them to be any other than bedlams and mad, or else such as came to put all things into a confusion in the fair. Therefore they took them and beat them, and besmeared them[7] with dirt, and then put them into the cage, that they might be made a spectacle[8] to all the men of the fair.

There, therefore, they lay for some time, and were made the objects of any man's sport, or malice, or revenge, the great one of the fair laughing still at all that befell them. But the men being patient, and not rendering railing for railing[9], but contrariwise, blessing, and good words for bad, and kindness for injuries done, some men in the fair that were more observing, and less prejudiced than the rest, began to check and blame the baser sort for their continual abuses done by them to the men; they, therefore, in angry manner, let fly at them[10] again,

1 trade and traffic: business.
2 carriage: bearing, posture.
3 confounded: confused and deeply troubled.
4 sat upon: judged.
5 whence: from where.
6 the heavenly Jerusalem: the Celestial City.
7 besmeared them: made them dirty.
8 be made a spectacle: be made an object of public shame.
9 rendering railing for railing: using abusive language in return for abusive language.
10 let fly at them: attack them.

counting them as bad as the men in the cage, and telling them that they seemed confederates[1], and should be made partakers of their misfortunes. The other replied that, for aught they could see, the men were quiet, and sober, and intended nobody any harm; and that there were many that traded in their fair that were more worthy to be put into the cage, yea, and pillory too, than were the men they had abused. Thus, after divers words had passed on both sides, the men behaving themselves all the while very wisely and soberly before them, they fell to some blows among themselves, and did harm one to another. Then were these two poor men brought before their examiners again, and there charged as being guilty of the late hubbub that had been in the fair. So they beat them pitifully[2], and hanged irons upon them, and led them in chains up and down the fair, for an example and a terror to others, lest any should speak in their behalf, or join themselves unto them. But Christian and Faithful behaved themselves yet more wisely, and received the ignominy and shame that was cast upon them, with so much meekness and patience, that it won to their side, though but few in comparison of the rest, several of the men in the fair. This put the other party yet into greater rage, insomuch that[3] they concluded the death of these two men. Wherefore they threatened, that the cage nor irons should serve their turn, but that they should die, for the abuse they had done, and for deluding the men of the fair.

Then were they remanded to the cage again, until further order should be taken with them. So they put them in, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

The River of Death and the Celestial City

So I saw that when they[4] awoke, they addressed themselves to go up to the City. But, as I said, the reflection of the Sun upon the City (for the City was pure Gold) was so extremely glorious, that they could not as yet with open face behold it, but through an Instrument made for that purpose. So I saw that as they went on, there met them two men, in Raiment that shone like Gold, also their faces shone as the light.

These men asked the pilgrims whence they came; and they told them. They also asked them where they had lodged, what difficulties and dangers, what comforts and pleasures they had met in the way; and they told them. Then said

1 confederates: allies.
2 pitifully: without pity.
3 insomuch that: so; with the result that.
4 they: Christian and his companion, Hopeful.

the men that met them, You have but two difficulties more to meet with, and then you are in the City.

Christian then and his companion asked the men to go along with them, so they told them they would. But, said they, you must obtain it by your own faith. So I saw in my dream that they went on together till they came in sight of the gate.

Now I further saw that betwixt them and the gate was a river, but there was no bridge to go over, the river was very deep: at the sight therefore of this river the pilgrims were much stunned[1]; but the men that went with them said, You must go through, or you cannot come at the gate.

The pilgrims then began to enquire if there was no other way to the gate; to which they answered, Yes, but there hath not any, save two, to wit, Enoch and Elijah[2], been permitted to tread that path, since the foundation of the world, nor shall, until the last trumpet shall sound. The pilgrims then, especially Christian, began to despond in his mind, and looked this way and that, but no way could be found by them by which they might escape the river. Then they asked the men if the waters were all of a depth? They said, No; yet they could not help them in that case, for said they, you shall find it deeper or shallower, as you believe in the King of the place.

They then addressed themselves to the Water; and entring, Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all his waves go over me! Selah.[3]

Then said the other, Be of good cheer, my Brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good. Then said Christian, Ah my friend, the sorrows of death have compassed me about, I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey. And with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him. Also here in great measure lost his senses, so that he could neither remember, nor orderly talk of any of those sweet refreshments that he had met with in the way of his pilgrimage. But all the words that he spake still tended to discover that he had horror of mind, and heart-fears that he should die in that River, and never obtain entrance in at the Gate. Here also, as they that stood by perceived, he was much in the troublesome thoughts of the sins that

1 stunned: amazed.
2 Enoch and Elijah: religious figures, both were translated alive to heaven. (See Genesis 5.24, Hebrews 11.5, 2 Kings 2.11-12.)
3 Selah: (*n.*) signifying silence or a pause in the musical performance of the song. Bunyan may have supposed it to signify the end.

he had committed, both since and before he began to be a pilgrim. 'Twas also observed that he was troubled with apparitions of Hobgoblins and evil Spirits, for ever and anon he would intimate so much by words. Hopeful therefore here had much ado to keep his Brother's head above water; yea sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then ere a while he would rise up again half dead. Hopeful also would endeavour to comfort him, saying, Brother, I see the Gate, and men standing by to receive us. But Christian would answer, 'Tis you, 'tis you they wait for, you have been hopeful ever since I knew you. And so have you, said he to Christian. Ah, Brother, said he, surely if I was right, he would now arise to help me; but for my sins he hath brought me into the snare, and hath left me. Then said Hopeful, My Brother, you have quite forgot the Text, where it is said of the wicked, There is no band in their death, but their strength is firm, they are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. These troubles and distresses that you go through in these Waters are no sign that God hath forsaken you, but are sent to try you, whether you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of his goodness, and live upon him in your distresses.

Then I saw in my dream, that Christian was as in a muse a while. To whom also Hopeful added this word, Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; and with that Christian brake out with a loud voice, Oh I see him again, and he tells me, When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee. Then they both took courage, and the Enemy was after that as still as a stone, until they were gone over. Christian therefore presently found ground to stand upon, and so it followed that the rest of the river was but shallow. Thus they got over. Now upon the bank of the river on the other side, they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them; wherefore being come out of the river, they saluted them saying, We are ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for those that shall be heirs of salvation. Thus they went along towards the gate.

Now, now, look how the holy pilgrims ride,
Clouds are their chariots, angels are their guide:
Who would not here for him all hazards run,
That thus provides for his when this world's done?

Now you must note that the City stood upon a mighty hill, but the pilgrims went up that hill with ease because they had these two men to lead them up by the arms; also they had left their mortal garments behind them in the river, for

though they went in with them, they came out without them. They therefore went up here with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the City was framed was higher than the clouds. They therefore went up through the Regions of the Air, sweetly talking as they went, being comforted, because they safely got over the River, and had such glorious companions to attend them.

The talk that they had with the Shining Ones was about the glory of the place, who told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. There, said they, is the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of Angels, and the Spirits of just men made perfect. You are going now, said they, to the Paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life, and eat of the never-fading fruits thereof; and when you come there, you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity. There you shall not see again such things as you saw when you were in the lower region upon the earth, to wit, sorrow, sickness, affliction, and death, for the former things are passed away. You are now going to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob, and to the Prophets, men that God hath taken away from the evil to come, and that are now resting upon their beds, each one walking in his righteousness. The men then asked, What must we do in the holy place? To whom it was answered, You must there receive the comfort of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow; you must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers and tears, and sufferings for the King by the way. In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight and vision of the holy one, for there you shall see him as he is. There also you shall serve him continually with praise, with shouting, and thanksgiving, whom you desired to serve in the World, though with much difficulty, because of the infirmity of your flesh. There your eyes shall be delighted with seeing, and your ears with hearing the pleasant voice of the Mighty One. There you shall enjoy your friends again, that are gone thither before you; and there you shall with joy receive even every one that follows into the holy place after you. There also shall you be clothed with glory and majesty, and put into an equipage fit to ride out with the King of Glory. When he shall come with sound of trumpet in the clouds, as upon the wings of the wind, you shall come with him; and when he shall sit upon the throne of judgment, you shall sit by him; yea, and when he shall pass sentence upon all the workers of iniquity, let them be angels or men, you also shall have a voice in that judgment, because they were his and your enemies. Also when he shall again return to the City, you shall go too, with sound of trumpet, and be ever with him.

Now while they were thus drawing towards the gate, behold a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them; to whom it was said by the other two Shining Ones, These are the men that have loved our Lord when they were in the world, and that have left all for his holy name, and he hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their redeemer in the face with joy. Then the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying, Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. There came out also at this time to meet them, several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who with melodious noises and loud, made even the Heavens to echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world, and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet.

This done, they compassed them round on every side; some went before, some behind, and some on the right hand, some on the left, (as 'twere to guard them through the upper regions) continually sounding as they went with melodious noise, in notes on high: so that the very sight was to them that could behold it, as if heaven itself was come down to meet them. Thus therefore they walked on together; and as they walked, ever and anon these trumpeters, even with joyful sound, would, by mixing their music with looks and gestures, still signify to Christian and his Brother, how welcome they were into their company, and with what gladness they came to meet them; and now were these two men as 'twere in heaven before they came at it, being swallowed up with the sight of angels, and with hearing of their melodious notes. Here also they had the City itself in view, and they thought they heard all the Bells therein ring to welcome them thereto. But above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there, with such company, and that for ever and ever. Oh, by what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed! And thus they came up to the Gate.

Now when they were come up to the gate, there was written over it in letters of gold, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Then I saw in my dream, that the Shining Men bid them call at the gate; the which when they did, some from above looked over the gate, to wit, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, etc., to whom it was said, These pilgrims are come from the City of Destruction for the love that they bear to the King of this place; and then the pilgrims gave in unto them each man his certificate, which they had received in the beginning; those therefore were carried in to the King, who when he had read them, said, Where are the men? To whom it was answered, They are

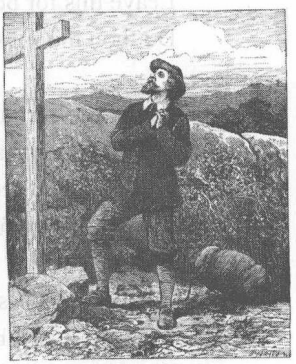
standing without the gate. The King then commanded to open the gate, "That the righteous nation," saith he, "which keepeth the truth, may enter in."

Now I say in my dream that these two men went in at the gate; and lo[1], as they entered, they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There was also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them, the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying, "Blessing, Honour, Glory, and Power, be to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the City shone like the sun: the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal.

There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord." And after that they shut up the gates. Which when I had seen, I wished myself among them.

Now while I was gazing upon all these things, I turned my head to look back, and saw Ignorance come up to the riverside; but he soon got over, and that without half that difficulty which the other two men met with. For it happened that there was then in that place one Vain-hope a ferryman, that with this boat helped him over; so he, as the other I saw, did ascend the hill to come up to the gate, only he came alone; neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement. When he was come up to the gate, he looked up to the writing that was above, and then began to knock, supposing that entrance should have been quickly administered to him; but he was asked by the men that looked over the top of the gate, Whence came you? and what would you have? He answered, I have eat and drank in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our streets. Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go in and shew it to the King. So he fumbled in his bosom for one, and found none. Then



Christian before the cross
"His burden fell off his back, and began to tremble."

1 lo: (*exclamation*) [*archaic*] used to draw attention to an interesting event.

said they, Have you none? But the man answered never a word. So they told the King, but he would not come down to see him, but commanded the two Shining Ones that conducted Christian and Hopeful to the City, to go out and take Ignorance, and bind him hand and foot, and have him away. Then they took him up, and carried him through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the Hill, and put him in there. Then I saw that there was a way to Hell even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke, and behold it was a Dream.

The Conclusion

Now Reader, I have told my dream to thee;
See if thou can'st interpret it to me,
Or to thyself, or Neighbour; but take heed
Of mis-interpreting; for that, instead
Of doing good, will but thyself abuse:
By mis-interpreting, evil ensues.

Take heed also, that thou be not extreme,
In playing with the out-side of my dream:
Nor let my figure or similitude
Put thee into a laughter or a feud;
Leave this for boys and fools; but as for thee,
Do thou the substance of my matter see.

Put by the curtains, look within my vail;
Turn up my metaphors, and do not fail
There, if thou seekest them, such things to find
As will be helpful to an honest mind.

What of my dross thou findest there, be bold
To throw away, but yet preserve the gold;
What if my gold be wrapped up in ore?
None throws away the Apple for the core.
But if thou shalt cast away all as vain,
I know not but 'twill make me dream again.

Critical Points

1 *The Pilgrimage's Progress* as an Allegory

Allegory is a narrative, in which the characters and actions, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived to make coherent sense on the literal level of signification, and at the same time to signify a second, correlated order of signification. The allegory of ideas is that the literal characters represent concepts and the plot allegorises an abstract doctrine or thesis. The central device of allegory is the personification of abstract entities such as virtues, vices, states of mind, modes of life, and types of character. In some explicit allegories, such reference is specified by the names given to characters and places.

The Pilgrimage's Progress indicates the nature of an explicit allegorical narrative, allegorising the Christian doctrine of salvation by telling how the character named Christian, flees the City of Destruction and makes his way laboriously to the Celestial City.

The novel, owing to its plain style and rich meanings, circulated at first mainly in uneducated circles, and became an allegorical classic, regarded by generations of readers as a manual of moral instruction and an aid to literacy, as well as a delightful tale.

2 The Realistic and Satirical Aspects of the Novel

The book gives a real picture of how life was like during the 17th century in England. Many allegorical figures and places Christian meets on the way are what might have been seen in Bunyan's day on any English market road; and the landscape and houses in the story seem to be no other than those of Restoration England. It is a faithful panoramic reflection of the age.

The most well known is the description of the Vanity Fair, by which the author gives a symbolic picture of London. In the Fair, all things are bought and sold, including honour, title and even kingdom, and lust, cheating, roguery, murder, and adultery prevail. He satirises the society he lives in, where vices violate the teachings of the Christian religion.

By the combination of the realistic description with allegorical symbolism and satire, Bunyan develops the tradition of name symbolism, making the book a seminal text in the development of the English realistic novel and producing a great influence upon later novelists as Charles Dickens and William Thackeray.

Questions

1 What is an allegory? How does Bunyan combine the personalities with the abstract human virtues in his allegoric characterisation? What is the allegorical meaning of this narrative?

2 In what aspects is *The Pilgrim's Progress* still inspiring readers in the modern time?

Class Activities

Writing Practice:

Write an allegorical story on a topic you like by imitating Bunyan's style, pretending the story happens in your dream.

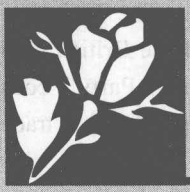
QUOTATIONS

Our heart oft times wakes when we sleep, and God can speak to that, either by words, by proverbs, by signs and similitudes, as well as if one was awake.

—John Bunyan

This is the great merit of the book (*The Pilgrim's Progress*), that the most cultivated man cannot find anything to praise more highly, and the child knows nothing more amusing.

—Samuel Johnson



Part IV

The Eighteenth Century (1688-1798)

Key Words

the Enlightenment	Neoclassicism
the rise of English novel	Gothic novel
sentimentality	satire
Three Dramatic Unities	Robinson Crusoe

1 Political, Economic and Social Changes

The establishment of the constitutional monarchy in England brought the Bourgeoisie into the centre of political power. During the 18th century, the Parliament was dominated in turn by two rival parties, the Tory and the Whig, representing the interests of different classes. The Tories, originally known as the "Court Party", was most composed of the British nobility and the landowners. The Whigs, originally as the "Country Party", consisted of rich nobility and the growing merchant class. Both supported free trade and the policy of tolerance.

This was a period of political stability and economic development at home. This was also an age of vast expansion of colonies overseas. On the one hand, the Enclosure drove thousands of small farmers and tenants to become wage earners in towns, providing a foundation for meeting the manual need to increase productivity; on the other hand, the colonial settlement and wars created great demand for huge amount of manufactured goods, serving as a potential market of prosperity. When the Industrial Revolution occurred with the invention of new machines and innovation of technologies, manufactured goods with high quality were produced in far larger quantities and in far less time.

England benefited a lot from being the first powerful industrial country, and experienced a profound change in social structure. The direct result of the Industrial Revolution was a rapid growth of the middle class. People as traders, merchants, manufacturers and adventurers enlarged the middle class. They obtained their present status mostly through hard work. In morality, they stressed self-discipline, self-struggle, and equality, which would be reflected in political issues, social culture and literary creation.

2 The Enlightenment Movement

The Enlightenment refers to the intellectual movement from the 1680s to 1789, which advocated reason as the primary basis of authority. Developing in France, Britain and Germany, its sphere of influence included the whole

Europe. The influential Enlightenment thinkers are Voltaire[1], Montesquieu[2], John Locke[3], Thomas Hobbes[4] and Jean-Jacques Rousseau[5].

Inspired by the revolution of knowledge commenced by Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton, and in a climate of increasing disaffection with repressive rule, Enlightenment thinkers believed that systematic thinking might be applied to all areas of human activity, carried into the governmental sphere in their explorations of the individual, society and the state.

The Enlightenment thinkers believed that the world was an object of study and that people could understand and control the world by means of reason and empirical research. They used reason to question monarch privilege, social inequality, injustice, oppression and superstition. They believed in the right of the individual, and claimed that the society should emerge and develop as the result of a social contract among the individuals instead of arbitrary rulers by birth. Such ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers helped create the intellectual framework for the American War of Independence in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789, and led to the rise of classical liberalism, democracy, and capitalism. All the Enlightenment thinkers were positive advocator of education, and they acknowledged that literature should play a very important

1 Voltaire: pen name of François-Marie Arouet (1694–1778), a French Enlightenment writer, essayist, and philosopher, known for his wit, philosophical points, and defence of civil liberties, including freedom of religion and the right to a fair trial. He was an outspoken supporter of social reform.

2 Montesquieu (1689–1755): French social commentator and political thinker during the Enlightenment. He is famous for his articulation of the theory of separation of powers.

3 John Locke (1632–1704): English philosopher. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers and contributors to social contract theory. Locke is considered the first of the British empiricists, and the first philosopher to define the self through a continuity of "consciousness". His writings influenced Voltaire and Rousseau, as well as the American revolutionaries.

4 Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679): English philosopher, whose famous book *Leviathan* (1651) established the agenda for nearly all subsequent Western political philosophy. His account of human nature as self-interested cooperation has proved to be an enduring theory in the field of philosophical anthropology.

5 Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778): Genevan philosopher of the Enlightenment whose political ideas influenced the French Revolution, the development of socialist theory, and the growth of nationalism. With his *Confessions* and other writings, he practically invented modern autobiography and encouraged a new focus on the building of subjectivity that would bear fruit in the work of thinkers as diverse as Hegel and Freud. His epistolary novel *Julie, or the New Heloise* (1761) was important to the development of romanticism.

role in public education.

Influential writers of the Enlightenment in England of the period are Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison, Jonathan Swift and Samuel Johnson. Their writings are both interesting and enlightening.

3 Cultural Progress

As more people had more leisure time and became better educated, a widely distributed reading public grew. Inspired by the spirit of the Enlightenment, people were encouraged to cultivate a sound sense of rationality and a witty intellectuality.

At the same time, the release of the Copyright Act[1] in 1709, for the first time in English history, made writing an independent profession and granted the freedom of writing. With the newly gained financial independence, the writers enjoyed greater freedom in practising their talent in whatever of their interest.

There appeared in large number pamphlets and newspapers and periodicals in the period, serving not only as political propaganda for the parties, but a popular medium for public education. Editing newspapers and writing pamphlets were common among literary men.

There also appeared many coffeehouses and many kinds of social clubs. Coffeehouses largely served as centres of social interaction: the coffeehouse provided social members with a place to congregate, talk, write, read, entertain one another, or pass the time, whether individually or in small groups. The first coffeehouse in London was opened in 1650. By 1739 there were 551 coffeehouses in London; each attracted a particular clientele divided by occupation or attitude, such as Tories and Whigs, wits and stockjobbers, merchants and lawyers, booksellers and authors.

The rapid increase of pamphlets and newspapers, coffeehouses and clubs greatly helped the cultivation and promotion of the new English culture, and helped the writers disseminate their ideas to common readers.

1 Copyright Act in 1709 was the first copyright law in Britain. It was enacted in 1709 and entering into force in 1710. The Act vested authors rather than printers with the monopoly on the reproduction of their works. It created a 21-year term for all works already in print at the time of its enactment and a 14-year term for all works published subsequently.

4 Literary Achievements

1 Neoclassicism

Neoclassicism dominated English literature from the last decades of the 17th century to the early of the 18th century.

Writers of Neoclassicism found their artistic models in the classical literature of the ancient Greek and Roman writers like Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and in the contemporary French writers as Voltaire and Denis Diderot[1]. They put stress on the classical artistic ideals of order, logic, proportion, restrained emotion, accuracy, good taste and decorum. They set laws and rules for almost every genre of literature, for example, prose should be precise, direct, smooth and flexible; poetry should be lyrical, epical, didactic, satiric or dramatic; drama should be written in the heroic couplets; the three unities of time, space and action should be strictly observed.

The famous poets of the 18th-century England in the classical style are Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson.

2 The Rise of English Novel

The rise of English novel was another important phenomenon of the period. With the wide audience from the middle class, the literary tendency of the period was moving away from the conventional romance, stories about the life of aristocratic class, to works of accounts of the common people.

Samuel Richardson

Oliver Goldsmith

1 Denis Diderot (1713–1784): French philosopher and writer. He was a prominent figure in the Enlightenment, and editor-in-chief of the famous *Encyclopédie*. Diderot also contributed to literature, notably with *Jacques the Fatalist and His Master*, which challenges conventions regarding novels, structure and content, and examines philosophical ideas about free will.

The novelists combined the allegorical tradition of the moral fables with the picaresque tradition of the folk stories and achieved a writing of both realistic accounting and moral teaching.

Denial Defoe, Samuel Richardson[1], Henry Fielding, and Oliver Goldsmith[2] made contributions to the rise and development of novel as a new genre of literature in different aspects and to different extent.

3 Gothic Novel

Gothic novel emerged and flourished in the last decades of the 17th century. The term Gothic derived from the frequent setting of the tales in the ruined, moss-covered castles of the Middle Ages. Gothic novel, as a literary genre, combines elements of both horror and romance.

Prominent features of Gothic novel include: terror, mystery, the supernatural, ghosts, haunted houses and Gothic architecture, decay, madness, secrets and hereditary curses. The stock characters of Gothic novel are always tyrants, villains, persecuted maidens, madwomen, magicians, vampires, monsters, and ghosts. The captivity and persecution of a beautiful maiden by an obsessed and haggard villain would often be the central plot.

These novels, in rebelling against the increasing commercialism and rationalism, show the dark, irrational side of human nature—the savage egoism, the perverse impulses, and the nightmarish terror that lie beneath the controlled and ordered surface of the conscious mind.

The originator of English Gothic novel is Horace Walpole, and his *Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764) is the first of the kind. Other famous Gothic novels are: Clara Reeve's *The Champion of Virtue: A Gothic Story* (1777), Matthew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk* (1797) and Anne Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797).

4 Sentimentality

Sentimentality in poetry and fiction appeared together with the rise of the English novel, as a partial reaction against that cold and logic rationalism.

1 Samuel Richardson (1689–1761): an English writer best known for his three epistolary novels: *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740), *Clarissa: Or, The History of a Young Lady* (1748) and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753).

2 Oliver Goldsmith (1730–1774): an Irish writer and poet, known for his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), his pastoral poem *The Deserted Village* (1770), and his plays *The Good-natur'd Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1771).

In literary works of sentimentality, a ready sympathy and an inward pain for the misery of others became part of accepted social morality and ethics. The susceptibility to tender feelings became a sign of good breeding and good manners. Besides, sensibility also finds pleasure in the wild nature, in the lawlessness of the exotic, and in the sensational indulgence of fear and awe before the mysterious or the inexplicable.

Popular novels of this genre include: *Pamela*[1] by Samuel Richardson, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) by Laurence Sterne, *The Vicar of Wakefield*[2] (1766) by Goldsmith, and *The Man of Feeling* (1771) by Mackenzie. Thomas Gray's "An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1750), Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* (1770) are representatives of poetry of sentimentality.

5 Satire

Satire made another feature of writing in this period. Satire is a composition in verse or prose, in which human or individual vices, follies, or shortcomings are held up to be censured by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, or other methods, with an intent to bring about improvement. Although satire is usually witty, and often very funny, the purpose of satire is not primarily humour but criticism of an event, an individual or a group in a witty but sharp manner. Simply speaking, satire seeks to expose the moral excesses by means of laughter.

The two great masters of satire in the 18th century are Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, both are noted for their wittiness of remark and adeptness of technique.

1 *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded* is an epistolary novel by Samuel Richardson, first published in 1740. The story inspired Henry Fielding to write two parodies: *Shamela* (1741), about Pamela's true identity; and *Joseph Andrews* (1742), about Pamela's brother.

2 *The Vicar of Wakefield*: a sentimental novel by Oliver Goldsmith. The novel displays the belief in the innate goodness of human beings. It is mentioned in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Jane Austen's *Emma*, Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

Unit 12

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)

Daniel Defoe *is notable for being one of the earliest practitioners of the novel and helped popularise the genre in Britain. He is also a pioneer of journalism. As a prolific and versatile writer, Defoe wrote many books, pamphlets, and journals on various topics.*

Life and Writing

Defoe was born in London, the son of James Foe, a butcher. He changed his name to Defoe. He travelled widely in France, Spain, the Low Countries, Italy and Germany, and then established himself as a hosiery merchant.

Daniel Defoe

His first important work was *An Essay upon Projects* (1697), followed by *The True-Born Englishman* (1701), an immensely popular satirical poem attacking the prejudice against a king of foreign birth and his Dutch friends. Defoe was fined, imprisoned, and pilloried in 1702 because of his publication of a tract entitled *The Shortest Way with Dissenters*. When in prison he kept on writing. He was soon secured to release, and was employed as a secret agent for the next 11 years by Robert Harley, the Troy politician and Speaker of the House of Commons. Defoe travelled around the country gathering information and wrote many pamphlets.

He issued a triweekly news journal entitled *The Review*. The journal is historically important as it establishes the form of the periodical essay. He has been regarded as the pioneer of modern journalism, for he not only ran *The Review* by himself, but also wrote articles on various subjects of politics, crime, religion, marriage, psychology and the supernatural. His pamphlets led to his persecution by the Whigs and to a brief imprisonment. He then started a

new trade journal, *Mercator*.

When he was nearly 60, he finished his first and most famous novel, *The Life and Strange and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719), usually shortened as *Robinson Crusoe*. A few months later Defoe followed it with *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, in which with Friday Crusoe revisits his island. *Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe with His Vision of the Angelick World* appeared in 1720, and was never as popular.

Another famous novel by Defoe was *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders* (1722), which was among the most important novels in 18th century England. *Moll Flanders* relates the adventures of a London prostitute, a woman "twelve years a whore, five times a wife, and twelve years a thief, eight years a transported felon in Virginia". Defoe emphasises that the environment in which one grows up and lives is the decisive element in the orientation of one's behaviour.

His *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, a guidebook in three volumes, is a vivid first-hand account of the state of the country, gleaned from his many travels. His last principal works are *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726), *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1728), and *The Complete English Gentleman* (1790). He died in his lodgings, probably whilst in hiding from his creditors. He was buried in Bunhill Fields, London.

Defoe's influence on the English novel and prose writing was enormous. He is a master of plain prose and powerful narrative, with a journalist's curiosity and love of realistic detail; his peculiar gifts make him one of the greatest reporters of his time, as well as a great imaginative writer.

Robinson Crusoe

Robinson Crusoe was first published in 1719 and has a claim to be the first English novel. It is a fictional autobiography. Its full title was *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner: who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an uninhabited Island on the coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pirates. Written by*

Robinson Crusoe

Himself.

The novel is based on the real adventures of a seaman, Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish sailor, who, after a quarrel with his captain, was thrown onto a desolate island off the coast of Chile. He lived there alone for five years. Defoe read about his story in a newspaper and went to interview him to get first-hand information. He then embellished the sailor's tale with many incidents out of his own imagination.

Plot Summary

Robinson Crusoe ran away from home because he wanted to become a sailor. After some time, he became the owner of a sugar plantation, and aligned himself with other planters to undertake a trip to Africa in order to bring back a shipload of slaves. After surviving a storm, he was thrown upon shore only to find that he was the only survivor of the wreck.

Crusoe made immediate plans for food, and then shelter, to protect himself from wild animals. He brought as many things as possible from the wrecked ship. Year after year, to keep his sanity and to entertain himself, he began a journal to record every task that he performed each day since he had been marooned. Year after year, Crusoe made his life more comfortable on the island. He learned about farming. He built himself a canoe, which was too heavy to get to the water. He then constructed a small boat and journeyed around the island.

After spending about 15 years on the island, Crusoe found a man's footprint. In December of the same year, he spied cannibals sitting around a campfire. When cannibals landed on the island, Crusoe saved a victim, named him Friday, and taught him English. Friday soon became Crusoe's humble and devoted slave. Crusoe and Friday built another boat. Crusoe also undertook Friday's religious education, converting the savage into a Protestant. They attacked the cannibals and saved two prisoners, one was a Spaniard and the other was Friday's father. They eventually left the island. Crusoe was back to England.

Chapter IV First Weeks on the Island

When I waked it was broad day, the weather clear, and the storm abated, so that the sea did not rage and swell as before. But that which surprised me most was, that the ship was lifted off in the night from the sand where she lay by the swelling of the tide, and was driven up almost as far as the rock which I at

first mentioned, where I had been so bruised by the wave dashing me against it. This being within about a mile from the shore where I was, and the ship seeming to stand upright still, I wished myself on board, that at least I might save some necessary things for my use.

When I came down from my apartment in the tree, I looked about me again, and the first thing I found was the boat, which lay, as the wind and the sea had tossed her up, upon the land, about two miles on my right hand. I walked as far as I could upon the shore to have got to her; but found a neck or inlet of water[1] between me and the boat which was about half a mile broad; so I came back for the present, being more intent upon getting at the ship, where I hoped to find something for my present subsistence.

A little after noon I found the sea very calm, and the tide ebbed so far out that I could come within a quarter of a mile of the ship. And here I found a fresh renewing of my grief; for I saw evidently that if we had kept on board we had been all safe—that is to say, we had all got safe on shore, and I had not been so miserable as to be left entirety destitute of all comfort and company as I now was. This forced tears to my eyes again; but as there was little relief in that, I resolved, if possible, to get to the ship; so I pulled off my clothes—for the weather was hot to extremity—and took the water. But when I came to the ship my difficulty was still greater to know how to get on board; for, as she lay aground, and high out of the water, there was nothing within my reach to lay hold of. I swam round her twice, and the second time I spied a small piece of rope, which I wondered I did not see at first, hung down by the fore-chains so low, as that with great difficulty I got hold of it, and by the help of that rope I got up into the forecastle of the ship. Here I found that the ship was bulged, and had a great deal of water in her hold, but that she lay so on the side of a bank of hard sand, or, rather earth, that her stern lay lifted up upon the bank, and her head low, almost to the water. By this means all her quarter was free, and all that was in that part was dry; for you may be sure my first work was to search, and to see what was spoiled and what was free. And, first, I found that all the ship's provisions were dry and untouched by the water, and being very well disposed to eat, I went to the bread room and filled my pockets with biscuit, and ate it as I went about other things, for I had no time to lose. I also found some rum in the great cabin, of which I took a large dram, and which

1 a neck or inlet of water: an arm off of a larger body of water between rocky headlands.

I had, indeed, need enough of to spirit me for what was before me. Now I wanted nothing but a boat to furnish myself with many things which I foresaw would be very necessary to me.

It was in vain to sit still and wish for what was not to be had; and this extremity roused my application. We had several spare yards, and two or three large spars of wood, and a spare topmast or two in the ship; I resolved to fall to work with these, and I flung as many of them overboard as I could manage for their weight, tying every one with a rope, that they might not drive away. When this was done I went down the ship's side, and pulling them to me, I tied four of them together at both ends as well as I could, in the form of a raft, and laying two or three short pieces of plank upon them crossways, I found I could walk upon it very well, but that it was not able to bear any great weight, the pieces being too light. So I went to work, and with a carpenter's saw I cut a spare topmast into three lengths, and added them to my raft, with a great deal of labour and pains. But the hope of furnishing myself with necessaries encouraged me to go beyond what I should have been able to have done upon another occasion.

My raft was now strong enough to bear any reasonable weight. My next care was what to load it with, and how to preserve what I laid upon it from the surf of the sea; but I was not long considering this. I first laid all the planks or boards upon it that I could get, and having considered well what I most wanted, I got three of the seamen's chests, which I had broken open, and emptied, and lowered them down upon my raft; the first of these I filled with provisions—viz. bread, rice, three Dutch cheeses, five pieces of dried goat's flesh (which we lived much upon), and a little remainder of European corn, which had been laid by for some fowls which we brought to sea with us, but the fowls were killed. There had been some barley and wheat together; but, to my great disappointment, I found afterwards that the rats had eaten or spoiled it all. As for liquors, I found several, cases of bottles belonging to our skipper, in which were some cordial waters; and, in all, about five or six gallons of rack. These I stowed by themselves, there being no need to put them into the chest, nor any room for them. While I was doing this, I found the tide begin to flow, though very calm; and I had the mortification to see my coat, shirt, and waistcoat, which I had left on the shore, upon the sand, swim away. As for my breeches, which were only linen, and open-kneed, I swam on board in them and my stockings. However, this set me on rummaging for clothes, of which I found enough, but took no more than I wanted for present use, for I had others things which my eye was more upon—as, first, tools to work with on shore. And it

was after long searching that I found out the carpenter's chest, which was, indeed, a very useful prize to me, and much more valuable than a shipload of gold would have been at that time. I got it down to my raft, whole as it was, without losing time to look into it, for I knew in general what it contained.

My next care was for some ammunition and arms. There were two very good fowling-pieces in the great cabin, and two pistols. These I secured first, with some powder-horns and a small bag of shot, and two old rusty swords. I knew there were three barrels of powder in the ship, but knew not where our gunner had stowed them; but with much search I found them, two of them dry and good, the third had taken water. Those two I got to my raft with the arms. And now I thought myself pretty well freighted, and began to think how I should get to shore with them, having neither sail, oar, nor rudder; and the least capful of wind would have overset all my navigation.

I had three encouragements—1st, a smooth, calm sea; 2ndly, the tide rising, and setting in to the shore; 3rdly, what little wind there was blew me towards the land. And thus, having found two or three broken oars belonging to the boat—and, besides the tools which were in the chest, I found two saws, an axe, and a hammer; with this cargo I put to sea. For a mile or thereabouts my raft went very well, only that I found it drive a little distant from the place where I had landed before; by which I perceived that there was some indraft of the water, and consequently I hoped to find some creek or river there, which I might make use of as a port to get to land with my cargo.

As I imagined, so it was. There appeared before me a little opening of the land, and I found a strong current of the tide set into it; so I guided my raft as well as I could, to keep in the middle of the stream.

But here I had like to have suffered a second shipwreck, which, if I had, I think verily would have broken my heart; for, knowing nothing of the coast, my raft ran aground at one end of it upon a shoal, and not being aground at the other end, it wanted but a little that all my cargo had slipped off towards the end that was afloat, and to fallen into the water. I did my utmost, by setting my back against the chests, to keep them in their places, but could not thrust off the raft with all my strength; neither durst I stir from the posture I was in; but holding up the chests with all my might, I stood in that manner near half-an-hour, in which time the rising of the water brought me a little more upon a level; and a little after, the water still-rising, my raft floated again, and I thrust her off with the oar I had into the channel, and then driving up higher, I at length found myself in the mouth of a little river, with land on both sides, and a strong current of tide running up. I looked on both sides for a proper place

to get to shore, for I was not willing to be driven too high up the river: hoping in time to see some ships at sea, and therefore resolved to place myself as near the coast as I could.

At length I spied a little cove on the right shore of the creek, to which with great pain and difficulty I guided my raft, and at last got so near that, reaching ground with my oar, I could thrust her directly in. But here I had like to have dipped all my cargo into the sea again; for that shore lying pretty steep—that is to say sloping—there was no place to land, but where one end of my float, if it ran on shore, would lie so high, and the other sink lower, as before, that it would endanger my cargo again. All that I could do was to wait till the tide was at the highest, keeping the raft with my oar like an anchor, to hold the side of it fast to the shore, near a flat piece of ground, which I expected the water would flow over; and so it did. As soon as I found water enough—for my raft drew about a foot of water—I thrust her upon that flat piece of ground, and there fastened or moored her, by sticking my two broken oars into the ground, one on one side near one end, and one on the other side near the other end; and thus I lay till the water ebbed away, and left my raft and all my cargo safe on shore.

My next work was to view the country, and seek a proper place for my habitation, and where to stow my goods to secure them from whatever might happen. Where I was, I yet knew not; whether on the continent or on an island; whether inhabited or not inhabited; whether in danger of wild beasts or not. There was a hill not above a mile from me, which rose up very steep and high, and which seemed to overtop some other hills, which lay as in a ridge from it northward. I took out one of the fowling-pieces, and one of the pistols, and a horn of powder; and thus armed, I travelled for discovery up to the top of that hill, where, after I had with great labour and difficulty got to the top, I saw any fate, to my great affliction—viz. that I was in an island environed every way with the sea: no land to be seen except some rocks, which lay a great way off; and two small islands, less than this, which lay about three leagues to the west.

I found also that the island I was in was barren, and, as I saw good reason to believe, uninhabited except by wild beasts, of whom, however, I saw none. Yet I saw abundance of fowls, but knew not their kinds; neither when I killed them could I tell what was fit for food, and what not. At my coming back, I shot at a great bird which I saw sitting upon a tree on the side of a great wood. I believe it was the first gun that had been fired there since the creation of the world. I had no sooner fired, than from all parts of the wood there arose an innumerable number of fowls, of many sorts, making a confused screaming and crying, and every one according to his usual note, but not one of them of any kind that I

knew. As for the creature I killed, I took it to be a kind of hawk, its colour and beak resembling it, but it had no talons or claws more than common. Its flesh was carrion, and fit for nothing.

Contented with this discovery, I came back to my raft, and fell to work to bring my cargo on shore, which took me up the rest of that day. What to do with myself at night I knew not, nor indeed where to rest, for I was afraid to lie down on the ground, not knowing but some wild beast might devour me, though, as I afterwards found, there was really no need for those fears.

However, as well as I could, I barricaded myself round with the chest and boards that I had brought on shore, and made a kind of hut for that night's lodging. As for food, I yet saw not which way to supply myself, except that I had seen two or three creatures like hares run out of the wood where I shot the fowl.

I now began to consider that I might yet get a great many things out of the ship which would be useful to me, and particularly some of the rigging and sails, and such other things as might come to land; and I resolved to make another voyage on board the vessel, if possible. And as I knew that the first storm that blew must necessarily break her all in pieces, I resolved to set all other things apart till I had got everything out of the ship that I could get. Then I called a council—that is to say in my thoughts—whether I should take back the raft; but this appeared impracticable: so I resolved to go as before, when the tide was down; and I did so, only that I stripped before I went from my hut, having nothing on but my chequered shirt, a pair of linen drawers, and a pair of pumps on my feet.

I got on board the ship as before, and prepared a second raft; and, having had experience of the first, I neither made this so unwieldy, nor loaded it so hard, but yet I brought away several things very useful to me; as first, in the carpenters stores I found two or three bags full of nails and spikes, a great screw—jack, a dozen or two of hatchets, and, above all, that most useful thing called a grindstone. All these I secured, together with several things belonging to the gunner, particularly two or three iron crows, and two barrels of musket bullets, seven muskets, another fowling-piece, with some small quantity of powder more; a large bagful of small shot, and a great roll of sheet-lead; but this last was so heavy, I could not hoist it up to get it over the ship's side.

Besides these things, I took all the men's clothes that I could find, and a spare fore-topsail, a hammock, and some bedding; and with this I loaded my second raft, and brought them all safe on shore, to my very great comfort.

I was under some apprehension, during my absence from the land, that

at least my provisions might be devoured on shore: but when I came back I found no sign of any visitor; only there sat a creature like a wild cat upon one of the chests, which, when I came towards it, ran away a little distance, and then stood still. She sat very composed and unconcerned, and looked full in my face, as if she had a mind to be acquainted with me. I presented my gun at her, but, as she did not understand it, she was perfectly unconcerned at it, nor did she offer to stir away; upon which I tossed her a bit of biscuit, though by the way, I was not very free of it, for my store was not great: however, I spared her a bit, I say, and she went to it, smelled at it, and ate it, and looked (as if pleased) for more; but I thanked her, and could spare no more: so she marched off.

Having got my second cargo on shore—though I was fain to open the barrels of powder, and bring them by parcels, for they were too heavy, being large casks—I went to work to make me a little tent with the sail and some poles which I cut for that purpose: and into this tent I brought everything that I knew would spoil either with rain or sun; and I piled all the empty chests and casks up in a circle round the tent, to fortify it from any sudden attempt, either from man or beast.

When I had done this, I blocked up the door of the tent with some boards within, and an empty chest set up on end without; and spreading one of the beds upon the ground, laying my two pistols just at my head, and my gun at length by me, I went to bed for the first time, and slept very quietly all night, for I was very weary and heavy; for the night before I had slept little, and had laboured very hard all day to fetch all those things from the ship, and to get them on shore.

I had the biggest magazine of all kinds now that ever was laid up, I believe, for one man: but I was not satisfied still, for while the ship sat upright in that posture, I thought I ought to get everything out of her that I could; so every day at low water I went on board, and brought away something or other; but particularly the third time I went I brought away as much of the rigging as I could, as also all the small ropes and rope-twine I could get, with a piece of spare canvas, which was to mend the sails upon occasion, and the barrel of wet gunpowder. In a word, I brought away all the sails, first and last; only that I was fain to cut them in pieces, and bring as much at a time as I could, for they were no more useful to be sails, but as mere canvas only.

But that which comforted me more still, was, that last of all, after I had made five or six such voyages as these, and thought I had nothing more to expect from the ship that was worth my meddling with—I say, after all this, I found a great hogshead of bread, three large runlets of rum, or spirits, a box of

sugar, and a barrel of fine flour; this was surprising to me, because I had given over expecting any more provisions, except what was spoiled by the water. I soon emptied the hogshead of the bread, and wrapped it up, parcel by parcel, in pieces of the sails, which I cut out; and, in a word, I got all this safe on shore also.

The next day I made another voyage, and now, having plundered the ship of what was portable and fit to hand out, I began with the cables. Cutting the great cable into pieces, such as I could move, I got two cables and a hawser on shore, with all the ironwork I could get; and having cut down the spritsail-yard, and the mizzen-yard, and everything I could, to make a large raft, I loaded it with all these heavy goods, and came away. But my good luck began now to leave me; for this raft was so unwieldy, and so overladen, that, after I had entered the little cove where I had landed the rest of my goods, not being able to guide it so handily as I did the other, it overset, and threw me and all my cargo into the water. As for myself, it was no great harm, for I was near the shore; but as to my cargo, it was a great part of it lost, especially the iron, which I expected would have been of great use to me; however, when the tide was out, I got most of the pieces of the cable ashore, and some of the iron, though with infinite labour; for I was fain to dip for it into the water, a work which fatigued me very much. After this, I went every day on board, and brought away what I could get.

I had been now thirteen days on shore, and had been eleven times on board the ship, in which time I had brought away all that one pair of hands could well be supposed capable to bring; though I believe verily, had the calm weather held, I should have brought away the whole ship, piece by piece. But preparing the twelfth time to go on board, I found the wind began to rise: however, at low water I went on board, and though I thought I had rummaged the cabin so effectually that nothing more could be found, yet I discovered a locker with drawers in it, in one of which I found two or three razors, and one pair of large scissors, with some ten or a dozen of good knives and forks: in another I found about thirty-six pounds value in money—some European coin, some Brazil, some pieces of eight, some gold, and some silver.

I smiled to myself at the sight of this money: "O drug!" said I, aloud, "what art thou good for? Thou art not worth to me—no, not the taking off the ground; one of those knives is worth all this heap; I have no manner of use for thee—e'en remain where thou art, and go to the bottom as a creature whose life is not worth saying." However, upon second thoughts I took it away; and wrapping all this in a piece of canvas, I began to think of making another raft; but while I was preparing this, I found the sky overcast, and the wind began to

rise, and in a quarter of an hour it blew a fresh gale from the shore. It presently occurred to me that it was in vain to pretend to make a raft with the wind offshore; and that it was my business to be gone before the tide of flood began, otherwise I might not be able to reach the shore at all. Accordingly, I let myself down into the water, and swam across the channel, which lay between the ship and the sands, and even that with difficulty enough, partly with the weight of the things I had about me, and partly the roughness of the water; for the wind rose very hastily, and before it was quite high water it blew a storm.

But I had got home to my little tent, where I lay, with all my wealth about me, very secure. It blew very hard all night, and in the morning, when I looked out, behold, no more ship was to be seen! I was a little surprised, but recovered myself with the satisfactory reflection that I had lost no time, nor abated any diligence, to get everything out of her that could be useful to me; and that, indeed, there was little left in her that I was able to bring away, if I had had more time.

I now gave over any more thoughts of the ship, or of anything out of her, except what might drive on shore from her wreck; as, indeed, divers pieces of her afterwards did; but those things were of small use to me.

My thoughts were now wholly employed about securing myself against either savages, if any should appear, or wild beasts, if any were in the island; and I had many thoughts of the method how to do this, and what kind of dwelling to make—whether I should make me a cave in the earth, or a tent upon the earth; and, in short, I resolved upon both; the manner and description of which, it may not be improper to give an account of.

I soon found the place I was in was not fit for my settlement, because it was upon a low, moorish ground, near the sea, and I believed it would not be wholesome, and more particularly because there was no fresh water near it; so I resolved to find a more healthy and more convenient spot of ground.

I consulted several things in my situation, which I found would he proper for me: 1st, health and fresh water, I just now mentioned; 2ndly, shelter from the heat of the sun; 3rdly, security from ravenous creatures, whether man or beast; 4thly, a view to the sea, that if God sent any ship in sight, I might not lose any advantage for my deliverance, of which I was not willing to banish all my expectation yet.

In search of a place proper for this, I found a little plain on the side of a

rising hill, whose front towards this little plain was steep as a house-side[1], so that nothing could come down upon me from the top. On the one side of the rock there was a hollow place, worn a little way in, like the entrance or door of a cave but there was not really any cave or way into the rock at all.

On the flat of the green, just before this hollow place, I resolved to pitch my tent. This plain was not above a hundred yards broad, and about twice as long, and lay like a green before my door; and, at the end of it, descended irregularly every way down into the low ground by the seaside. It was on the N.N.W.[2] side of the hill; so that it was sheltered from the heat every day, till it came to a W. and by S. sun, or thereabouts, which, in those countries, is near the setting.

Before I set up my tent I drew a half-circle before the hollow place, which took in about ten yards in its semi-diameter from the rock, and twenty yards in its diameter from its beginning and ending.

In this half-circle I pitched two rows of strong stakes, driving them into the ground till they stood very firm like piles, the biggest end being out of the ground above five feet and a half, and sharpened on the top. The two rows did not stand above six inches from one another.

Then I took the pieces of cable which I had cut in the ship, and laid them in rows, one upon another, within the circle, between these two rows of stakes, up to the top, placing other stakes in the inside, leaning against them, about two feet and a half high, like a spur to a post; and this fence was so strong, that neither man nor beast could get into it or over it. This cost me a great deal of time and labour, especially to cut the piles in the woods, bring them to the place, and drive them into the earth.

The entrance into this place I made to be, not by a door, but by a short ladder to go over the top; which ladder, when I was in, I lifted over after me; and so I was completely fenced in and fortified, as I thought, from all the world, and consequently slept secure in the night, which otherwise I could not have done; though, as it appeared afterwards, there was no need of all this caution from the enemies that I apprehended danger from.

Into this fence or fortress, with infinite labour, I carried all my riches, all my provisions, ammunition, and stores, of which you have the account above; and I made a large tent, which to preserve me from the rains that in one part of the year are very violent there, I made double—one smaller tent within, and

1 a house-side: wall.
2 N.N.W.: north by northwest.

one larger tent above it; and covered the uppermost with a large tarpaulin[1], which I had saved among the sails.

And now I lay no more for a while in the bed which I had brought on shore, but in a hammock, which was indeed a very good one, and belonged to the mate of the ship.

Into this tent I brought all my provisions, and everything that would spoil by the wet; and having thus enclosed all my goods, I made up the entrance, which till now I had left open, and so passed and repassed, as I said, by a short ladder.

When I had done this, I began to work my way into the rock, and bringing all the earth and stones that I dug down out through my tent, I laid them up within my fence, in the nature of a terrace, so that it raised the ground within about a foot and a half; and thus I made me a cave, just behind my tent, which served me like a cellar to my house.

It cost me much labour and many days before all these things were brought to perfection; and therefore I must go back to some other things which took up some of my thoughts. At the same time it happened, after I had laid my scheme for the setting up my tent, and making the cave, that a storm of rain falling from a thick, dark cloud, a sudden flash of lightning happened, and after that a great clap of thunder, as is naturally the effect of it. I was not so much surprised with the lightning as I was with the thought which darted into my mind as swift as the lightning itself—Oh, my powder! My very heart sank within me when I thought that, at one blast, all my powder might be destroyed; on which, not my defence only, but the providing my food, as I thought, entirely depended. I was nothing near[2] so anxious about my own danger, though, had the powder took fire, I should never have known who had hurt me.

Such impression did this make upon me, that after the storm was over I laid aside all my works, my building and fortifying, and applied myself to make bags and boxes, to separate the powder, and to keep it a little and a little in a parcel, in the hope that, whatever might come, it might not all take fire at once; and to keep it so apart that it should not be possible to make one part fire another. I finished this work in about a fortnight; and I think my powder, which in all was about two hundred and forty pounds weight, was divided in not less than a hundred parcels. As to the barrel that had been wet, I did not apprehend

1 tarpaulin: a large sheet of strong, flexible water resistant or waterproof cloth. It has multiple uses, including as shelter from wind, rain, or sunlight.
2 nothing near: in no way; not in the least.

any danger from that; so I placed it in my new cave, which, in my fancy, I called my kitchen; and the rest I hid up and down in holes among the rocks, so that no wet might come to it, marking very carefully where I laid it.

In the interval of time while this was doing, I went out once at least every day with my gun, as well to divert myself as to see if I could kill anything fit for food; and, as near as I could, to acquaint myself with what the island produced. The first time I went out, I presently discovered that there were goats in the island, which was a great satisfaction to me; but then it was attended with this misfortune to me—viz. that they were so shy, so subtle, and so swift of foot, that it was the most difficult thing in the world to come at them; but I was not discouraged at this, not doubting but I might now and then shoot one, as it soon happened; for after I had found their haunts[1] a little, I laid wait in this manner for them: I observed if they saw me in the valleys, though they were upon the rocks, they would run away, as in a terrible fright; but if they were feeding in the valleys, and I was upon the rocks, they took no notice of me; from whence I concluded that, by the position of their optics[2], their sight was so directed downward that they did not readily see objects that were above them; so afterwards I took this method—I always climbed the rocks first, to get above them, and then had frequently a fair mark[3].

The first shot I made among these creatures, I killed a she-goat, which had a little kid by her, which she gave suck to, which grieved me heartily; for when the old one fell, the kid stood stock still by her, till I came and took her up; and not only so, but when I carried the old one with me, upon my shoulders, the kid followed me quite to my enclosure; upon which I laid down the dam, and took the kid in my arms, and carried it over my pale, in hopes to have bred it up tame; but it would not eat; so I was forced to kill it and eat it myself. These two supplied me with flesh a great while, for I ate sparingly, and saved my provisions, my bread especially, as much as possibly I could.

Having now fixed my habitation, I found it absolutely necessary to provide a place to make a fire in, and fuel to burn: and what I did for that, and also how I enlarged my cave, and what conveniences I made, I shall give a full account of in its place; but I must now give some little account of myself, and of my thoughts about living, which, it may well be supposed, were not a few.

1 their haunts: places they frequently visited.
2 optics: usually the branch of physics that studies the physical properties of light, here refers to the mechanisms for seeing.
3 had frequently a fair mark: hit the target most of the time.

I had a dismal prospect of my condition; for as I was not cast away upon that island without being driven, as is said, by a violent storm, quite out of the course of our intended voyage, and a great way, viz. some hundreds of leagues, out of the ordinary course of the trade of mankind, I had great reason to consider it as a determination of Heaven, that in this desolate place, and in this desolate manner, I should end my life. The tears would run plentifully down my face when I made these reflections; and sometimes I would expostulate with myself why Providence should thus completely ruin His creatures, and render them so absolutely miserable; so without help, abandoned, so entirely depressed, that it could hardly be rational to be thankful for such a life.

But something always returned swift upon me to check these thoughts, and to reprove me; and particularly one day, walking with my gun in my hand by the seaside, I was very pensive upon the subject of my present condition, when reason, as it were, expostulated with me the other way, thus: "Well, you are in a desolate condition, it is true; but, pray remember, where are the rest of you? Did not you come, eleven of you in the boat? Where are the ten? Why were they not saved, and you lost? Why were you singled out? Is it better to be here or there?" And then I pointed to the sea. All evils are to be considered with the good that is in them, and with what worse attends them.

Then it occurred to me again, how well I was furnished for my subsistence, and what would have been my case if it had not happened (which was a hundred thousand to one) that the ship floated from the place where she first struck, and was driven so near to the shore that I had time to get all these things out of her; what would have been my case, if I had been forced to have lived in the condition in which I at first came on shore, without necessaries of life, or necessaries to supply and procure them? "Particularly," said I, aloud (though to myself), "what should I have done without a gun, without ammunition, without any tools to make anything, or to work with, without clothes, bedding, a tent, or any manner of covering?" and that now I had all these to sufficient quantity, and was in a fair way to provide myself in such a manner as to live without my gun, when my ammunition was spent: so that I had a tolerable view of subsisting, without any want, as long as I lived; for I considered from the beginning how I would provide for the accidents that might happen, and for the time that was to come, even not only after my ammunition should be spent, but even after my health and strength should decay.

I confess I had not entertained any notion of my ammunition being destroyed at one blast—I mean my powder being blown up by lightning; and this made the thoughts of it so surprising to me, when it lightened and

thundered, as I observed just now.

And now being about to enter into a melancholy relation of a scene of silent life, such, perhaps, as was never heard of in the world before, I shall take it from its beginning, and continue it in its order. It was by my account the 30th of September, when, in the manner as above said, I first set foot upon this horrid island; when the sun, being to us in its autumnal equinox, was almost over my head; for I reckoned myself, by observation, to be in the latitude of nine degrees twenty-two minutes north of the line.

After I had been there about ten or twelve days, it came into my thoughts that I should lose my reckoning of time for want of books, and pen and ink, and should even forget the Sabbath days; but to prevent this, I cut with my knife upon a large post, in capital letters—and making it into a great cross, I set it up on the shore where I first landed—"I came on shore here on the 30th September 1659."

Upon the sides of this square post I cut every day a notch with my knife, and every seventh notch was as long again as the rest, and every first day of the month as long again as that long one; and thus I kept my calendar, or weekly, monthly, and yearly reckoning of time.

In the next place, we are to observe that among the many things which I brought out of the ship, in the several voyages which, as above mentioned, I made to it, I got several things of less value, but not at all less useful to me, which I omitted setting down before; as, in particular, pens, ink, and paper, several parcels in the captain's, mate's, gunner's and carpenter's keeping; three or four compasses, some mathematical instruments, dials, perspectives, charts, and books of navigation, all which I huddled together, whether I might want them or no; also, I found three very good Bibles, which came to me in my cargo from England, and which I had packed up among my things; some Portuguese books also; and among them two or three Popish prayer-books, and several other books, all which I carefully secured. And I must not forget that we had in the ship a dog and two cats, of whose eminent history I may have occasion to say something in its place; for I carried both the cats with me; and as for the dog, he jumped out of the ship of himself, and swam on shore to me the day after I went on shore with my first cargo, and was a trusty servant to me many years; I wanted nothing that he could fetch me, nor any company that he could make up to me; I only wanted to have him talk to me, but that would not do. As I observed before, I found pens, ink, and paper, and I husbanded them to the utmost; and I shall show that while my ink lasted, I kept things very exact, but after that was gone I could not, for I could not make any ink by any means

that I could devise.

And this put me in mind that I wanted many things notwithstanding all that I had amassed together; and of these, ink was one; as also a spade, pickaxe, and shovel, to dig or remove the earth; needles, pins, and thread; as for linen, I soon learned to want that without much difficulty.

This want of tools made every work I did go on heavily; and it was near a whole year before I had entirely finished my little pale, or surrounded my habitation. The piles, or stakes, which were as heavy as I could well lift, were a long time in cutting and preparing in the woods, and more, by far, in bringing home; so that I spent sometimes two days in cutting and bringing home one of those posts, and a third day in driving it into the ground; for which purpose I got a heavy piece of wood at first, but at last bethought myself of one of the iron crows; which, however, though I found it, made driving those posts or piles very laborious and tedious work. But what need I have been concerned at the tediousness of anything I had to do, seeing I had time enough to do it in? Nor had I any other employment, if that had been over, at least that I could foresee, except the ranging the island to seek for food, which I did, more or less, every day.

I now began to consider seriously my condition, and the circumstances I was reduced to; and I drew up the state of my affairs in writing, not so much to leave them to any that were to come after me—for I was likely to have but few heirs—as to deliver my thoughts from daily poring over them, and afflicting my mind; and as my reason began now to master my despondency, I began to comfort myself as well as I could, and to set the good against the evil, that I might have something to distinguish my case from worse; and I stated very impartially, like debtor and creditor, the comforts I enjoyed against the miseries I suffered, thus: —

Evil: I am cast upon a horrible, desolate island, void of all hope of recovery.

Good: But I am alive; and not drowned, as all my ship's company were.

Evil: I am singled out and separated, as it were, from all the world, to be miserable.

Good: But I am singled out, too, from all the ship's crew, to be spared from death; and He that miraculously saved me from death can deliver me from this condition.

Evil: I am divided from mankind—a solitaire; one banished from human society.

Good: But I am not starved, and perishing on a barren place, affording no

sustenance.

Evil: I have no clothes to cover me.

Good: But I am in a hot climate, where, if I had clothes, I could hardly wear them.

Evil: I am without any defence, or means to resist any violence of man or beast.

Good: But I am cast on an island where I see no wild beasts to hurt me, as I saw on the coast of Africa; and what if I had been shipwrecked there?

Evil: I have no soul to speak to or relieve me.

Good: But God wonderfully sent the ship in near enough to the shore, that I have got out as many necessary things as will either supply my wants or enable me to supply myself, even as long as I live.

Upon the whole, here was an undoubted testimony that there was scarce any condition in the world so miserable but there was something negative or something positive to be thankful for in it; and let this stand as a direction from the experience of the most miserable of all conditions in this world: that we may always find in it something to comfort ourselves from, and to set, in the description of good and evil, on the credit side of the account.

Having now brought my mind a little to relish my condition, and given over looking out to sea, to see if I could spy a ship—I say, giving over these things, I begun to apply myself to arrange my way of living, and to make things as easy to me as I could.

I have already described my habitation, which was a tent under the side of a rock, surrounded with a strong pale of posts and cables: but I might now rather call it a wall, for I raised a kind of wall up against it of turfs, about two feet thick on the outside; and after some time (I think it was a year and a half) I raised rafters from it, leaning to the rock, and thatched or covered it with boughs of trees, and such things as I could get, to keep out the rain; which I found at some times of the year very violent.

I have already observed how I brought all my goods into this pale, and into the cave which I had made behind me. But I must observe, too, that at first this was a confused heap of goods, which, as they lay in no order, so they took up all my place; I had no room to turn myself: so I set myself to enlarge my cave, and work farther into the earth; for it was a loose sandy rock, which yielded easily to the labour I bestowed on it: and so when I found I was pretty safe as to beasts of prey, I worked sideways, to the right hand, into the rock; and then, turning to the right again, worked quite out, and made me a door to come out

on the outside of my pale or fortification. This gave me not only egress and regress, as it was a back way to my tent and to my storehouse, but gave me room to store my goods.

And now I began to apply myself to make such necessary things as I found I most wanted, particularly a chair and a table; for without these I was not able to enjoy the few comforts I had in the world; I could not write or eat, or do several things, with so much pleasure without a table: so I went to work. And here I must needs observe, that as reason is the substance and origin of the mathematics, so by stating and squaring everything by reason, and by making the most rational judgment of things, every man may be, in time, master of every mechanic art. I had never handled a tool in my life; and yet, in time, by labour, application, and contrivance, I found at last that I wanted nothing but I could have made it, especially if I had had tools. However, I made abundance of things, even without tools; and some with no more tools than an adze and a hatchet, which perhaps were never made that way before, and that with infinite labour. For example, if I wanted a board, I had no other way but to cut down a tree, set it on an edge before me, and hew it flat on either side with my axe, till I brought it to be thin as a plank, and then dub it smooth with my adze. It is true, by this method I could make but one board out of a whole tree; but this I had no remedy for but patience, any more than I had for the prodigious deal of time and labour which it took me up to make a plank or board: but my time or labour was little worth, and so it was as well employed one way as another.

However, I made me a table and a chair, as I observed above, in the first place; and this I did out of the short pieces of boards that I brought on my raft from the ship. But when I had wrought out some boards as above, I made large shelves, of the breadth of a foot and a half, one over another all along one side of my cave, to lay all my tools, nails and ironwork on; and, in a word, to separate everything at large into their places, that I might come easily at them. I knocked pieces into the wall of the rock to hang my guns and all things that would hang up; so that, had my cave been to be seen, it looked like a general magazine of all necessary things; and had everything so ready at my hand, that it was a great pleasure to me to see all my goods in such order, and especially to find my stock of all necessaries so great.

And now it was that I began to keep a journal of every day's employment; for, indeed, at first I was in too much hurry, and not only hurry as to labour, but in too much discomposure of mind; and my journal would have been full of many dull things; for example, I must have said thus: "30TH.—After I had got to shore, and escaped drowning, instead of being thankful to God for

my deliverance, having first vomited, with the great quantity of salt water which had got into my stomach, and recovering myself a little, I ran about the shore wringing my hands and beating my head and face, exclaiming at my misery, and crying out, 'I was undone, undone!' till, tired and faint, I was forced to lie down on the ground to repose, but durst not sleep for fear of being devoured."

Some days after this, and after I had been on board the ship, and got all that I could out of her, yet I could not forbear getting up to the top of a little mountain and looking out to sea, in hopes of seeing a ship; then fancy at a vast distance I spied a sail, please myself with the hopes of it, and then after looking steadily, till I was almost blind, lose it quite, and sit down and weep like a child, and thus increase my misery by my folly.

But having gotten over these things in some measure, and having settled my household staff and habitation, made me a table and a chair, and all as handsome about me as I could, I began to keep my journal; of which I shall here give you the copy (though in it will be told all these particulars over again) as long as it lasted; for having no more ink, I was forced to leave it off.

Critical Points

1 *Robinson Crusoe*: Cultural Influence

Robinson Crusoe is a book of immediate and permanent success. The name of the main protagonist have entered the English language, as synonymous with the word "castaway" and is often used as a metaphor for being or doing something alone.

It has been variously read as an allegory for the development of civilisation, as a manifesto of economic individualism, and as an expression of European colonial desires. But it also shows the importance of repentance and illustrates the strength of Defoe's religious convictions.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Émile* recommended it as the first book that should be studied by a growing boy. In Rousseau's view, Émile needs to imitate Crusoe's experience, identifying himself as Crusoe so he could rely upon himself for all of his needs. Coleridge praised Crusoe as "universal man". Marx in *Das Kapital* used it to illustrate economic theory in action.

Modern novelist James Joyce eloquently noted that the true symbol of

the British conquest is *Robinson Crusoe*: "He is the true prototype of the British colonist... The whole Anglo-Saxon spirit is in Crusoe: the manly independence, the unconscious cruelty, the persistence, the slow yet efficient intelligence, the sexual apathy, the calculating taciturnity."

2 *Robinson Crusoe*: Political, Social and Religious Perspectives

To read it politically, the reader may interpret the story as an artistic projection of colonial expansion. Crusoe, backed by advanced technology, the gun, conquers a less civilised people represented by Friday. Friday has remained a servant, if not a slave, to his master Crusoe since the first day they met.

To read it socially, the reader can find that Crusoe's adventures imply different Western cultural values. The novel sings a song of the dignity of labour, a slogan which the bourgeoisie used to justify their accumulation of wealth through diligent work and colonial expansion. Robinson is a self-made man. He succeeds in creating a life all through his own efforts. The novel also explores the theme of "back to nature", a desire to go back to a more economical and basic lifestyle.

There is also the theme of religious devotion. *Robinson Crusoe* is filled with religious aspects. Defoe was himself a Puritan moralist, and wrote many books on how to be a good Puritan Christian. *Robinson Crusoe* shares many of the same themes.

On the whole, the novel is significant as the first English novel, which glorifies the individual experience of ordinary people in plain and simple language.

Questions

1 Why does Robinson Crusoe think that his present dwelling place was not suitable for him? What are the basic points in choosing a dwelling place? Cite examples from the selection to illustrate the survival ability of the protagonist, and analyse his character.

2 Why does the author describe Crusoe's daily activities in such great details? What is the purpose and effect of the description?

Class Activities

Write a story of adventure in the first person either based on your own experience or in a fictional way, and share with the class what you learn from the adventure.

QUOTATIONS

The soul is placed in the body like a rough diamond, and must be polished, or the lustre of it will never appear.

—Daniel Defoe

Defoe says that there were a hundred thousand country fellows in his time ready to fight to the death against popery, without knowing whether popery was a man or a horse.

—William Hazlitt

Unit 13

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)

Jonathan Swift *is regarded as one of the greatest satirists in the history of English literature. Nearly all his works were published anonymously except* Gulliver's Travels, *which is Swift's most esteemed work, and a classic of eternal charm.*

Life and Writing

Jonathan Swift

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin, Ireland. His father died before he was born, and he was compelled to accept aid from relatives. He first studied at Trinity College, Dublin, then he was sent to England. He was admitted to the household of a distant relative, Sir William Temple, a retired diplomat. During the next 10 years between 1689 and 1699 Swift acted as secretary to Temple. There he first met Esther Johnson, the daughter of a companion of Temple's sister, the girl was at the age of eight then, with whom he later came to fall in love. Swift read widely, and started to practise his genius as a satirist. He wrote two satirical essays on "corruptions in religion and learning", *The Battle of Books* and *A Tale of the Tub* (1704), which made him famous among literary figures in London.

From 1704 to 1710 he wrote political pamphlets for the Whigs. Disgusted at its indifference to the welfare of the Anglican Church in Ireland, he abandoned the Whigs, and went over to the Tories. He served as an editor of *The Examiner*, as well as author of its most powerful articles. He established himself as the most brilliant political journalist of the day.

He began to write the famous journal-letters, *The Journal to Stella* (1766), to Esther Johnson, who had moved to Ireland. It is written partly in child language, and gives a vivid account of Swift's daily life in London. In 1713

Swift was appointed the Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, where they met constantly.

His life in Ireland gave him an intimate knowledge of the miserable condition of the people. A desire to serve Ireland became one of his ruling passions. He became not only an efficient ecclesiastical administrator, but also the leader of Irish resistance to English oppression in 1724. Swift wrote a number of pamphlets to criticise the oppression and exploitation of the Irish people by the absentee landlords and the English government. Among them are the famous *The Draiper's Letter* (1724) and *A Modest Proposal* (1729). He was highly respected and beloved by the Irish people. In 1737 his 70th birthday was celebrated by the Irish with bells, bonfires and toasts of "Long life to the Draiper!"

Swift had been afflicted from his early youth with a certain disease which caused him intense pain, now recognised as Meniere's syndrome (梅尼埃尔综合症), which affects the inner ear, causing dizziness, nausea, and deafness. He spent a third of his income on charities, and saved another third to found St. Patrick's Hospital for Imbeciles (opened 1757). It is now still in use. After his death, he was buried by the side of Stella in St. Patrick's, Dublin. Inscribed on the tomb stone was the epitaph he wrote for himself, "*ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit*" ("where fierce indignation cannot further tear apart the heart").

Swift is one of the greatest of English novelist, poet and prose writers. It is a great education in English to read Swift's prose. His language is simple, clear and vigorous. As for a good style, his definition is popular: "Proper words in proper places, makes the true definition of a style."

He is a master satirist, and his irony is sharp. His satire is masked by an outward gravity and an apparent earnestness. This makes his satire all the more powerful, as shown in *A Modest Proposal.*

A Modest Proposal

This is a satirical pamphlet (1729), the whole title of which is *A Modest Proposal: For Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public,* commonly referred to as *A Modest Proposal.*

In *A Modest Proposal*, Swift suggests, with bitter irony, that the poverty of the Irish people should be relieved by the sale of their children "at a year old" as food for the rich. "I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore

very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children." With the utmost gravity he sets out statistics to show the revenue that would come if this idea are adopted. It would give the people something valuable of their own and thus help to pay their landlord's rent; it would save the cost of maintaining so many children; it would lead to a lessening of the number of papists, i.e., Catholics in Ireland; it would be a great inducement of marriage. To top the bitter poignancy, the author shows his regret at the end that "I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny".

This proposal is a most devastating piece of sarcasm that fiery indignation can give birth to and a powerful blow on the English government's policy of exploitation and oppression in Ireland.

FOR PREVENTING THE CHILDREN OF POOR PEOPLE IN IRELAND FROM BEING A BURDEN TO THEIR PARENTS OR COUNTRY, AND FOR MAKING THEM BENEFICIAL TO THE PUBLIC

It is a melancholy object[1] to those who walk through this great town[2] or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads and cabin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms[3]. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling, to beg sustenance for their helpless infants, who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the Pretender in Spain[4], or sell themselves to the Barbadoes[5].

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious[6] number of children,

1 a melancholy object: a depressing sight.
2 this great town: Dublin.
3 importuning...for an alms: beg persistently and urgently for charitable donation.
4 the Pretender in Spain: James Francis Edward Stuart (1688-1766), the son of James II, who was expelled from Britain in 1689. Many Irishmen joined him in his exile on the Continent. James and his descendants were Catholic.
5 sell themselves to the Barbadoes: many poor Irishmen emigrated to the West Indies. They had to pay their passage by working for a certain period of time for the planters. Barbados is an island in the West Indies, located in the western Atlantic Ocean, just to the east of the Caribbean Sea, one of the British colonies then.
6 prodigious: great; far beyond what is usual.

in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the commonwealth would serve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of other projectors[1], I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true a child just dropped from its dam[2] may be supported by her milk for a solar year with little other nourishment, at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps[3], by her lawful occupation of begging, and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them, in such a manner as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish[4], or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding and partly to the clothing of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas, too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expense than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in Ireland being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couples whose wives are breeders, from which number I subtract thirty thousand couples who are able to maintain their own children, although 1 apprehend

1 weighed the several schemes of other projectors: carefully considered the plans by people who make plans or schemes.
2 dam: female parent of an animal, especially domestic livestock, or "a human mother: in contempt or detestation" (Johnson). The author here expresses that the lives of the Irish people are as miserable as those of beasts.
3 scraps: food that is discarded (as from a kitchen).
4 the parish: a local church community.

there cannot be so many under the present distresses of the kingdom, but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born: the question therefore is, how this number shall be reared, and provided for, which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed, for we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country), nor cultivate land[1]: they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing until they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts[2] although I confess they learn the rudiments[3] much earlier, during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers, as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the County of Cavan[4], who protested to me that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art[5].

I am assured by our merchants that a boy or a girl before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age, they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half-a-crown at most on the Exchange, which cannot turn to account either to the parents or the kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled, and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee, or a ragout.[6]

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be

1 cultivate land: Britain imposed strict regulation on Irish agriculture.
2 towardly parts: promising abilities.
3 rudiments: fundamental principles or basic skills (of stealing).
4 the County of Cavan: a county in Ireland.
5 in that art: (*ironic*) in the skill of stealing.
6 fricassee: a dish of pieces of chicken or other meat stewed in gravy with carrots and onions and served with noodles or dumplings. ragout: well-seasoned stew of meat and vegetables.

reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males, which is more than we allow to sheep, black-cattle, or swine, and my reason is that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may at a year old be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune[1], through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh twelve pounds, and in a solar year if tolerably nursed increaseth to twenty-eight pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after, for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician,[2] that fish being a prolific diet, there are more children born in Roman Catholic countries about nine months after Lent[3] than at any other season; therefore reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be

1 the persons of quality and fortune: persons of high social status and wealth.

2 a grave author, an eminent French physician: Francois Rabelais (1494-1553), a major French Renaissance writer, known for his satirical attacks on medieval scholasticism. His works are *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, a connected series of books. They tell the story of two giants—a father (Gargantua) and his son (Pantagruel) and their adventures, written in an amusing, extravagant, and satirical vein. He died in Paris in 1553, leaving a famous one-sentence will: "I have nothing, I owe a great deal, and the rest I leave to the poor", and his last words were "I am off in search of a great perhaps".

3 Lent: in Western Christianity, Lent is the period of 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday. The traditional reason for this is that fasting was considered inappropriate on Sunday, the day commemorating the Resurrection of Jesus. In Eastern Christianity, the period before Easter is known as Great Lent to distinguish it from the Winter Lent. Easter always falls on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25, roughly corresponding to the Northern Hemisphere's early spring. Ash Wednesday, which can fall anywhere between February 4 and March 10, occurs 40 days before Easter.

more glutted than usual, because the number of Popish[1] infants is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage by lessening the number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included, and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend or his own family to dine with him. Thus the Squire will learn to be a good landlord and grow popular among his tenants, the mother will have eight shillings net profit, and be fit for work until she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require may flay the carcass; the skin of which artificially dressed will make admirable gloves for the ladies and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles[2] may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting, although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve, so great a number of both sexes in every county being now ready to starve, for want of work and service: and these to be disposed of by their parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments. For as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our school boys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think with humble submission, be a loss to the public, because they soon would become breeders themselves:

1 Popish: (*contemptuous*) of or relating to or supporting Roman Catholicism or the papal system.
2 shambles: slaughterhouses.

and besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, howsoever well intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar[1], a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend that in his country when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality, as a prime dainty, and that, in his time, the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the emperor, was sold to his Imperial Majesty's Prime Minister of State, and other great Mandarins of the Court, in joints[2] from the gibbet[3], at four hundred crowns[4]. Neither indeed can I deny that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town who, without one single groat[5] to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at the playhouse and assemblies in foreign fineries, which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about the vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain about that matter, because it is very well known that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold, and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected.

1 Psalmanazar: George Psalmanazar (1679-1763), who claimed to be the first Formosan to visit Europe, but was later revealed to be an impostor. In 1704, Psalmanazar published a book *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa*, an Island subject to the Emperor of Japan which revealed a number of strange habits. According to his autobiography, he was born in France in 1679 and was educated in the Jesuit school, then he became a pilgrim. Among all pilgrims he met on his way to Rome, there were too many who actually knew something about Ireland. Then he switched to being first a Japanese convert and then a heathen to sound even more exciting. He walked hungry around Europe as a beggar and sometimes even a soldier. He had taken the role of a Formosan at the urging of the priest Innes when the latter had realised he was a fraud but wanted to join his imposture.
2 joints: pieces of an animal's body as cut up for the table.
3 gibbet: gallows; instrument of execution consisting of a wooden frame from which condemned persons are executed by hanging.
4 crowns: British coin worth five shillings.
5 groat: English silver coin used in old times, worth fourpence.

And as to the younger labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away from want of nourishment, to a degree that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are in a fair, way of being soon delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly over-run being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies; and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country than stay at home and pay tithes[1] against their conscience to an idolatrous Episcopal curate[2].

Secondly, the poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to distress[3], and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, whereas the maintenance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, besides the profit of a new dish, introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste, and the money will circulate among ourselves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, the constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum, by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, this food would likewise bring custom[4] to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection, and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine

1 tithes: an offering of a tenth part of some personal income, formerly paid as tax to support clergy and church.
2 Episcopal curate: a clergyman appointed by a bishop.
3 distress: distraint; the seizure and holding of property as security for payment of a debt or satisfaction of a claim.
4 custom: regular trade of business.

gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skillful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, this would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would increase the care and tenderness of mothers towards their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life, to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the public to their annual profit instead of expense. We should soon see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal[1], their cows in calf, or sows when they are ready to farrow[2], nor offer to beat or trick them (as it is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barreled beef; the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables, are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well-grown, fat yearling child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor's feast, or any other public entertainment. But this and many others I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city would be constant customers for infants flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, early weddings and christenings; I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses, and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and it was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual Kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, it, or, I think, ever can be upon earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: Of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound: Of using neither clothes, nor household furniture, except

1 their mares in foal: their mares in pregnancy.
2 farrow: give birth to pigs.

what is of our own growth and manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: Of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: Of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence, and temperance: Of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo:[1] Of quitting our animosities and factions[2], nor act any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken:[3] Of being a little cautious not to sell our country and consciences for nothing: Of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy towards their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he hath at least a glimpse of hope that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice.

But as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expense and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, the flesh being of too tender a consistence to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country which would be to eat up our whole nation without it[4].

After all I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer, proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap,

1 Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo: even the Laplanders love their frozen, barren country and the savage tribes of Brazil love their jungle more than Anglo-Irish love Ireland. Lapland encompasses parts of northern Sweden, Norway, Finland and the Kola Peninsula of Russia. The Laplanders are one of the largest indigenous groups in Europe. Topinamboo is a district in Brazil.

2 quitting our animosities and factions: putting an end to the hostilities and discords among ourselves.

3 like the Jews...city was taken: referring to the internal factions of the Jewish people when the Roman Emperor Titus captured and destroyed the city of Jerusalem in AD 70.

4 a country which would be to eat up our whole nation: England. it: salt.

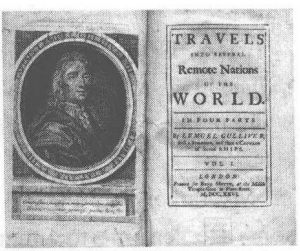
easy and effectual. But before some thing of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author, or authors, will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, as things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs? And secondly, there being a round million of creatures of human figure, throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock would leave them in debt two millions of pounds sterling; adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers, and labourers with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribed, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them from the inclemencies of weather, and the most inevitable prospect of entailing the like, or greater miseries upon their breed for ever.

I profess in the sincerity of my heart that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past childbearing.

Gulliver's Travels

Gulliver's Travels (1726), with the full title as *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, in Four Parts, by Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and Then a Captain of Several Ships,* is a novel that is both a powerful satire on human nature and a parody of the "travellers' tales".

It was an immediate success and the only work for which Swift received payments of 200 pounds.


TRAVELS
INTO SEVERAL
Remote Nations
OF THE
WORLD
IN FOUR PARTS
VOL. I.
LONDON

The first edition of *Gulliver's Travels*, printed in London, 1726

Gulliver in Lilliput

Plot Summary

The book is divided into four parts. In the first part Lemuel Gulliver, who is a surgeon on a merchant ship, relates his shipwreck on the island of Lilliput, where the inhabitants are six inches high, everything on the island being in the proportion of an inch to a foot as compared with things that we know. The English political parties and religious conflict are satirised in the description of the wearers of high heels and low heels, and of the controversy on the question whether eggs should be broken at the big end or small end.

In the second part Gulliver is accidentally left ashore on Brobdingnag, where the inhabitants are as tall as steeples, and everything else is in proportion. The third part is occupied with a visit to the flying island of Laputa, and its neighbouring continent and capital Lagado. Here the satire is directed against philosophers, men of science, historians, and projectors. In the fourth part Swift describes the country of the Houyhnhnms, who are horses endowed with reason; their rational, clean, and simple society is contrasted with the filthiness and brutality of the Yahoos, beasts in human shape.

The selection is from Chapter I, in which Swift establishes Gulliver's character. He is of British middle class. He is an honest man, and he expects others to be honest. He believes what he is told. Gulliver starts his voyage, but becomes a prisoner of the Lilliputians. The Lilliputians, though of six inches in height, possess all the pretension and conceit of men.

Part I A Voyage to Lilliput

CHAPTER I. *The author gives some account of himself and family; his first inducements to travel. He is shipwrecked, and swims for his life; gets safe on shore in the country of Lilliput; is made a prisoner, and carried up the country.*

My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons. He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge at fourteen years old, where I resided three years, and applied myself close to my studies; but the charge of maintaining me, although I had a very scanty allowance, being too great for a narrow fortune, I was bound apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London, with whom I continued four years. My father

now and then sending me small sums of money, I laid them out in learning navigation, and other parts of the mathematics, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be, some time or other, my fortune to do. When I left Mr. Bates, I went down to my father: where, by the assistance of him and my uncle John, and some other relations, I got forty pounds, and a promise of thirty pounds a year to maintain me at Leyden: there I studied physic two years and seven months, knowing it would be useful in long voyages.

Soon after my return from Leyden, I was recommended by my good master, Mr. Bates, to be surgeon to the Swallow, Captain Abraham Pannel, commander; with whom I continued three years and a half, making a voyage or two into the Levant, and some other parts. When I came back I resolved to settle in London; to which Mr. Bates, my master, encouraged me, and by him I was recommended to several patients. I took part of a small house in the Old Jewry; and being advised to alter my condition, I married Mrs. Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr. Edmund Burton, hosier[1], in Newgate Street, with whom I received four hundred pounds for a portion[2].

But my good master Bates dying in two years after, and I having few friends, my business began to fail; for my conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad practice of too many among my brethren. Having therefore consulted with my wife, and some of my acquaintance, I determined to go again to sea. I was surgeon successively in two ships, and made several voyages, for six years, to the East and West Indies[3], by which I got some addition to my fortune. My hours of leisure I spent in reading the best authors, ancient and modern, being always provided with a good number of books; and when I was ashore, in observing the manners and dispositions of the people, as well as learning their language; wherein I had a great facility, by the strength of my memory.

The last of these voyages not proving very fortunate, I grew weary of the sea, and intended to stay at home with my wife and family. I removed from

1 hosier: a person whose work or business is selling socks.
2 four hundred pounds for a portion: the part of a man's money or property contributed by his bride; here, meaning the dowry brought by Gulliver's wife.
3 East and West Indies: East Indies refers to Malay Archipelago; especially, the islands of Indonesia; West Indies includes the large group of islands between North America and South America; it includes the Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles, and the Bahamas.

the Old Jewry to Fetter Lane, and from thence to Wapping, hoping to get business among the sailors; but it would not turn to account. After three years expectation that things would mend, I accepted an advantageous offer from Captain William Prichard, master of the Antelope, who was making a voyage to the South Sea. We set sail from Bristol, May 4, 1699, and our voyage was at first very prosperous.

It would not be proper, for some reasons, to trouble the reader with the particulars of our adventures in those seas; let it suffice to inform him, that in our passage from thence to the East Indies, we were driven by a violent storm to the north-west of Van Diemen's Island[1]. By an observation, we found ourselves in the latitude of 30 degrees 2 minutes south. Twelve of our crew were dead by immoderate labour and ill food; the rest were in a very weak condition. On the 5th of November, which was the beginning of summer in those parts, the weather being very hazy, the seamen spied a rock within half a cable's length of the ship; but the wind was so strong, that we were driven directly upon it, and immediately split. Six of the crew, of whom I was one, having let down the boat into the sea, made a shift to get clear of the ship and the rock. We rowed, by my computation, about three leagues, till we were able to work no longer, being already spent with labour while we were in the ship. We therefore trusted ourselves to the mercy of the waves, and in about half an hour the boat was overset by a sudden flurry from the north. What became of my companions in the boat, as well as of those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the vessel, I cannot tell; but conclude they were all lost. For my own part, I swam as fortune directed me, and was pushed forward by wind and tide. I often let my legs drop, and could feel no bottom; but when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my depth; and by this time the storm was much abated. The declivity[2] was so small, that I walked near a mile before I got to the shore, which I conjectured was about eight o'clock in the evening. I then advanced forward near half a mile, but could not discover any sign of houses or inhabitants; at least I was in so weak a condition, that I did not observe them. I was extremely tired, and with that, and the heat of the weather, and about half a pint of brandy that I drank as I left the ship, I found myself much inclined to sleep. I lay down on the grass, which was very short and soft, where I slept sounder than ever I remembered to have

1 Van Diemen's Island: former name for Tasmania.
2 declivity: a downward slope or sloping, as of a hill.

done in my life, and, as I reckoned, about nine hours; for when I awaked, it was just day-light. I attempted to rise, but was not able to stir: for, as I happened to lie on my back, I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground; and my hair, which was long and thick, tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender ligatures[1] across my body, from my arm-pits to my thighs. I could only look upwards; the sun began to grow hot, and the light offended my eyes. I heard a confused noise about me; but in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg, which advancing gently forward over my breast, came almost up to my chin; when, bending my eyes downwards as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver at his back. In the mean time, I felt at least forty more of the same kind (as I conjectured) following the first. I was in the utmost astonishment, and roared so loud, that they all ran back in a fright; and some of them, as I was afterwards told, were hurt with the falls they got by leaping from my sides upon the ground. However, they soon returned, and one of them, who ventured so far as to get a full sight of my face, lifting up his hands and eyes by way of admiration, cried out in a shrill but distinct voice, *Hekinah Degul*: the others repeated the same words several times, but then I knew not what they meant. I lay all this while, as the reader may believe, in great uneasiness. At length, struggling to get loose, I had the fortune to break the strings, and wrench out the pegs that fastened my left arm to the ground; for, by lifting it up to my face, I discovered the methods they had taken to bind me, and at the same time with a violent pull, which gave me excessive pain, I a little loosened the strings that tied down my hair on the left side, so that I was just able to turn my head about two inches. But the creatures ran off a second time, before I could seize them; whereupon there was a great shout in a very shrill accent, and after it ceased I heard one of them cry aloud *Tolgo phonac*; when in an instant I felt above a hundred arrows discharged on my left hand, which, pricked me like so many needles; and besides, they shot another flight into the air, as we do bombs in Europe, whereof many, I suppose, fell on my body, (though I felt them not), and some on my face, which I immediately covered with my left hand. When this shower of arrows was over, I fell a groaning with grief and pain; and then striving again to get loose, they discharged another volley larger than the first, and some of them attempted

1 several slender ligatures: the ropes used to tie Gulliver to the ground.

with spears to stick me in the sides; but by good luck I had on a buff jerkin[1], which they could not pierce. I thought it the most prudent method to lie still, and my design was to continue so till night, when, my left hand being already loose, I could easily free myself: and as for the inhabitants, I had reason to believe I might be a match for the greatest army they could bring against me, if they were all of the same size with him that I saw. But fortune disposed otherwise of me. When the people observed I was quiet, they discharged no more arrows; but, by the noise I heard, I knew their numbers increased; and about four yards from me, over against my right ear, I heard a knocking for above an hour, like that of people at work; when turning my head that way, as well as the pegs and strings would permit me, I saw a stage erected about a foot and a half from the ground, capable of holding four of the inhabitants, with two or three ladders to mount it: from whence one of them, who seemed to be a person of quality, made me a long speech, whereof I understood not one syllable. But I should have mentioned, that before the principal person began his oration, he cried out three times, *Langro Dehul san* (these words and the former were afterwards repeated and explained to me); whereupon, immediately, about fifty of the inhabitants came and cut the strings that fastened the left side of my head, which gave me the liberty of turning it to the right, and of observing the person and gesture of him that was to speak. He appeared to be of a middle age, and taller than any of the other three who attended him, whereof one was a page that held up his train, and seemed to be somewhat longer than my middle finger; the other two stood one on each side to support him. He acted every part of an orator, and I could observe many periods of threatenings, and others of promises, pity, and kindness. I answered in a few words, but in the most submissive manner, lifting up my left hand, and both my eyes to the sun, as calling him for a witness; and being almost famished with hunger, having not eaten a morsel[2] for some hours before I left the ship, I found the demands of nature so strong upon me, that I could not forbear showing my impatience (perhaps against the strict rules of decency) by putting my finger frequently to my mouth, to signify that I wanted food. The Hurgo (for so they call a great lord, as I afterwards learnt) understood me very well. He descended from the stage, and commanded that several ladders should be applied to my sides, on which above a hundred of the inhabitants mounted

1 buff jerkin: a short, closefitting, sleeveless jacket or vest made of soft brownish leather.
2 morsel: a small piece of food; a mouthful.

and walked towards my mouth, laden with baskets full of meat, which had been provided and sent thither by the king's orders, upon the first intelligence he received of me. I observed there was the flesh of several animals, but could not distinguish them by the taste. There were shoulders, legs, and loins, shaped like those of mutton, and very well dressed, but smaller than the wings of a lark. I ate them by two or three at a mouthful, and took three loaves at a time, about the bigness of musket bullets. They supplied me as fast as they could, showing a thousand marks of wonder and astonishment at my bulk and appetite. I then made another sign, that I wanted drink. They found by my eating that a small quantity would not suffice me; and being a most ingenious people, they slung up, with great dexterity, one of their largest hogsheads[1], then rolled it towards my hand, and beat out the top; I drank it off at a draught, which I might well do, for it did not hold half a pint, and tasted like a small wine of Burgundy, but much more delicious. They brought me a second hogshead, which I drank in the same manner, and made signs for more; but they had none to give me. When I had performed these wonders, they shouted for joy, and danced upon my breast, repeating several times as they did at first, *Hekinah Degul*. They made me a sign that I should throw down the two hogsheads, but first warning the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, *Borach Mivola*; and when they saw the vessels in the air, there was a universal shout of *Hekinah Degul*. I confess I was often tempted, while they were passing backwards and forwards on my body, to seize forty or fifty of the first that came in my reach, and dash them against the ground. But the remembrance of what I had felt, which probably might not be the worst they could do, and the promise of honour I made them—for so I interpreted my submissive behaviour—soon drove out these imaginations. Besides, I now considered myself as bound by the laws of hospitality, to a people who had treated me with so much expense and magnificence. However, in my thoughts I could not sufficiently wonder at the intrepidity of these diminutive mortals[2], who durst venture to mount and walk upon my body, while one of my hands was at liberty, without trembling at the very sight of so prodigious a creature as I must appear to them. After some time, when they observed that I made no more demands for meat, there appeared before me a person of high rank from his imperial majesty. His excellency, having mounted on the small of my right

1 hogshead: a large barrel or cask holding from 63 to 140 gallons.
2 diminutive mortals: very small human being.

leg, advanced forwards up to my face, with about a dozen of his retinue[1]; and producing his credentials under the signet royal[2], which he applied close to my eyes, spoke about ten minutes without any signs of anger, but with a kind of determinate resolution, often pointing forwards, which, as I afterwards found, was towards the capital city, about half a mile distant; whither it was agreed by his majesty in council that I must be conveyed. I answered in few words, but to no purpose, and made a sign with my hand that was loose, putting it to the other (but over his excellency's head for fear of hurting him or his train) and then to my own head and body, to signify that I desired my liberty. It appeared that he understood me well enough, for he shook his head by way of disapprobation, and held his hand in a posture to show that I must be carried as a prisoner. However, he made other signs to let me understand that I should have meat and drink enough, and very good treatment. Whereupon I once more thought of attempting to break my bonds; but again, when I felt the smart of their arrows upon my face and hands, which were all in blisters, and many of the darts still sticking in them, and observing likewise that the number of my enemies increased, I gave tokens to let them know that they might do with me what they pleased. Upon this, the *Hurgo* and his train withdrew, with much civility and cheerful countenances. Soon after I heard a general shout, with frequent repetitions of the words *Peplom Selan*; and I felt great numbers of people on my left side relaxing the cords to such a degree, that I was able to turn upon my right, and to ease myself with making water; which I very plentifully did, to the great astonishment of the people; who, conjecturing by my motion what I was going to do, immediately opened to the right and left on that side, to avoid the torrent, which fell with such noise and violence from me. But before this, they had daubed[3] my face and both my hands with a sort of ointment, very pleasant to the smell, which, in a few minutes, removed all the smart of their arrows. These circumstances, added to the refreshment I had received by their victuals and drink, which were very nourishing, disposed me to sleep. I slept about eight hours, as I was afterwards assured; and it was no wonder, for the physicians, by the emperor's order, had mingled a sleepy potion in the hogsheads of wine.

It seems, that upon the first moment I was discovered sleeping on the

1 retinue: a body of assistants, followers, or servants attending a person of rank or importance.
2 signet royal: an official seal.
3 daubed: covered.

ground, after my landing, the emperor had early notice of it by an express; and determined in council, that I should be tied in the manner I have related, (which was done in the night while I slept;) that plenty of meat and drink should be sent to me, and a machine prepared to carry me to the capital city.

This resolution perhaps may appear very bold and dangerous, and I am confident would not be imitated by any prince in Europe on the like occasion. However, in my opinion, it was extremely prudent, as well as generous: for, supposing these people had endeavoured to kill me with their spears and arrows, while I was asleep, I should certainly have awaked with the first sense of smart, which might so far have roused my rage and strength, as to have enabled me to break the strings wherewith I was tied; after which, as they were not able to make resistance, so they could expect no mercy.

These people are most excellent mathematicians, and arrived to a great perfection in mechanics, by the countenance and encouragement of the emperor, who is a renowned patron of learning. This prince has several machines fixed on wheels, for the carriage of trees and other great weights. He often builds his largest men of war, whereof some are nine feet long, in the woods where the timber grows, and has them carried on these engines three or four hundred yards to the sea. Five hundred carpenters and engineers were immediately set at work to prepare the greatest engine they had. It was a frame of wood raised three inches from the ground, about seven feet long, and four wide, moving upon twenty-two wheels. The shout I heard was upon the arrival of this engine, which, it seems, set out in four hours after my landing. It was brought parallel to me, as I lay. But the principal difficulty was to raise and place me in this vehicle. Eighty poles, each of one foot high, were erected for this purpose, and very strong cords, of the bigness of packthread, were fastened by hooks to many bandages, which the workmen had girt round my neck, my hands, my body, and my legs. Nine hundred of the strongest men were employed to draw up these cords, by many pulleys fastened on the poles; and thus, in less than three hours, I was raised and slung into the engine, and there tied fast. All this I was told; for, while the operation was performing, I lay in a profound sleep, by the force of that soporiferous medicine[1] infused into my liquor. Fifteen hundred of the emperor's largest horses, each about four inches and a half high, were employed to draw me towards the metropolis, which, as I said, was half a mile distant.

1 soporiferous medicine: medicine that causes sleep.

About four hours after we began our journey, I awaked by a very ridiculous accident; for the carriage being stopped a while, to adjust something that was out of order, two or three of the young natives had the curiosity to see how I looked when I was asleep; they climbed up into the engine, and advancing very softly to my face, one of them, an officer in the guards, put the sharp end of his half-pike a good way up into my left nostril, which tickled my nose like a straw, and made me sneeze violently; whereupon they stole off unperceived, and it was three weeks before I knew the cause of my waking so suddenly. We made a long march the remaining part of the day, and, rested at night with five hundred guards on each side of me, half with torches, and half with bows and arrows, ready to shoot me if I should offer to stir. The next morning at sunrise we continued our march, and arrived within two hundred yards of the city gates about noon. The emperor, and all his court, came out to meet us; but his great officers would by no means suffer his majesty to endanger his person by mounting on my body.

At the place where the carriage stopped there stood an ancient temple, esteemed to be the largest in the whole kingdom; which, having been polluted some years before by an unnatural murder, was, according to the zeal of those people, looked upon as profane, and therefore had been applied to common use, and all the ornaments and furniture carried away. In this edifice it was determined I should lodge. The great gate fronting to the north was about four feet high, and almost two feet wide, through which I could easily creep. On each side of the gate was a small window, not above six inches from the ground: into that on the left side, the king's smith conveyed fourscore and eleven chains, like those that hang to a lady's watch in Europe, and almost as large, which were locked to my left leg with six-and-thirty padlocks. Over against this temple, on the other side of the great highway, at twenty feet distance, there was a turret at least five feet high. Here the emperor ascended, with many principal lords of his court, to have an opportunity of viewing me, as I was told, for I could not see them. It was reckoned that above a hundred thousand inhabitants came out of the town upon the same errand; and, in spite of my guards, I believe there could not be fewer than ten thousand at several times, who mounted my body by the help of ladders. But a proclamation was soon issued, to forbid it upon pain of death. When the workmen found it was impossible for me to break loose, they cut all the strings that bound me; whereupon I rose up, with as melancholy a disposition as ever I had in my life. But the noise and astonishment of the people, at seeing me rise and walk, are not to be expressed. The chains that held my left leg were about two yards

long, and gave me not only the liberty of walking backwards and forwards in a semicircle, but, being fixed within four inches of the gate, allowed me to creep in, and lie at my full length in the temple.

Critical Points

Gulliver's Travels: Themes and Cultural Influences

Gulliver's Travels is a masterpiece and is read "from the cabinet council to the nursery" (Alexander Pope).

The book is full of allusions to historical events. It gives an unparalleled satirical depiction of the vices of the age, expresses a satirical view of the state of European government, and of petty conflicts between religions, and also serves as an inquiry into whether men are inherently corrupt or whether they become corrupted.

Gulliver's Travels is as valid today as it was originally produced. The popularity of the book even made the term "Lilliputian" enter the English language as an adjective meaning "small and delicate". The term "Yahoo" is often encountered as a synonym for ruffian or thug. "Brobdingnagian" appears as a synonym for "very large" or "gigantic". In the discipline of computer science, the terms big-endian and little-endian are used to describe two possible ways of laying out bytes in memory.

Gulliver's Travels has been called a lot of things: from social satire to a children's story, from proto-science fiction to a forerunner of the modern novel. Swift's art works on many levels. Probably one of the reasons for the book's classic status is that it can be seen as many things to many people.

Questions

1 What is Swift's argument in *A Modest Proposal*? How does he develop his ideas to support his argument?
2 Explain the tone and effect of the word "modest" in the title.
3 Some would argue that Swift was a misanthrope and that *Gulliver's Travels* proves his hatred of mankind. What is your opinion? Support your opinion with examples from the text.
4 Explain how Swift makes use of the character of Gulliver. Does Gulliver have a distinct and recognisable character or is he simply Swift's

mouthpiece?

5 In his satire, Swift makes a correlation between "size" and "sense of morality". Cite examples from the description of Gulliver in Lilliput to explain how this works.

Class Activities

Debate Contest: use the argument of *A Modest Proposal* as topic to arrange a debate contest.

Step 1 Divide the students into three large teams, each of the first two teams chooses four students as contestants. The first team is to defend the argument, the second one to refute, the third team of students who hold a neutral opinion is needed to be judges in the contest.

Step 2 All students in the team work together to help the contestants collect materials, they may cite directly from the text, and they are also encouraged to find more sources to make the contest lively and interesting.

Step 3 The eight students from the first and second teams give an open debate in class; the teacher and the third team give the comments and announce the winner.

QUOTATIONS

When a true genius appears in this world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him.

—Jonathan Swift

Invention is the talent of youth, as judgement is of age.

—Jonathan Swift

Unit 14

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele

Joseph Addison and **Richard Steele** *are always mentioned together because they started a journalistic tradition together. Their collaboration in journalism, particularly in* The Tatler *and* The Spectator *produced the best essays of the time, having profound influence on the 18th century English taste and opinion.*

Life and Writing

Joseph Addison

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) was the son of a parson. He was educated at Charterhouses at The Queen's College, Oxford. Later he distinguished himself as classical scholar. He travelled on the Continent from 1699 to 1703. He was appointed undersecretary of State in 1706, and was Member of Parliament from 1708 till his death. He formed a close friendship with Swift, Steele, and other writers of the time.

Between 1709 and 1711 he contributed a number of essays to Steele's *The Tatler* and joined with him in the issue of *The Spectator* in 1711-1712. He wrote 18 essays on *Paradise Lost*, setting an important landmark in literary criticism. Addison died in 1719 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Addison's prose was acclaimed by Dr. Johnson in his *Life of Poets* (1781) as "the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not groveling". Addison himself said, "I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of class and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and coffee-houses." He attacked the coarseness of Restoration literature, and introduced new, essentially middle-class standards of taste and judgement. One of his

most original and influential contributions to the history of literary taste is his reassessment of the popular ballad, previously neglected as a form, in essays in *The Spectator* on *Chevy Chase* and *The Children in the Wood*. He admired Locke and did much to popularise his ideas.

Richard Steele

Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729) was born in Dublin, in the same year as Addison, and attended with Addison the same school, and the same university. Later he entered the army and obtained the rank of captain. He published three comedies, none of which proved very successful. In 1709 he started *The Tatler*, which he carried on with the help of Addison till 1711. Again in conjunction with Addison he established a new magazine *The Spectator*. This was followed by *The Guardian*, and *The Englishman*. In 1720 he established *The Theatre*, a bi-weekly magazine.

Less highly regarded as an essayist than Addison, Steele's influence was nevertheless great. his attacks on Restoration drama, his praise of tender and affectionate domestic and family life, and his own reformed and sentimental dramas did much to create an image of polite behaviour for English people.

The Spectator and familiar essay

The Spectator, a periodical conducted by Steele and Addison, appeared daily (except Sundays) in 1711-1712 and 1714. The articles are mainly concerned with manners, morals, and literature. Their object is "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality". In addition to influential social and literary criticism, it popularised current philosophical and scientific notions, set standards of tastes and manners, and appealed to urban readers by providing vivid descriptions of the life of the town. It was immensely popular, particularly with the new growing middle-class readership.

Steele and Addison successfully combined entertainment with enlightenment. The warm-hearted Steele communicated with his readers as a social man-about-town, while the reserved and scholarly Addison contributed many serious literary essays in highly polished style. The best portion of *The Spectator* comprises a series of essays known as the Sir Roger de Coverley papers. The character was first conceived by Steele but well developed by Addison.

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele started a tradition of **familiar essay**, sometimes called light essay or informal essay. Different from Bacon's formal

essays, their familiar essays were written in a witty and humourous style, using well-intentioned satire as a weapon to criticise the follies of society.

The Royal Exchange[1]

Joseph Addison, from *The Spectator*, No. 69, 1711

There is no place in the town which I so much love to frequent as the Royal Exchange. It gives me a secret satisfaction, and, in some measure, gratifies my vanity, as I am an Englishman, to see so rich an assembly of countrymen and foreigners consulting together upon the private business of mankind, and making this metropolis a kind of emporium[2] for the whole earth. I must confess I look upon high-change[3] to be a great council, in which all considerable nations have their representatives. Factors[4] in the trading world are what ambassadors are in the politick world; they negotiate affairs, conclude treaties, and maintain a good correspondence between those wealthy societies of men that are divided from one another by seas and oceans, or live on the different extremities of a continent. I have often been pleased to hear disputes adjusted between an Inhabitant of Japan and an alderman[5] of London, or to see a subject of the Great Mogul[6] entering into a league with one of the Czar of Muscovy[7]. I am infinitely delighted in mixing with these several ministers of commerce, as they are distinguished by their different walks and different languages: Sometimes I am justled among a body of Armenians; sometimes I am lost in a crowd of Jews, and sometimes make one in a group of Dutch-men. I am a Dane, Swede, or French-Man at different times, or rather fancy my self like the

1 The Royal Exchange in the City of London was founded in 1565 to act as not only a hub for business and shopping but also a symbol of "globalisation": the increasing importance of international commerce to the British economy. Addison's idyllic picture of the Exchange, written in 1711, celebrates the way in which the whole world seems to revolve around the blessings of trade. But many English people also worried that foreign luxuries might sap the national spirit of independence and self-sufficiency.
2 emporium: a centre of commerce.
3 high-change: the time of greatest activity.
4 factors: agents; people who buy or sell things for others.
5 alderman: a member of a municipal assembly or council in many jurisdictions.
6 the Great Mogul: the emperor of the Muslim dynasty of Mongol which ruled much of India in the 16th-19th centuries.
7 Czar of Muscovy: a male monarch or emperor of Russia.

old philosopher, who upon being asked what countryman he was, replied, That he was a citizen of the world.

Though I very frequently visit this busy multitude of people, I am known to nobody there but my friend Sir Andrew[1], who often smiles upon me as he sees me bustling in the crowd, but at the same time connives at[2] my presence without taking any further notice of me. There is indeed a merchant of Egypt who just knows me by sight, having formerly remitted me some money to Grand Cairo; but as I am not versed in the modern Coptic[3], our conferences go no further than a bow and a grimace[4].

This grand scene of business gives me an infinite variety of solid and substantial entertainments. As I am a great lover of mankind, my heart naturally overflows with pleasure at the sight of a prosperous and happy multitude, insomuch that at many public solemnities I cannot forbear expressing my joy with tears that have stolen down my cheeks. For this reason I am wonderfully delighted to see such a body of men thriving in their own private fortunes, and at the same time promoting the public stock; or in other words, raising estates for their own families, by bringing into their country whatever is wanting, and carrying out of it whatever is superfluous.

Nature seems to have taken a particular care to disseminate her blessings among the different regions of the world, with an eye to this mutual intercourse and traffic among mankind, that the natives of the several parts of the globe might have a kind of dependence upon one another, and be united together by their common Interest. Almost every degree produces something peculiar to it. The food often grows in one country, and the sauce in another. The fruits of Portugal are corrected[5] by the products of Barbadoes; the infusion[6] of a China plant sweetened with the pith of an Indian cane: The Philippic Islands give a flavour to our European bowls. The single dress of a woman of quality is often the product of an hundred climates. The muff and the fan come together from the different ends of the earth. The scarf is sent from the torrid zone, and the tippet from beneath the pole. The brocade petticoat rises out of the mines of

1 Sir Andrew: a merchant of London and also a member of Spectator Club.
2 connives at: takes no notice of.
3 Coptic: the language of the Copts, Egyptian descendants.
4 grimace: facial expression.
5 corrected: neutralised by opposite qualities.
6 infusion: tea.

Peru, and the diamond necklace out of the bowels of Indostan[1].

If we consider our own country in its natural prospect, without any of the benefits and advantages of commerce, what a barren uncomfortable spot of earth falls to our share! Natural historians tell us, that no fruit grows originally among us, besides hips and haws[2], acorns and pignuts[3], with other delicacies of the like nature; that our climate of itself, and without the assistances of art, can make no further advances towards a plum than to a sloe, and carries an apple to no greater a perfection than a crab; that our melons, our peaches, our figs, our apricots, and cherries, are strangers among us, imported in different ages, and naturalized in our English gardens; and that they would all degenerate and fall away into the trash of our own country, if they were wholly neglected by the planter, and left to the mercy of our sun and soil. Nor has traffic more enriched our vegetable world, than it has improved the whole face of nature among us. Our ships are laden with the harvest of every climate; our tables are stored with spices, and oils, and wines; our rooms are filled with pyramids of China[4], and adorned with the workmanship of Japan; our morning's draft[5] comes to us from the remotest corners of the earth; we repair our bodies by the drugs of America, and repose ourselves under Indian canopies. My friend Sir Andrew calls the vineyards of France our gardens; the Spice Islands our hotbeds; the Persians our silk-weavers, and the Chinese our potters. Nature indeed furnishes us with the bare necessaries of life, but traffic gives us a great variety of what is useful, and at the same time supplies us with everything that is convenient and ornamental. Nor is it the least part of this our happiness, that whilst we enjoy the remotest products of the north and south, we are free from those extremities of weather which give them birth; that our eyes are refreshed with the green fields of Britain, at the same time that our palates are feasted with fruits that rise between the tropics.

For these reasons there are not more useful members in a commonwealth than merchants. They knit mankind together in a mutual intercourse of good offices, distribute the gifts of nature, find work for the poor, add wealth to the rich, and magnificence to the great. Our English merchant converts the

1 bowels of Indostan: mines of India.
2 hips and haws: fruits of wild rose and hawthorn berries.
3 acorns and pignuts: the nuts of the oak tree and earth-nuts.
4 pyramids of China: miniature pagodas cast in bronze or made of glazed tile from China.
5 morning's draft: morning's drink.

tin of his own country into gold, and exchanges his wool for rubies. The Mahometans[1] are clothed in our British manufacture, and the inhabitants of the Frozen Zone warmed with the fleeces of our sheep.

When I have been upon the 'Change[2], I have often fancied one of our old kings standing in person, where he is represented in effigy[3], and looking down upon the wealthy concourse[4] of people with which that place is every day filled. In this case, how would he be surprised to hear all the languages of Europe spoken in this little spot of his former dominions, and to see so many private men, who in his time would have been the vassals of some powerful baron, negotiating like princes for greater sums of money than were formerly to be met with in the royal treasury! Trade, without enlarging the British territories, has given us a kind of additional empire; it has multiplied the number of the rich, made our landed estates infinitely more valuable than they were formerly, and added to them an accession of other estates as valuable as the lands themselves.

The Cries of London

Joseph Addison, from *The Spectator*, No. 251

There is nothing which more astonishes a foreigner and frights a country squire, than the cries of London. My good friend, Sir Roger, often declares that he cannot get them out of his head, or go to sleep for them the first week that he is in town. On the contrary, Will Honeycomb[5] calls them the *ramage de la ville*[6], and prefers them to the sounds of larks and nightingales, with all the music of the fields and woods. I have lately received a letter from some very odd fellow upon this subject, which I shall leave with my reader, without saying any further of it.

Sir,—

1 Mahometans: Mohammedans, refer to Muslims. This word was previously often used in English, but Muslims consider it offensive because it suggests that they worship Mohammed rather than Allah.
2 'Change: the same as Exchange, but not a contraction of that word: to write it 'change is a mistake.
3 in effigy: in statures.
4 concourse: crowd.
5 Sir Roger, and Will Honeycomb are fictional friends of the author.
6 *ramage de la ville*: (French) chirping of the town.

I am a man of all business, and would willingly turn my head to any thing for an honest livelihood. I have invented several projects for raising many millions of money without burthening[1] the subject, but I cannot get the Parliament to listen to me, who look upon me, forsooth, as a crack, and a projector; so that despairing to enrich either my self or my country by this public spiritedness, I would make some proposals to you relating to a design which I have very much at heart, and which may procure me a handsome subsistence, if you will be pleased to recommend it to the cities of London and Westminster.

The post I would aim at is to be Comptroller General of the London Cries, which are at present under no manner of rules or discipline. I think I am pretty well qualified for this place, as being a man of very strong lungs, of great insight into all the branches of our British trades and manufactures, and of a competent skill in music.

The cries of London may be divided into vocal and instrumental. As for the latter, they are at present under a very great disorder. A freeman[2] of London has the privilege of disturbing a whole street for an hour together, with the twanking of a brass kettle or a frying pan. The watchman's[3] thump at midnight startles us in our beds, as much as the breaking in of a thief. The sowgelder's [4] horn has indeed something musical in it, but this is seldom heard within the liberties. I would therefore propose, that no instrument of this nature should be made use of, which I have not tuned and licensed, after having carefully examined in what manner it may affect the ears of her Majesty's liege subject.

Vocal cries are of a much larger extent, and indeed so full of incongruities[5] and barbarisms, that we appear a distracted city, to foreigners, who do not comprehend the meaning of such enormous outcries. Milk is generally sold in a note above ela[6], and in sounds so exceedingly shrill, that it often sets our teeth an edge. The chimney sweeper is confined to no certain pitch; he sometimes utters himself in the deepest base, and sometimes in the lowest note of the gamut[7]. The same observation might be made on the retailers of small

1 burthening: burdening.
2 freeman: businessman; merchant.
3 watchman: a man employed to look after an empty building, especially at night.
4 sowgelder: one who neuters pigs.
5 incongruities: the quality of disagreeing; being unsuitable and inappropriate.
6 ela: a very high note in the musical register.
7 gamut: the complete extent or range; the entire scale of musical notes.

coal, not to mention broken glasses or brick dust. In these, therefore, and the like cases, it should be my care to sweeten and mellow the voices of these itinerant tradesmen, before they make their appearance in our streets, as also to accommodate their cries to their respective wares; and to take care in particular that those may not make the most noise who have the least to sell, which is very observable in the venders of card matches, to whom I cannot but apply that old proverb of "Much cry but little wool."

Some of these last mentioned musicians are so very loud in the sale of these trifling manufactures, that an honest splenetic[1] gentleman of my acquaintance bargained with one of them never to come into the street where he lived. But what was the effect of this contract? Why, the whole tribe of card matchmakers which frequent that quarter, passed by his door the very next day, in hopes of being bought off after the same manner.

It is another great imperfection in our London cries, that there is no just time nor measure observed in them. Our news should, indeed, be published in a very quick time, because it is a commodity that will not keep cold. It should not, however, be cried with the same precipitation as fire: yet this is generally the case. A bloody battle alarms the town from one end to another in an instant. Every motion of the French is published in so great a hurry, that one would think the enemy were at our gates.[2] This likewise I would take upon me to regulate in such a manner, that there should be some distinction made between the spreading of a victory, a march, or an encampment, a Dutch, a Portugal or a Spanish mail. Nor must I omit under this head, those excessive alarms with which several boisterous rustics infest our streets in turnip season; and which are more inexcusable, because these are wares which are in no danger of cooling upon their hands.

There are others who affect a very slow time, and are, in my opinion, much more tunable than the former; the cooper[3], in particular, swells his last note in a hollow voice, that is not without its harmony; nor can I forbear being inspired with a most agreeable melancholy, when I hear that sad and solemn air with which the public are very often asked if they have any chairs to mend. Your own memory may suggest to you many other lamentable ditties of the same nature, in which the music is wonderfully languishing and melodious.

I am always pleased with that particular time of the year which is proper

1 splenetic: very irritable; afflicted with low spirits.
2 England and France had been at war, hence here "enemy" is used.
3 cooper: a craftsman who makes or repairs wooden barrels or tubs.

for the pickling of dill and cucumbers; but alas, this cry, like the song of the nightingale, is not heard above two months. It would therefore be worthwhile to consider whether the same air might not in some cases be adapted to other words.

It might likewise deserve our most serious consideration, how far, in a well-regulated city, those humourists are to be tolerated, who, not contented with the traditional cries of their forefathers, have invented particular songs and tunes of their own; such as was, not many years since, the pastry man, commonly known by the name of the colly-molly-puff; and such as is at this day the vender of powder and washballs, who, if I am rightly informed, goes under the name of Powder Watt.

I must not here omit one particular absurdity which runs through this whole vociferous generation, and which renders their cries very often not only incommodious, but altogether useless to the public; I mean, that idle accomplishment, which they all of them aim at, of crying so as not to be understood. Whether or no they have learned this from several of our affected singer, I will not take upon me to say; but most certain it is, that people know the wares they deal in rather by their tunes than by their words; insomuch that I have sometimes seen a country boy run out to buy apples of a bellows-mender, and gingerbread from a grinder of knives and scissors. Nay, so strangely infatuated are some very eminent artists of this particular grace in a cry, that none but their acquaintance are able to guess at their profession; for who else can know, that "Work if I had it" should be the signification of a corn-cutter?

Forasmuch therefore, as persons of this rank are seldom men of genius or capacity, I think it would be very proper, that some man of good sense and sound judgment should preside over these public cries, who should permit none to lift up their voices in our streets, that have not tunable throats, and are not only able to overcome the noise of the crowd, and the rattling of coaches, but also to vend their respective merchandizes in apt phrases, and in the most distinct and agreeable sounds. I do therefore humbly recommend myself as a person rightly qualified for this post; and if I meet with fitting encouragement, shall communicate some other projects which I have by me, that may no less conduce to the emolument[1] of the public.

I am, Sir, etc.

Ralph Crotchet

1 emolument: a salary, fee, or benefit from employment or office.

Sir Roger at Church[1]

Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, No. 112, July 9, 1711.

"First worship the immoral gods as custom decrees."

—Pythagoras[2]

I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday; and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country-people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure[3] in the eye of the village. A country-fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard as a citizen does upon the' Change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good church-man, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing: he has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners

1 Steele had contributed the first sketch of Sir Roger de Coverley to *The Spectator* (No. 2). But Addison so developed the sketch that he must be looked upon as the real creator of that immortal character. "The figure of Sir Roger," says Prof. Courthope, "though it belongs to a bygone stage of society, is as durable as human nature itself, and while the language lasts the exquisite beauty of the colours in which it is preserved will excite the same kind of pleasure."

2 Pythagoras (ca. 582–507 BC): Greek mathematician and philosopher, founder of the mystic, religious and scientific society called Pythagoreans. Known as "the father of numbers", Pythagoras made influential contributions to philosophy and religious teaching in the late sixth century BC. Pythagoras and his students believed that everything was related to mathematics and, through mathematics, everything could be predicted and measured in rhythmic patterns or cycles.

3 give them a figure: make them noticeable.

very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock[1] and a Common Prayer Book; and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed out-do most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions: sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing-psalms[2], half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces Amen three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character, make his friends observe these little singularities as foils[3] that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then he inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret

1 hassock: a cushion for kneeling on when praying in church.
2 singing-psalms: psalms for singing, as distinguished from the psalms for the day which at this time were generally read.
3 foils: people who serve by contrast to call attention to another thing's good qualities.

reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain[1] has often told me, that upon a catechising[2] day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent[3], who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always at the squire, and the squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers[4]; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates[5] to them, almost in every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference[6] to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

1 chaplain: a clergyman attached to a private chapel.
2 catechising: giving religious instructions systematically, especially by asking questions, receiving answers, and offering explanations.
3 incumbent: holder of the office of clerk.
4 tithe-stealers: men who defraud the clergyman of the tithe (tenth part) due to him from the produce of the land.
5 insinuate: introduce or insert (oneself) in a subtle manner.
6 deference: a courteous expression of esteem or regard; polite respect.

Questions

1 Do you find the perspective of "The Cries of London" interesting? Who is Crotchet? What phenomenon is he talking about? How would you characterise the tone of the letter? Do you find Crotchet an interesting character or a serious one? Is his proposal practical?
2 How do you interpret "The Royal Exchange" with the perspective of modern globalisation?

Class Activities

Writing Practice:

1 Imitate the style of "The Cries of London", and write an essay entitled "The Cries of...(name of a city or a local community)". In your writing, you must mention Addison's essay so as to make a comparison of the 18th century London with the modern street sounds.
2 Write a letter of response to "The Cries of London". You may choose to write from the perspective of a local resident, a journalist, or the mayor of London. You may also respond as a modern reader so as to have a dialogue with the author about the cries of different times and places.

QUOTATIONS

I do not believe that sheer suffering teaches. If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers. To suffering must be added mourning, understanding, patience, love, openness and the willingness to remain vulnerable.

—Joseph Addison

What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity. These are but trifles, to be sure; but, scattered along life's pathway, the good they do is inconceivable.

—Joseph Addison

Unit 15

Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

Alexander Pope *is generally regarded as the greatest English poet of the early 18th century, best known for his satirical verse and for his translation of Homer. Pope is the only important writer of his generation living on personal literary achievements.*

Life and Writing

Alexander Pope

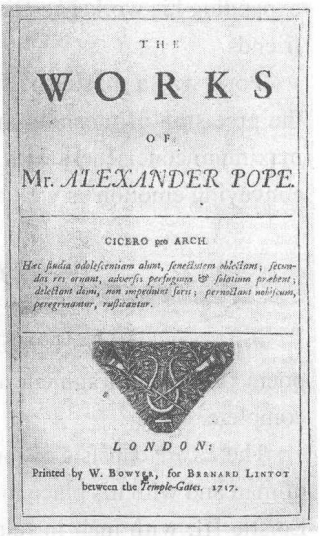
Pope was a son of a Roman Catholic linen draper of London. His ill-health and Catholic faith greatly influenced his life and literary career. From early childhood he suffered numerous health problems. At the age of 12, he got tuberculosis, which deformed his body and stunted his growth. He never grew beyond 1.37 metres (4 feet 6 inches) tall. He was later often troubled by violent headaches, and suffered from easily exacerbated nerves.

Since he was a Roman Catholic, he could not attend university, vote or hold public office, and he was excluded from the sort of patronage that was freely bestowed by statesmen on most writers during the reign of Queen Anne. Pope was taught to read by his aunt and then sent to two surreptitious Catholic schools. He completed the schooling by wide reading.

In 1700, his family moved to a small estate in Binfield, Berkshire due to strong anti-Catholic sentiment and a statute preventing Catholics from living within 10 miles of either London or Westminster. Pope started an extensive campaign of reading. As he later remembered: "In a few years I had dipped into a great number of the English, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek poets. This I did without any design but that of pleasing myself, and got the languages by hunting after the stories...rather than read the books to get the languages." Encouraged by his father, he began to develop his precocious talent for poetry,

his very favourite author being Homer, whom he had first read at age of eight in the English translation.

His first success as a poet was his *An Essay on Criticism* (1711). It is written in **heroic couplets**[1]. It is a critical essay in verse modeled on Horace's *Art of Poetry*, and is primarily concerned with how writers and critics behave in the new literary commerce of the time, covering a range of good criticism and advice. It also represents many chief literary ideals of Pope's age. Throughout the poem, Pope refers to ancient writers such as Virgil, Homer, Aristotle, Horace and Longinus. He believes that the "imitation of the ancients" is the ultimate standard for taste. Pope also says, "True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,/As those move easiest who have learned to dance", that is, poets are made, not born. *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), one of Pope's most popular poems, is a mock-heroic epic to make fun of a high society quarrel.


THE
WORKS
OF
Mr. ALEXANDER POPE.
CICERO pro ARCH.
Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant; secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium & solatium præbent; delectant domi, non impedinnt foris; pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.
LONDON:
Printed by W. BOWYER, for BERNARD LINTOT between the Temple-Gates. 1717.
The Works of Alexander Pope

In 1715 He issued the first volume of his translation in heroic couplets of Homer's *Iliad*. His translation was completed in 1720. The work was greatly admired. It was later acclaimed by Samuel Johnson as "a performance which no age or nation could hope to equal". Samuel Coleridge thought it an "astonishing product of matchless talent and ingenuity". The commercial success of his translation made Pope the first English poet who could live off the sales of his work alone, "indebted to no prince or peer alive", as he put it. He moved in 1718 with his mother to his villa at Twickenham upon Thames, where he spent the rest of his life. During 1725-1726, Pope translated *Odyssey* with two assistants. Pope also brought out an edition of Shakespeare in this period.

In the 1730s Pope published a series of moral and philosophical poems: *An Essay on Man* (1733-1734), consisting of four Epistles; *Moral Essays* (1731-1735), four in number: *Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men, Of*

1 A heroic couplet is a traditional form for English poetry, commonly used for epic and narrative poetry; it refers to poems constructed from a sequence of rhyming pairs of iambic pentameter lines.

the Characters of Women, *Of the Use of Riches*; and *the Imitations of Horace*. After 1738, Pope wrote little. His major work in these years was revising and expanding his work *The Dunciad*. Pope died in his villa in 1744, surrounded by friends.

Pope was a master of style. His verse is notable for its rhythmic variety, the precision of meaning and the harmony of his language, and the union of maximum conciseness with complexity. His expression is concise and forceful, conveying emotion as well as reason and wit.

An Essay on Man

An Essay on Man is a philosophical poem, written in heroic couplets. The poem is in fact a fragment of a larger work, which Pope planned to but did not complete.

The *Essay* consists of four epistles. Epistle I concerns itself with the nature of man and with his place in the universe; Epistle II, with man as an individual; Epistle III, with man in relation to human society, to the political and social hierarchies; and Epistle IV, with man's pursuit of happiness in this world.

Considered as a whole, *An Essay on Man* is an affirmative poem of faith: life seems chaotic and patternless to man when he is in the midst of it, but is in fact a coherent portion of a divinely ordered plan. His conclusion is that we must learn to accept our position in the Great Chain of Being: a "middle state", below that of the angels but above that of the beasts, in which we can potentially lead happy and virtuous lives. It popularised optimistic philosophy throughout England and the rest of Europe in Pope's age.

EPISTLE I. OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO THE UNIVERSE

Awake, my St. John! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings.
Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man; 5

A mighty maze[1]! but not without a plan;
A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot;
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;[2]
The latent tracts[3], the giddy heights explore
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;[4]
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;
But vindicate the ways of God to man.[5]

I

Say first, of God above, or man below,[6]
What can we reason, but from what we know?
Of man what see we, but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer?
Through worlds unnumbered though the God be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied being peoples every star,
May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.
But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies,

1 maze: a labyrinth-like arrangement was frequently used in 18th-century gardening.
2 open...covert: terms from hunting, applying to ground that will not shelter animals and ground that will.
3 tracts: (1) regions, (2) tracks.
4 This line continues the hunting metaphor.
5 cf. *Paradise Lost*, I, 26.
6 ff. "[Pope] He can reason only from things known, and judge only with regard to his own system."

Gradations just, has thy pervading soul[1]
Look'd through? or can a part contain the whole?
Is the great chain[2], that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?

II

Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find,[3]
Why formed so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why formed no weaker, blinder, and no less!
Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade?
Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove?
Of systems possible, if 'tis confessed
That Wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must full or not coherent be,
And all that rises, rise in due degree;[4]
Then, in the scale of reasoning life, 'tis plain
There must be somewhere, such a rank as man:[5]
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this, if God has placed him wrong?
Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works[6], though laboured on with pain,

1 Lines 29-31: the terms frame, bearings, gradation, ties may have architectural overtones, but along with connections and dependencies, they were key terms of the new science in that age.
2 the great chain: *Paradise Lost*, V, 469-90. cf. below, I, 207-41.
3 ff. "[Pope] He is not therefore a judge of his own perfection or imperfection, but is certainly such a being as is suited to his place and rank in the creation."
4 Of man what see we...due degree: these are axioms common to many traditional cosmologies: (1) that a deity of Infinite Wisdom exists and in his goodness could only create the best of all possible worlds; (2) that the world so created is a plenum formosum, i.e., full, containing the maximum number of kinds of beings; (3) that the hierarchy of kinds of being is arranged in even steps, so that each kind has its due degree.
5 Lines 47-48: there must be a rank in the scale combining rational and animal.
6 works: also in the sense of the mechanical works in a clock or machine.

A thousand movements[1] scarce one purpose gain;
In God's, one single can its end produce;
Yet serves to second too some other use.
So man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;[2]
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
When the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains:
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God[3]:
Then shall man's pride and dullness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's, use and end;
Why doing, suffering, checked, impelled; and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity.
Then say not man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
Say rather, man's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge measured to his state and place,
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
The blest today is as completely so,
As who began a thousand years ago.

III

Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,[4]
All but the page prescribed, their present state:
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:[5]

1 movement: also with reference to mechanism.
2 Lines 58-59: continuing the imagery of clockwork or mechanism.
3 Egypt's God: a bull was worshipped at Memphis under the name Apis.
4 Line 77: Pope here compares man's blindness to his future to that of a lamb which knows nothing about the approach of his doom. His view is that instead of feeling depressed and pessimistic, he believes ignorance as a bliss and advises human beings to place absolute trust in God's way to man. [Pope] "His happiness depends on his ignorance to a certain degree."
5 Line 79: Pope's concept of an orderly universe is that God is placed above men and men above brutes and accordingly they are allowed to know what they should know.

Or who could suffer being here below?[1]
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed today,
Had he thy reason[2], would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle marked by Heav'n[3]:
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.
Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;[4]
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore!
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:[5]
Man never is, but always to be blest:
The soul, uneasy and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.
Lo! the poor Indian,[6] whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven;
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,

1 Line 80: if those who stayed below knew everything that is about to happen to them, how could they bear their low status of life.
2 Had he thy reason: if he had your reason. thy: your; human.
3 each may fill the circle marked by Heav'n: each creature may stay happily in its own place as designed by God.
4 [Pope] "And on his hope of a relation to a future state."
5 Hope springs eternal in the human breast: human beings can always hope since we do not know about our destiny.
6 Pope's illustration of an Indian image in the following four lines expresses his religious idea, that is, without the guidance of God the pagans have less access to truth and knowledge. The line "Far as the solar walk, or milky way" shows Pope's interest in astronomy and geography.

Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's[1] fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.[2]

IV

Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense[3]
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such,
Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust[4],
Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If man alone engross not Heaven's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the God of God.
In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:[5]
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of order, sins against the Eternal Cause.

1 seraph: one of a class of celestial beings mentioned once in the Old Testament, in Isaiah. Later Jewish imagery perceived them as having human form, and in that way they passed into the ranks of Christian angels. It is the highest rank of angels surrounding God's throne.
2 Line 112: Pope thinks that the Indians benefiting from their ignorance and their poor knowledge does not at all make them live a happy life in the woods and satisfy their natural desire.
3 Line 113 ff. cf. Raphael's advice to Adam, *Paradise Lost*, VII, 167-74.
4 gust: taste, i.e., the pleasure of the palate.
5 Lines 127-128: cf. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*: "Aspiring to be like God in power, the angels transgressed and fell (Isa. XIV, 14) by aspiring to be like God in knowledge, man transgressed and fell (Gen., iii, 5)."

V

Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, " 'Tis for mine:
For me kind Nature wakes her genial[1] power,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew,
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies."
But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
"No, ('tis replied) the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial, but by general laws;
Th' exceptions few; some change since all began:
And what created perfect?"—Why then man?
If the great end be human happiness,
Then Nature deviates; and can man do less?
As much that end a constant course requires
Of showers and sunshine, as of man's desires[2];
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men for ever temperate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?[3]
Who knows but he, whose hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms,
Pours fierce ambition in a Caesar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon[4] loose to scourge mankind?

1 genial: generative.
2 desires: passions.
3 Borgia: alludes to the 15th-century Italian family notorious for murders and other crimes. Catiline: the young conspirator against the Roman Republic who was attacked by Cicero.
4 young Ammon: Alexander the Great.

From pride, from pride, our very reasoning springs;
Account for moral, as for natural things:
Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?
In both, to reason right is to submit.
Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never passion discomposed the mind.
But ALL subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life.
The general order, since the whole began,
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

VI

What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
And little less than angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as grieved appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the powers of all?
Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
The proper organs, proper powers assigned;
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;[1]
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is Heav'n unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleased with nothing, if not blessed with all?
The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
No powers of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.

1 [Pope] "It is a certain axiom in the anatomy of creatures, that in proportion as they are formed for strength, their swiftness is lessened, or as they are formed for swiftness, their strength is abated."

Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.[1]
Say what the use, were finer optics given,
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heaven?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at every pore?
Or quick effluvia[2] darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If nature thundered in his opening ears,
And stunned him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still
The whispering zephyr, and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII

Far as creation's ample range extends,[3]
The scale of sensual, mental powers ascends:
Mark how it mounts, to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between,[4]
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:[5]

1 Why has not...fly: it was widely believed that the fly's eye had microscopic powers.
2 effluvia: the real outflow of material particles too subtle to be perceived by the sense.
3 ff. [Pope] "There is an universal ORDER and GRADATION through the whole visible world, of the sensible and mental faculties, which causes the subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man, whose reason alone countervails all the other faculties... The extent, limits and use of human reason and science, the author designed as the subject of his next book of *Ethic Epistles*."
4 [Pope] "The manner of the lions hunting their prey in the deserts of Africa is this: At their first going out in the nighttime they set up a loud roar, and then listen to the noise made by the beasts in their flight, pursuing them by the ear, and not by the nostril. It is probable the story of the jackal's hunting for the lion was occasioned by observation of this defect of scent in that terrible animal."
5 sagacious: acute in perception. tainted: smelling of an animal, usually one that is hunted.

Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles through the vernal wood:
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew:
How instinct varies in the grovelling swine,
Compar'd, half-reasoning elephant, with thine:
'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier;
For ever separate, yet forever near!
Remembrance and reflection how allied;
What thin partitions sense from thought divide:
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass the insuperable line!
Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these powers in one?

VIII

See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being, which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,[1]
Beast, bird, fish, insect! what no eye can see,
No glass can reach! from infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing!—On superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed:
From nature's chain whatever link you strike,

1 The double order in human, angel, man is explained by such traditional doctrine as: "In our minds, verily, we be so celestial and of so godly capacity that we may surmount above the nature of angels and be unite, knit, and made one with God" (Erasmus, Enchiridon, IV).

Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to the amazing whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall.
Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled,
Being on being wrecked, and world on world;
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And nature tremble to the throne of God.[1]
All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—Oh madness, pride, impiety![2]

IX

What if the foot ordained the dust to tread,[3]
Or hand to toil, aspired to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repined
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another, in this general frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
The great directing Mind of All ordains.
All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;

1 cf. *Paradise Lost*, VI, 218-219, 832-834.
2 [Pope] "The extravagance, impiety and pride of such a desire."
3 ff. Pope uses St. Paul's analogy of the body-members illustrating unity in the system of grace and applies it to the system of nature. See I Cor. 12:15-21.

As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns;
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

X

Cease then, nor order imperfection name:[1]
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
Submit—In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing power[2],
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony, not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

Critical Points

Alexander Pope's Influence and Later Comments

The poetry of Alexander Pope holds an acknowledged place in the canons of English literature. Pope was famous for his witty satires and aggressive, bitter quarrels with other writers.

He is one of the most frequently quoted writer in the English language. Some quotations from Pope's work have passed so deeply into the English language that they are often taken as proverbs by those who do not know their source: "A little learning is a dang'rous thing" (from *An Essay on Criticism*);

1 ff. [Pope] "The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to providence, both as to our present and our future state."
2 one disposing power: God.

"To err is human, to forgive, divine" (ibid.); "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread" (ibid.); "Hope springs eternal in the human breast" and "The proper study of mankind is man" (*An Essay on Man*).

With the growth of Romanticism, Pope's poetry was increasingly seen as outdated, with the notable exception of Lord Byron, who acclaimed him as "the great moral poet of all times, of all climes, of all feelings, and all stages of existence".

In the Victorian era, Matthew Arnold dismissed Pope and Dryden as "classics of our prose". The 19th century critics considered his diction artificial, his versification too regular, and his satires insufficiently humane. It was not until the 1930s when serious attempt was made to rediscover the Pope's works.

Questions

1 *An Essay on Man* is a rationalistic effort to use philosophy in order to, as John Milton attempted, "justify the ways of God to man". Pope's conclusion is that we must learn to accept our position of a "middle state". Do you find Pope's argument convincing or not?

2 In which ways can we relate *An Essay on Man* to works like Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*?

Class Activities

Pope is one of the most frequently quoted poets. Underline the most convincing lines you can find from Pope's works, and share with your classmates.

QUOTATIONS

True wit is nature to advantage drest;
Which oft was thought, but ne'er so well exprest.

—Alexander Pope

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance, as those move easiest who have learned to dance. 'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence. The sound must seem an echo to the sense.

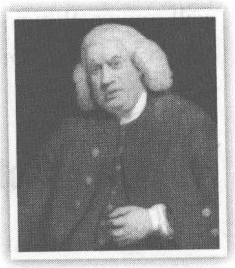
—Alexander Pope

Unit 16

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

Samuel Johnson, *often referred to simply as Dr. Johnson, was a poet, essayist, biographer, lexicographer, and often considered one of the finest critics of English literature. He was also a man of great wit. His fame came from his work as a scholar and from his powerful personality.*

Life and Writing


Samuel Johnson

Johnson was born in a bookseller's family. When he was three years old he suffered scrofula, which seriously affected his eyesight. He was educated at Grammar School in his hometown, and then went to Oxford, where he spent 14 months, and, owing to poverty, was forced to leave without taking a degree. He suffered acute mental stress during the period between leaving Oxford and his father's death in 1731. Aged 25, he married Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow 21 years his elder, and started a private school near Lichfield. His lack of a degree and convulsive mannerisms hindered his prospects as a teacher.

He set off to London in 1737, entered the service of Edward Cave, the founder of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. For the next three decades, Johnson wrote biographies, poetry, essays, pamphlets and parliamentary reports. In 1749 he published his finest poem *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, a satire on illusion and wishful thinking, and the first work to bear his own name.

Between 1745 and 1755, Johnson worked at *A Dictionary of the English Language*. Johnson's dictionary rose above all the other dictionaries not only because of his meticulous research, but of the depth and breadth of definitions and careful use of description. It was a monumental success, firmly established his reputation, and brought him the Oxford degree he had failed to achieve as a student.

In 1750 he started *The Rambler*, a semi-weekly periodical of essays written almost entirely by himself. It lasted until 1752, the year when his wife died, a loss which caused him great and prolonged grief.

After the completion of the *Dictionary*, he continued to write essays, reviews, and political articles for various periodicals. In 1765 appeared Johnson's edition of Shakespeare's works. It contains valuable notes and emendations, and acute commentary on the characters in the plays, and its "Preface" is a brilliant piece of literary criticism.

Johnson's final major work was *The Lives of the English Poets* (1778-1781), a project commissioned by a consortium of London booksellers. The work has 10 volumes. It is a distinctive blend of biography and literary criticism, which appear as prefaces to selections of each poet's work. Johnson died in 1784 and was buried at Westminster Abbey.

Johnson was a man of strong will, and a man of moral principles. He was conservative and eccentric, but he never lacked wit. As a compassionate man, Johnson supported a number of poor friends under his own roof. Although a fervent Tory himself, Johnson kept friendly and intimate terms with several well-known Whigs. Johnson's reputation rests not only on his works but also on Boswell's account of Johnson's life as one of the most eminent literary figures of his day.

A Dictionary of the English Language

Before Johnson no standard dictionary of the English language existed. English seemed to change utterly from one generation to another. Johnson tried to produce "a dictionary by which the pronunciation of our language may be fixed, and its attainment facilitated; by which its purity may be preserved, its use ascertained, and its duration lengthened".

Johnson's *Dictionary* is notable in three respects: its volume of 40,000 words; the wealth of illustrative quotations; and the excellence of the definitions. He wrote the definitions of over 40,000 words, illustrating them with about 114,000 quotations drawn from the best English writers from the time of Sidney to the 18th century in every field of learning and literature; the definitions established the authority of the *Dictionary*: full, clear, and totally free from eccentricity. He is also well known for his playful definitions, e.g., lexicographer: "a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge". Johnson did more than any man of his time to preserve the ideal of a standard English.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield[1]

7th February, 1755

My Lord,

I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of *The World*[2], that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge[3].

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself "*le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*"[4]; that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending[5]; but I found my attendance[6] so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer[7] me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

1 During his work on the dictionary, Johnson made many appeals for financial help in the form of subscriptions: patrons would get a copy of the first edition as soon as it was printed in compensation for their support during its compilation. Among the patrons to whom he appealed in vain was Lord Chesterfield. After the dictionary was finally published, Chesterfield sent Johnson a cheque of a large sum. Johnson returned it with his now famous letter to Chesterfield, in which he compares himself to a drowning man who calls for help vainly, then slowly swims to shore and crawls up on the beach, only to be offered a belated assistance.
2 the proprietor: owner. *The World*: a periodical in London, published in 1753-1756.
3 in what terms to acknowledge: in what words to express my gratitude.
4 *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*: (*French*) the conqueror of the conqueror of the earth.
5 contending: competing for.
6 my attendance: my visit.
7 suffer: allow; permit.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.[1]

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it: till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity[2] not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning[3], I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less[4]; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

your Lordship's most humble,

most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

The Preface to Shakespeare

"The Preface" is the finest piece of Shakespeare criticism in the 18th century. Johnson claims that Shakespeare is the poet of nature, not learning, the creator of characters who spring to life, and a writer whose works express the full range of human passions; his truth to life surpasses that of all other modern writers.

"The Preface" is most original when it attacks the long-standing critical reverence for the unities of time and place. He argues that what seems real on the stage does not depend on artificial rules but on what the mind is willing to imagine.

1 The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks: a story from Virgil's *Eclogues*, in which the shepherd found Cupid, the god of love, living in the rocks and with a heart as hard as the rock. Here Johnson compared himself to the shepherd, Lord Chesterfield the god of love.

2 cynical asperity: harshness of a cynic; rough manner of a cynic.

3 favourer of learning: patron of knowledge.

4 if less be possible, with less: if less (help) be possible, I would like to carry on my work with less help from you, i.e., I do not need any others' help now.

Shakespeare's Excellence. General Nature

That praises are without reason lavished[1] on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries[2] that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all perhaps are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living we estimate his powers by his worst performance, and when he is dead we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientific, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains and many rivers; so in the productions of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined that it was round or square,

1 lavished: given too much.
2 votaries: a devoted (almost religiously so) adherent.

but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers[1] was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose[2] his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision,[3] may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topic of merriment or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity nor gratify malignity, but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have past through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they

1 The Pythagorean scale of numbers: Pythagoras (a. 580-500 BC, Greek philosopher and mathematician) discovered that ratios the determine the principal intervals of the musical scale.

2 transpose: transfer from one place or period to another.

3 The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision: Johnson edited Shakespeare's works and added footnotes and brief introductions to each of the plays. The poet: the ideal poet, according to Johnson, who has a genius for making the things we see everyday seem new. Without denying the right of the poet to flights of imagination, he also insists that poems must make sense, please readers, and help us not only understand the world but cope with it. His determination to judge literature by its truth to life, not by abstract rules, is perfectly illustrated by his treatment of the doctrine of the Three Unities in "The Preface to Shakespeare". His criticism puts forth some of the deepest questions about literature: why it endures, and how it helps us endure. The essence of art is true to life.

devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible[1]; and approbation[2], though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight a-while, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny[3] of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestic wisdom. It was said of Euripides[4], that every verse was a precept and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable[5], and the

1 infallible: incapable of failure or error; always right.
2 approbation: official recognition or approval.
3 progeny: the immediate descendants.
4 Euripides (c. 480–406 BC): the last of the three great tragedians of ancient Greece. The other two are Aeschylus and Sophocles.
5 his fable: plot, i.e., "the series or contexture of events which constitute a poem epic or dramatic" (Johnson's *Dictionary*).

tenour of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles[1], who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excells in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harrass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered, is the business of a modern dramatist. For this probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from

1 Hierocles: Hierocles of Alexandria, a Greek philosopher, who was active around AD 430. The only preserved complete work of his is the commentary on the *Chrysa Epe* (*Golden Verse*) of Pythagoras. It enjoyed a great reputation in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and there are numerous translations in various European languages.

each other. I will not say with Pope that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristical; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find, any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical[1] or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: Even where the agency is supernatural the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents: so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would be probably such as he has assigned; and it may be said, that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies[2], but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious[3] ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

1 hyperbolical: exaggerating or diminishing beyond the fact; exceeding the truth.
2 exigencies: pressing or urgent situations.
3 delirious: marked by uncontrolled excitement or emotion.

Shakespeare's Faults. The Three Dramatic Unities[1]

Shakespeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall show them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard[2] is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth[3].

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate[4]; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting which the train[5] of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and, in view of

1 The Three Dramatic Unities: usually known as the Three Unities or Classical Unities, which are rules for drama derived from Aristotle's *Poetics*. In their neoclassical form they are: the unity of action: a play should have one main action that it follows, with no or few subplots; the unity of place: a play should cover a single physical space and should not attempt to compress geography, nor should the stage represent more than one place; and the unity of time: the action in a play should take place over no more than 24 hours.
2 regard: respect.
3 bigotry which sets candour higher than truth: blind zeal which values kindness higher than truth. candour: kindness.
4 extenuate: lessen the seriousness or extent of; offer excuse for.
5 train: a series of happenings.

his reward, he shortened the labour, to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts[1] where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgement, to transfer to his imagined interpolators[2]. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle[3], when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothic mythology of fairies[4]. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney[5], who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet and security, with those of turbulence, violence and adventure.

In his comic scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations[6] of smartness and contest of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious[7]; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality and reserve,

1 remits his efforts: holds back or refrains from exerting efforts.
2 interpolators: interrupters.
3 Hector quoting Aristotle: see Shakespeare's play *Troilus and Cressida*, II. 2. 166. Hector: in Greek mythology, a Trojan prince and one of the greatest fighters in the Trojan War, was killed by Achilles.
4 the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothic mythology of fairies: see Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which fairies mix with human beings.
5 Sidney: Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586), famous in the Elizabethan Age of England as a poet, courtier and soldier. He is now best known as the author of *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), *The Defence of Poesy* (or *An Apology for Poetry*, 1595), and *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1590). Of which, *The Defence of Poesy* is the most important contribution to Renaissance literary theory. What is at stake in Sidney's argument is a defence of poetry's nobility. The significance of the nobility of poetry is its power to move readers to virtuous action. True poets must teach and delight—a view that dates back to Horace. It was England's first philosophical defence in which he describes poetry's ancient and indispensable place in society, its mimetic nature, and its ethical function.
6 reciprocations: interchanges.
7 pleasantry licentious: lacking moral discipline; especially sexually unrestrained.

yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gayety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion which exigence forces out are for the most part striking and energetic; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties,[1] the offspring of his throes is tumour[2], meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp[3] of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution[4], and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatic poetry is, naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an encumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragic writers, to catch opportunities of amplification[5], and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved[6] by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is

1 solicits his invention, or strains his faculties: appeals to his creative imagination, or stretches his power of mind to the utmost.
2 the offspring of his throes is tumour: the work produced out of his mental pains is false imagination. throes: violent pangs of suffering; tumour: inflated grandeur, false imagination.
3 pomp: ceremonial elegance and splendor; (old use) vain and boastful display.
4 circumlocution: an indirect way of expressing.
5 amplification: expanded statement.
6 disentangled and evolved: straightened out and unfolded. disentangled: freed from entanglement; disengaged.

very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets[1] and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have never less reason to indulge their hopes of supreme excellence, than when he seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection[2], and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. He is not long soft and pathetic without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation[3]. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity[4].

Questions

1 What is a patron, according to Johnson? When and why did Johnson first visit Lord Chesterfield? How does Johnson feel about the Lord's ignorance of at first and later attention to his work?
2 Johnson defines that Shakespeare is "the poet of nature". How do you interpret his argument?
3 It is said that "The Preface" is an earliest piece of Shakespeare criticism. Cite examples from the selection to summarise the qualities you admire for Johnson as an original critic.
4 Do research on the origin and history of the role of the patron in the early Western Civilisation, and cite examples to illustrate what makes a good relationship between the patron and the artist.

Class Activities

Writing Practice:

1 Write a piece of literary criticism on Samuel Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield, and give analysis on his artistic characteristics.
2 Suppose that you were Lord Chesterfield, write a letter of response to Johnson's.

1 epithets: descriptive word or phrase.
2 dejection: melancholy depression.
3 equivocation: intentionally using vague or ambiguous words or phrases.
4 frigidity: a lack of affection or enthusiasm.

QUOTATIONS

Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. Great works are performed not by strength, but perseverance.

—Samuel Johnson

Lexicographer: a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge, that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the signification of words.

—Samuel Johnson

Unit 17

Henry Fielding (1707-1754)

Henry Fielding *is a novelist and dramatist known for his rich earthy humour and satirical prowess. His masterpiece is* Tom Jones. *Fielding made a crucial contribution to the development of the novel as a unified narrative structure.*

Life and Writing

Henry Fielding was born in Glastonbury in Somerset in 1707. The son of an army lieutenant and a judge's daughter, he was educated at Eton Sohool and the University of Leiden before returning to England where he wrote a series of farces, operas and light comedies.

Henry Fielding

Fielding formed his own company and was running a little theatre, Haymarket. The passing of the Theatrical Licensing Act in 1737 effectively ended Fielding's career as a playwright.

In 1739 Fielding turned to journalism and became editor of *The Champion*. He also began writing novels; *The Adventures of Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Abraham Adams* (1842) and *Jonathan Wild* (1743) appeared with some attention.

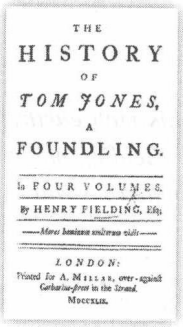
Fielding was appointed Justice of Peace for Westminster and Middlesex in 1748. He campaigned against legal corruption and helped his half-brother, Sir John Fielding, establish the Bow Street Runners.

In 1749 Fielding's novel, *The History of Tom Jones,* was published to public acclaim. Critics agree that it is one of the greatest comic novels in the English language. Fielding followed this success with another well-received novel, *Amelia* (1751).

Throughout his life, Fielding suffered from poor health and by 1752 he

could not move without the help of crutches. In an attempt to overcome his health problems, Henry Fielding went to live in Portugal but this didn't work and he died in Lisbon in 1754.

The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling


THE
HISTORY
OF
TOM JONES,
A
FOUNDLING.
In FOUR VOLUMES.
By HENRY FIELDING, Esq;
LONDON:
Printed for A. MILLAR, over-against
Catharine-street in the Strand.
MDCCXLIX.

The title page of the 1749 edition

The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling, often known simply as *Tom Jones*, is generally regarded as Fielding's greatest work, and one of the first and most influential of English novels.

As for the purpose and theme of his writing of the novel, Fielding informs the reader that "The provision...we have here made is no other than Human Nature" (Chapter 1), and in his Dedication, he declares, "that to recommend goodness and innocence hath been my sincere endeavour in this history".

Plot Summary

The novel is divided into 18 books. Mr. Allworthy, a kind and wealthy widower, lives in Somerset with his ill-humoured unmarried sister Bridget. Late one evening Allworthy finds a baby boy lying on his bed. He names it Tom, adding the surname Jones on the assumption that the mother is Jenny Jones, a maidservant to the wife of the schoolmaster Partridge, who is eventually accused of being the father and dismissed his post. Meanwhile Bridget marries the obnoxious Captain Blifil and they have a son, Master Blifil, who is brought up with Tom.

Blifil tries to discredit Tom whenever he can. Tom becomes a vigorous, kind-hearted youth who gets into a number of scrapes, Mr. Allworthy has a neighbour, Squire Western, who has a lovely young daughter, Sophia, his heiress. Tom rescues Sophia when her horse bolts, but suffers a broken arm in the process. During his recuperation at Western's house, he and Sophia fall in love. The Squire wants Sophia to marry Blifil so their two lands will be joined. Meanwhile, due to Blifil's machinations, Tom is disinherited and evicted from Mr. Allworthy's house.

Tom then embarks upon a series of adventures at a number of roadside inns while on his way to London. During these adventures, he encounters Partridge, who is now travelling the country as a barber-surgeon. He unwittingly sleeps with Jenny Jones, and Jenny reveals that Tom's mother

was really Bridget Allworthy. Meanwhile, Bridget has confessed all to her brother on her deathbed. In London, Tom becomes the lover of Lady Bellaston, a much older, wealthy woman, and is arrested and imprisoned after a fight. Blifil arranges that the gang shall give evidence against Tom, but, when the help of a long letter from Square to Allworthy, Blifil's duplicity is revealed. Tom is cleared of charges. Tom realises the error of his youthful ways, promising to always behave morally from now on. Blifil is disinherited, Tom, now revealed as Allworthy's nephew, becomes his heir, and he gets engaged to his beloved Sophia.

Book I Containing as Much of the Birth of the Foundling as Is Necessary or Proper to Acquaint the Reader with in the Beginning of This History

Chapter III

An Odd Accident Which Befell Mr. Allworthy at His Return Home, the Decent Behaviour of Mrs. Deborah Wilkins, with Some Proper Animadversions on Bastards

I have told my reader, in the preceding chapter, that Mr. Allworthy inherited a large fortune; that he had a good heart, and no family. Hence, doubtless, it will be concluded by many that he lived like an honest man, owed no one a shilling, took nothing but what was his own, kept a good house, entertained his neighbours with a hearty welcome at his table, and was charitable to the poor, i.e., to those who had rather beg than work, by giving them the offals[1] from it; that he died immensely rich and built an hospital.

And true it is that he did many of these things; but had he done nothing more I should have left him to have recorded his own merit on some fair freestone over the door of that hospital. Matters of a much more extraordinary kind are to be the subject of this history, or I should grossly misspend my time in writing so voluminous a work; and you, my sagacious friend, might with equal profit and pleasure travel through some pages which certain droll[2] authors have been facetiously pleased to call *The History of*

1 offals: the entrails and internal organs of an animal used as food.
2 droll: comical in an odd or whimsical manner.

England.

Mr. Allworthy had been absent a full quarter of a year in London, on some very particular business, though I know not what it was; but judge of its importance by its having detained him so long from home, whence he had not been absent a month at a time during the space of many years. He came to his house very late in the evening, and after a short supper with his sister, retired much fatigued to his chamber. Here, having spent some minutes on his knees, a custom which he never broke through on any account, he was preparing to step into bed, when, upon opening the clothes, to his great surprise he beheld an infant, wrapt up in some coarse linen, in a sweet and profound sleep, between his sheets. He stood some time lost in astonishment at this sight; but, as good nature had always the ascendant in his mind, he soon began to be touched with sentiments of compassion for the little wretch before him. He then rang his bell, and ordered an elderly woman-servant to rise immediately, and come to him; and in the meantime was so eager in contemplating the beauty of innocence, appearing in those lively colours with which infancy and sleep always display it, that his thoughts were too much engaged to reflect that he was in his shirt when the matron came in. She had indeed given her master sufficient time to dress himself; for out of respect to him, and regard to decency, she had spent many minutes in adjusting her hair at the looking-glass, notwithstanding all the hurry in which she had been summoned by the servant, and though her master, for aught she knew, lay expiring in an apoplexy, or in some other fit.[1]

It will not be wondered at that a creature who had so strict a regard to decency in her own person, should be shocked at the least deviation from it in another. She therefore no sooner opened the door, and saw her master standing by the bedside in his shirt, with a candle in his hand, than she started back in a most terrible fright, and might perhaps have swooned away, had he not now recollected his being undressed, and put an end to her terrors by desiring her to stay without the door till he had thrown some clothes over his back, and was become incapable of shocking the pure eyes of Mrs. Deborah Wilkins, who, though in the fifty-second year of her age, vowed she had never beheld a man without his coat. Sneerers and profane[2]

1 and though her master, for aught she knew, lay expiring in an apoplexy, or in some other fit: and she would not have come, for anything she knew, even though her master were dying of illness.

2 profane: not sacred or concerned with religion.

wits may perhaps laugh at her first fright: yet my graver reader, when he considers the time of night, the summons from her bed, and the situation in which she found her master, will highly justify and applaud her conduct, unless the prudence which must be supposed to attend maidens at that period of life at which Mrs. Deborah had arrived, should a little lessen his admiration.[1]

When Mrs. Deborah returned into the room, and was acquainted by her master with the finding the little infant, her consternation was rather greater than his had been; nor could she refrain from crying out, with great horror of accent as well as look, "My good sir! What's to be done?" Mr. Allworthy answered, she must take care of the child that evening, and in the morning he would give orders to provide it a nurse. "Yes, sir," says she; "and I hope your worship will send out your warrant to take up the hussy its mother, for she must be one of the neighbourhood; and I should be glad to see her committed to Bridewell[2], and whipped at the cart's tail. Indeed, such wicked sluts cannot be too severely punished. I'll warrant 'tis not her first, by her impudence in laying it to your worship[3]." "In laying it to me, Deborah!" answered Allworthy. "I can't think she hath any such design. I suppose she hath only taken this method to provide for her child; and truly I am glad she hath not done worse." "I don't know what is worse," cries Deborah, "than for such wicked strumpets to lay their sins at honest men's doors; and though your worship knows your own innocence, yet the world is censorious; and it hath been many an honest man's hap[4] to pass for the father of children even he never begot; and if your worship should provide for the child, it may make the people the apter to believe; besides, why should your worship provide for what the parish is obliged to maintain? For my own part, if it was an honest man's child, indeed—but for my own part, it goes against me to touch these misbegotten

1 unless the prudence which..., should a little lessen his admiration: unless the reader realises that Mrs. Deborah was too old to pretend caution against any attempt at her virtue, and after this realisation, the reader will think differently of her.

2 Bridewell: a house of correction for the confinement of disorderly persons; —so called from a hospital built in 1553 near St. Bride's (or Bridget's) well, in London, which was subsequently a penal workhouse.

3 by her impudence in laying it to your worship: judging by her shameless way of trying to make you responsible for it.

4 hap: an accidental happening.

wretches, whom I don't look upon as my fellow-creatures. Faugh![1] How it stinks! It doth not smell like a Christian. If I might be so bold to give my advice, I would have it put in a basket, and sent out and laid at the churchwarden's door. It is a good night, only a little rainy and windy; and if it was well wrapt up, and put in a warm basket, it is two to one but it lives till it is found in the morning. But if it should not, we have discharged our duty in taking proper care of it; and it is, perhaps, better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence, than to grow up and imitate their mothers; for nothing better can be expected of them."

There were some strokes in this speech which perhaps would have offended Mr. Allworthy, had he strictly attended to it; but he had now got one of his fingers into the infant's hand, which, by its gentle pressure, seeming to implore his assistance, had certainly out-pleaded the eloquence of Mrs. Deborah, had it been ten times greater than it was. He now gave Mrs. Deborah positive orders to take the child to her own bed, and to call up a maid-servant to provide it pap, and other things, against it waked[2]. He likewise ordered that proper clothes should be procured for it early in the morning, and that it should be brought to himself as soon as he was stirring.

Such was the discernment of Mrs. Wilkins, and such the respect she bore her master, under whom she enjoyed a most excellent place, that her scruples gave way to his peremptory commands; and she took the child under her arms, without any apparent disgust at the illegality of its birth; and declaring it was a sweet little infant, walked off with it to her own chamber.

Allworthy here betook himself to those pleasing slumbers which a heart that hungers after goodness is apt to enjoy when thoroughly satisfied. As these are possibly sweeter than what are occasioned by any other hearty meal, I should take more pains to display them to the reader, if I knew any air to recommend him to for the procuring such an appetite.[3]

1 Faugh: an exclamation of contempt, disgust, or abhorrence.
2 against it waked: by of before the time that it waked; in preparation for or so as to be ready for the time when it waked.
3 The paragraph uses simile as its rhetorical device by comparing pleasing slumbers to a hearty meal which a hungry man of benevolence enjoys after performing good deeds. them: slumbers.

Book I Chapter IV

The reader's neck brought into danger by a description; his escape, and the great condescension of Miss Bridget Allworthy

The Gothic style[1] of building could produce nothing nobler than Mr. Allworthy's house. There was an air of grandeur in it that struck you with awe, and rivalled the beauties of the best Grecian architecture; and it was as commodious within as venerable without.

It stood on the south-east side of a hill, but nearer the bottom than the top of it, so as to be sheltered from the north-east by a grove of old oaks which rose above it in a gradual ascent of near half a mile, and yet high enough to enjoy a most charming prospect of the valley beneath.

In the midst of the grove was a fine lawn, sloping down towards the house, near the summit of which rose a plentiful spring, gushing out of a rock covered with firs, and forming a constant cascade of about thirty feet, not carried down a regular flight of steps, but tumbling in a natural fall over the broken and mossy stones till it came to the bottom of the rock, then running off in a pebbly channel, that with many lesser falls winded along, till it fell into a lake at the foot of the hill, about a quarter of a mile below the house on the south side, and which was seen from every room in the front. Out of this lake, which filled the centre of a beautiful plain, embellished with groups of beeches and elms, and fed with sheep, issued a river, that for several miles was seen to meander through an amazing variety of meadows and woods till it emptied itself into the sea, with a large arm of which, and an island beyond it, the prospect was closed.

On the right of this valley opened another of less extent, adorned with several villages, and terminated by one of the towers of an old ruined abbey, grown over with ivy, and part of the front, which remained still entire.

The left-hand scene presented the view of a very fine park, composed of very unequal ground, and agreeably varied with all the diversity that hills, lawns, wood, and water, laid out with admirable taste, but owing less to art than to nature, could give. Beyond this, the country gradually rose into a ridge of wild mountains, the tops of which were above the clouds.

It was now the middle of May, and the morning was remarkably serene, when Mr. Allworthy walked forth on the terrace, where the dawn opened every

1 The Gothic style: a style of architecture developed in northern France that spread throughout Europe between the 12th and 16th centuries; characterised by slender vertical piers and counterbalancing buttresses and by vaulting and pointed arches.

minute that lovely prospect we have before described to his eye; and now having sent forth streams of light, which ascended the blue firmament before him, as harbingers preceding his pomp, in the full blaze of his majesty rose the sun,[1] than which one object alone in this lower creation could be more glorious,[2] and that Mr. Allworthy himself presented—a human being replete with benevolence, meditating in what manner he might render himself most acceptable to his Creator, by doing most good to his creatures.

Reader, take care. I have unadvisedly led thee to the top of as high a hill as Mr. Allworthy's, and how to get thee down without breaking thy neck, I do not well know. However, let us e'en venture to slide down together; for Miss Bridget rings her bell, and Mr. Allworthy is summoned to breakfast, where I must attend, and, if you please, shall be glad of your company.

The usual compliments having past between Mr. Allworthy and Miss Bridget, and the tea being poured out, he summoned Mrs. Wilkins, and told his sister he had a present for her, for which she thanked him—imagining, I suppose, it had been a gown, or some ornament for her person. Indeed, he very often made her such presents; and she, in complacence to him, spent much time in adorning herself. I say in complacence to him, because she always expressed the greatest contempt for dress, and for those ladies who made it their study.

But if such was her expectation, how was she disappointed when Mrs. Wilkins, according to the order she had received from her master, produced the little infant? Great surprises, as hath been observed, are apt to be silent; and so was Miss Bridget, till her brother began, and told her the whole story, which, as the reader knows it already, we shall not repeat.

Miss Bridget had always expressed so great a regard for what the ladies are pleased to call virtue, and had herself maintained such a severity of character, that it was expected, especially by Wilkins, that she would have vented much bitterness on this occasion, and would have voted for sending the child, as a kind of noxious animal, immediately out of the house; but, on the contrary, she rather took the good-natured side of the question, intimated some compassion for the helpless little creature, and commended her brother's charity in what he had done.

Perhaps the reader may account for this behaviour from her condescension

1 and now having sent forth streams of light, which...of his majesty rose the sun: the sun rose, having sent forth streams of lights ahead of him. his: the sun's. The sentence is in inverted order.

2 than which one object alone in this lower creation could be more glorious: the sun was more glorious than any object alone in this human world.

to Mr. Allworthy[1], when we have informed him that the good man had ended his narrative with owning a resolution to take care of the child, and to breed him up as his own; for, to acknowledge the truth, she was always ready to oblige her brother, and very seldom, if ever, contradicted his sentiments. She would, indeed, sometimes make a few observations, as that men were headstrong, and must have their own way, and would wish she had been blest with an independent fortune; but these were always vented in a low voice, and at the most amounted only to what is called muttering.

However, what she withheld from the infant, she bestowed with the utmost profuseness on the poor unknown mother[2], whom she called an impudent slut, a wanton hussy, an audacious harlot, a wicked jade, a vile strumpet, with every other appellation with which the tongue of virtue never fails to lash those who bring a disgrace on the sex.

A consultation was now entered into how to proceed in order to discover the mother. A scrutiny was first made into the characters of the female servants of the house, who were all acquitted by Mrs. Wilkins, and with apparent merit; for she had collected them herself, and perhaps it would be difficult to find such another set of scarecrows[3].

The next step was to examine among the inhabitants of the parish; and this was referred to Mrs. Wilkins, who was to enquire with all imaginable diligence, and to make her report in the afternoon.

Matters being thus settled, Mr. Allworthy withdrew to his study, as was his custom, and left the child to his sister, who, at his desire, had undertaken the care of it.

Book I Chapter VI

Mrs. Deborah is introduced into the parish with a simile. A short account of Jenny Jones, with the difficulties and discouragements which may attend young women in the pursuit of learning.

1 from her condescension to Mr. Allworthy: allowing herself to oblige her brother.
2 what she withheld from the infant, she...on the poor unknown mother: she did not show contempt to the baby, but she vented such feelings on the baby's mother. Fielding here expresses his satires on Bridget, for she was the real mother of this illegitimate child.
3 another set of scarecrows: referring to the group of female servants chosen by Mrs. Wilkins, and like her they always scared people away.

Mrs. Deborah, having disposed of the child according to the will of her master, now prepared to visit those habitations which were supposed to conceal its mother.

Not otherwise than when a kite, tremendous bird, is beheld by the feathered generation[1] soaring aloft, and hovering over their heads, the amorous dove, and every innocent little bird, spread wide the alarm, and fly trembling to their hiding-places. He proudly beats the air, conscious of his dignity, and meditates intended mischief.

So when the approach of Mrs. Deborah was proclaimed through the street, all the inhabitants ran trembling into their houses, each matron dreading lest the visit should fall to her lot. She with stately steps proudly advances over the field: aloft she bears her towering head, filled with conceit of her own pre-eminence, and schemes to effect her intended discovery.

The sagacious reader will not from this simile imagine these poor people had any apprehension of the design with which Mrs. Wilkins was now coming towards them; but as the great beauty of the simile may possibly sleep these hundred years, till some future commentator shall take this work in hand, I think proper to lend the reader a little assistance in this place.

It is my intention, therefore, to signify, that, as it is the nature of a kite to devour little birds, so is it the nature of such persons as Mrs. Wilkins to insult and tyrannize over little people. This being indeed the means which they use to recompense to themselves their extreme servility and condescension to their superiors; for nothing can be more reasonable, than that slaves and flatterers should exact the same taxes on[2] all below them, which they themselves pay to all above them.

Whenever Mrs. Deborah had occasion to exert any extraordinary condescension to Mrs. Bridget, and by that means had a little soured her natural disposition, it was usual with her to walk forth among these people, in order to refine her temper, by venting, and, as it were, purging off all ill humours; on which account she was by no means a welcome visitant: to say the truth, she was universally dreaded and hated by them all.

On her arrival in this place, she went immediately to the habitation of an elderly matron; to whom, as this matron had the good fortune to resemble herself in the comeliness of her person, as well as in her age, she had generally

1 the feathered generation: birds.
2 exact the same taxes on: treat equally.

been more favourable than to any of the rest. To this woman she imparted what had happened, and the design upon which she was come thither that morning. These two began presently to scrutinize the characters of the several young girls who lived in any of those houses, and at last fixed their strongest suspicion on one Jenny Jones, who, they both agreed, was the likeliest person to have committed this fact[1].

This Jenny Jones was no very comely girl, either in her face or person; but nature had somewhat compensated the want of beauty with what is generally more esteemed by those ladies whose judgement is arrived at years of perfect maturity, for she had given her a very uncommon share of understanding[2]. This gift Jenny had a good deal improved by erudition[3]. She had lived several years a servant with a schoolmaster, who, discovering a great quickness of parts[4] in the girl, and an extraordinary desire of learning—for every leisure hour she was always found reading in the books of the scholars—had the good-nature, or folly—just as the reader pleases to call it—to instruct her so far, that she obtained a competent skill in the Latin language, and was, perhaps, as good a scholar as most of the young men of quality of the age. This advantage, however, like most others of an extraordinary kind, was attended with some small inconveniences: for as it is not to be wondered at, that a young woman so well accomplished should have little relish for the society of those whom fortune had made her equals, but whom education had rendered so much her inferiors; so is it matter of no greater astonishment, that this superiority in Jenny, together with that behaviour which is its certain consequence,[5] should produce among the rest some little envy and ill-will towards her; and these had, perhaps, secretly burnt in the bosoms of her neighbours ever since her return from her service.

Their envy did not, however, display itself openly, till poor Jenny, to the surprise of everybody, and to the vexation of all the young women in these parts, had publicly shone forth on a Sunday in a new silk gown, with a laced cap, and other proper appendages to these.

1 this fact: that of giving birth to a child out of wedlock.
2 she had given her a very uncommon share of understanding: she (nature) had made Jenny Jones more intelligent than others.
3 erudition: profound scholarly knowledge.
4 parts: talents; mind.
5 this superiority in Jenny,...is its certain consequence: the superior feeling is certainly to show in her behaviour.

The flame[1], which had before lain in embryo, now burst forth. Jenny had, by her learning, increased her own pride, which none of her neighbours were kind enough to feed with the honour she seemed to demand; and now, instead of respect and adoration, she gained nothing but hatred and abuse by her finery. The whole parish declared she could not come honestly by such things; and parents, instead of wishing their daughters the same, felicitated themselves that their children had them not.

Hence, perhaps, it was, that the good woman first mentioned the name of this poor girl to Mrs. Wilkins; but there was another circumstance that confirmed the latter in her suspicion; for Jenny had lately been often at Mr. Allworthy's house. She had officiated as nurse to Miss Bridget, in a violent fit of illness, and had sat up many nights with that lady; besides which, she had been seen there the very day before Mr. Allworthy's return, by Mrs. Wilkins herself, though that sagacious person had not at first conceived any suspicion of her on that account: for, as she herself said, "She had always esteemed Jenny as a very sober girl (though indeed she knew very little of her), and had rather suspected some of those wanton trollops, who gave themselves airs, because, forsooth[2], they thought themselves handsome."

Jenny was now summoned to appear in person before Mrs. Deborah, which she immediately did. When Mrs. Deborah, putting on the gravity of a judge, with somewhat more than his austerity, began an oration with the words, "You audacious strumpet!" in which she proceeded rather to pass sentence on the prisoner than to accuse her.

Though Mrs. Deborah was fully satisfied of the guilt of Jenny, from the reasons above shown, it is possible Mr. Allworthy might have required some stronger evidence to have convicted her; but she saved her accusers any such trouble, by freely confessing the whole fact with which she was charged.

This confession, though delivered rather in terms of contrition, as it appeared, did not at all mollify Mrs. Deborah, who now pronounced a second judgement against her, in more opprobrious language than before; nor had it any better success with the bystanders, who were now grown very numerous. Many of them cried out, "They thought what madam's silk gown would end in"; others spoke sarcastically of her learning. Not a single female was present

1 the flame: the flame of envy; anger generated by envy.
2 forsooth: indeed; no doubt.

but found some means of expressing her abhorrence of poor Jenny,[1] who bore all very patiently, except the malice of one woman, who reflected upon her person, and tossing up her nose, said, "The man must have a good stomach who would give silk gowns for such sort of trumpery!" Jenny replied to this with a bitterness which might have surprised a judicious person, who had observed the tranquillity with which she bore all the affronts to her chastity; but her patience was perhaps tired out, for this is a virtue which is very apt to be fatigued by exercise.[2]

Mrs. Deborah having succeeded beyond her hopes in her inquiry, returned with much triumph, and, at the appointed hour, made a faithful report to Mr. Allworthy, who was much surprised at the relation; for he had heard of the extraordinary parts and improvements of this girl, whom he intended to have given in marriage, together with a small living, to a neighbouring curate. His concern, therefore, on this occasion, was at least equal to the satisfaction which appeared in Mrs. Deborah, and to many readers may seem much more reasonable.

Miss Bridget blessed herself, and said, "For her part, she should never hereafter entertain a good opinion of any woman." For Jenny before this had the happiness of being much in her good graces also[3].

The prudent housekeeper was again dispatched to bring the unhappy culprit before Mr. Allworthy, in order, not as it was hoped by some, and expected by all, to be sent to the house of correction, but to receive wholesome admonition and reproof; which those who relish that kind of instructive writing may peruse in the next chapter.

Book IV Chapter VIII

A battle sung by the muse in the Homerican style[4], and which none but the classical reader can taste.

Mr. Western had an estate in this parish; and as his house stood at little

1 Not a single female was present but...of poor Jenny: all the women present said something against Jenny. abhorrence: hate coupled with disgust.
2 ...which is very apt to be fatigued by exercise: patience is very likely to be worn thin if it is put to test time and again.
3 in her good graces also: in her favour too. her: Bridget's.
4 Homerican style: the style of mimic scenes from Homer's epics.

greater distance from this church than from his own, he very often came to Divine Service[1] here; and both he and the charming Sophia happened to be present at this time.

Sophia was much pleased with the beauty of the girl[2], whom she pitied for her simplicity in having dressed herself in that manner, as she saw the envy which it had occasioned[3] among her equals. She no sooner came home than she sent for the gamekeeper, and ordered him to bring his daughter to her; saying she would provide for her in the family, and might possibly place the girl about her own person, when her own maid, who was now going away, had left her.

Poor Seagrim was thunderstruck at this; for he was no stranger to the fault in the shape of his daughter. He answered, in a stammering voice, "That he was afraid Molly would be too awkward to wait on her ladyship, as she had never been at service." "No matter for that," says Sophia, "she will soon improve. I am pleased with the girl, and am resolved to try her."

Black George now repaired to his wife, on whose prudent counsel he depended to extricate him out of this dilemma; but when he came thither he found his house in some confusion. So great envy had this sack[4] occasioned, that when Mr. Allworthy and the other gentry were gone from church, the rage, which had hitherto been confined, burst into an uproar; and, having vented itself at first in opprobrious words, laughs, hisses, and gestures, betook itself at last to certain missile weapons[5]; which, though from their plastic nature they threatened neither the loss of life or of limb, were however sufficiently dreadful to a well-dressed lady. Molly had too much spirit to bear this treatment tamely. Having therefore—but hold, as we are diffident of our own abilities, let us here invite a superior power to our assistance.

Ye Muses, then, whoever ye are, who love to sing battles, and principally thou who whilom didst recount the slaughter in those fields where Hudibras

1 Divine Service: the ceremony, of the Lutheran Church which is used during the celebration of the Eucharist, or The Lord's Supper, which is the rite that Christians perform in fulfillment of Jesus' instruction, recorded in the New Testament, to do in memory of him what he did at his Last Supper. The Divine Service has equal participation from the congregation as well as from the pastor, so there are hymns to be sung by all. It has its roots in Luther's German Mass of 1526. Martin Luther (1483–1546), a German monk, priest, professor, theologian, and church reformer.
2 the girl: referring to Molly, daughter of George Seagrim, the gamekeeper.
3 occasioned: aroused.
4 this sack: the night gown which Sophia had given to Molly.
5 missile weapons: things that can be thrown to hit people.

and Trulla fought, if thou wert not starved with thy friend Butler, assist me on this great occasion.[1] All things are not in the power of all.

As a vast herd of cows in a rich farmer's yard, if, while they are milked, they hear their calves at a distance, lamenting the robbery which is then committing, roar and bellow; so roared forth the Somersetshire mob[2] an hallaloo, made up of almost as many squalls, screams, and other different sounds as there were persons, or indeed passions among them: some were inspired by rage, others alarmed by fear, and others had nothing in their heads but the love of fun; but chiefly Envy, the sister of Satan, and his constant companion, rushed among the crowd, and blew up the fury of the women; who no sooner came up to Molly than they pelted her with dirt and rubbish.

Molly, having endeavoured in vain to make a handsome retreat, faced about; and laying hold of ragged Bess, who advanced in the front of the enemy, she at one blow felled her to the ground. The whole army of the enemy (though near a hundred in number), seeing the fate of their general, gave back many paces, and retired behind a new-dug grave; for the churchyard was the field of battle, where there was to be a funeral that very evening. Molly pursued her victory, and catching up a skull which lay on the side of the grave, discharged it with such fury, that having hit a tailor on the head, the two skulls sent equally forth a hollow sound at their meeting, and the tailor took presently measure of his length on the ground[3], where the skulls lay side by side, and it was doubtful which was the more valuable of the two. Molly then taking a thigh-bone in her hand, fell in among the flying ranks, and dealing her blows with great liberality on either side, overthrew the carcass of many a mighty hero and heroine.

Recount, O Muse, the names of those who fell on this fatal day. First, Jemmy Tweedle felt on his hinder head the direful bone. Him the pleasant banks of sweetly-winding Stour[4] had nourished, where he first learnt the vocal

1 Ye Muses,...assist me on this great occasion: you Muses, whoever you are, whoever love to sing of battles, and especially you who in the past had given an account of the fierce battle between Hudibras and Trulla, if you had not used up your power in assistance to the work of your friend Butler, help me now in my account of the great fight between Molly and the villagers. Butler: Samuel Butler (1612–1680), a poet, author of a long satirical burlesque poem on Puritanism entitled *Hudibras*. The work was widely popular and spawned many imitators. Hudibras and Trulla: characters in *Hudibras*.

2 the Somersetshire mob: the people who are gathering against Molly.

3 took presently measure of his length on the ground: immediately fell flat on the ground.

4 Stour: name of a river.

art, with which, wandering up and down at wakes and fairs, he cheered the rural nymphs and swains, when upon the green they interweaved the sprightly dance; while he himself stood fiddling and jumping to his own music. How little now avails his fiddle! He thumps the verdant floor with his carcass. Next, old Echepole, the sow-gelder, received a blow in his forehead from our Amazonian heroine[1], and immediately fell to the ground. He was a swinging fat fellow, and fell with almost as much noise as a house. His tobacco-box dropped at the same time from his pocket, which Molly took up as lawful spoils. Then Kate of the Mill tumbled unfortunately over a tombstone, which catching hold of her ungartered stocking inverted the order of nature, and gave her heels the superiority to her head. Betty Pippin, with young Roger her lover, fell both to the ground; where, oh perverse fate, she salutes the earth, and he the sky.[2] Tom Freckle, the smith's son, was the next victim to her rage. He was an ingenious workman, and made excellent patterns[3]; nay, the very pattern with which he was knocked down was his own workmanship. Had he been at that time singing psalms in the church, he would have avoided a broken head. Miss Crow, the daughter of a farmer; John Giddish, himself a farmer; Nan Slouch, Esther Codling, Will Spray, Tom Bennet; the three Misses Potter, whose father keeps the sign of the Red Lion; Betty Chambermaid, Jack Ostler, and many others of inferior note, lay rolling among the graves.

Not that the strenuous arm of Molly reached all these; for many of them in their flight overthrew each other.

But now Fortune, fearing she had acted out of character, and had inclined too long to the same side, especially as it was the right side, hastily turned about: for now Goody Brown—whom Zekiel Brown caressed in his arms; nor he alone, but half the parish besides; so famous was she in the fields of Venus[4], nor indeed less in those of Mars[5]. The trophies of both these her husband always bore about on his head and face; for if ever human head did by its horns display the amorous glories of a wife, Zekiel's did; nor did his well-scratched

1 Amazonian heroine: referring to Molly as a strong, aggressive fighter. In Greek mythology, the Amazons were either an ancient legendary nation of female warriors or a land dominated by women at the outer edges of their known world.
2 she salutes the earth, and he the sky: she fell down on her belly, and he fell down on his back.
3 pattern: footwear with wooden soles.
4 in the fields of Venus: in conquering men. Venus: Goddess of Love in Roman mythology.
5 in those of Mars: in fighting. Mars: God of War in Roman mythology.

face less denote her talents (or rather talons) of a different kind.

No longer bore this Amazon the shameful flight of her party. She stopped short, and, calling aloud to all who fled, spoke as follows: "Ye Somersetshire men, or rather ye Somersetshire women, are ye not ashamed thus to fly from a single woman? But if no other will oppose her, I myself and Joan Top here will have the honour of the victory." Having thus said, she flew at Molly Seagrim, and easily wrenched the thigh-bone from her hand, at the same time clawing off her cap from her head. Then laying hold of the hair of Molly with her left hand, she attacked her so furiously in the face with the right, that the blood soon began to trickle from her nose. Molly was not idle this while. She soon removed the clout from the head of Goody Brown, and then fastening on her hair with one hand, with the other she caused another bloody stream to issue forth from the nostrils of the enemy.

When each of the combatants had borne off sufficient spoils of hair from the head of her antagonist, the next rage was against the garments. In this attack they exerted so much violence, that in a very few minutes they were both naked to the middle.

It is lucky for the women that the seat of fisticuff war[1] is not the same with them as among men; but though they may seem a little to deviate from their sex, when they go forth to battle, yet I have observed, they never so far forget, as to assail the bosoms of each other; where a few blows would be fatal to most of them. This, I know, some derive from their being of a more bloody inclination than the males. On which account they apply to the nose, as to the part whence blood may most easily be drawn; but this seems a far-fetched as well as ill-natured supposition.

Goody Brown had great advantage of Molly in this particular; for the former had indeed no breasts, her bosom (if it may be so called), as well in colour as in many other properties, exactly resembling an ancient piece of parchment, upon which any one might have drummed a considerable while without doing her any great damage.

Molly, beside her present unhappy condition, was differently formed in those parts, and might, perhaps, have tempted the envy of Brown to give her a fatal blow, had not the lucky arrival of Tom Jones at this instant put an immediate end to the bloody scene.

This accident was luckily owing to Mr. Square; for he, Master Blifil, and

1 fisticuff war: a fight in which the participants fight with fists.

Jones, had mounted their horses, after church, to take the air, and had ridden about a quarter of a mile, when Square, changing his mind (not idly, but for a reason which we shall unfold as soon as we have leisure), desired the young gentlemen to ride with him another way than they had at first purposed. This motion being complied with, brought them of necessity back again to the churchyard.

Master Blifil, who rode first, seeing such a mob assembled, and two women in the posture in which we left the combatants, stopped his horse to enquire what was the matter. A country fellow, scratching his head, answered him: "I don't know, master, un't I; an't please your honour, here hath been a vight[1], I think, between Goody Brown and Moll Seagrim."

"Who, who?" cries Tom; but without waiting for an answer, having discovered the features of his Molly through all the discomposure in which they now were, he hastily alighted, turned his horse loose, and, leaping over the wall, ran to her. She now first bursting into tears, told him how barbarously she had been treated. Upon which, forgetting the sex of Goody Brown, or perhaps not knowing it in his rage—for, in reality, she had no feminine appearance but a petticoat, which he might not observe—he gave her a lash or two with his horsewhip; and then flying at the mob, who were all accused by Moll, he dealt his blows so profusely on all sides, that unless I would again invoke the muse (which the good-natured reader may think a little too hard upon her, as she hath so lately been violently sweated), it would be impossible for me to recount the horse-whipping of that day.

Having scoured the whole coast of the enemy,[2] as well as any of Homer's heroes ever did, or as Don Quixote[3] or any knight-errant[4] in the world could have done, he returned to Molly, whom he found in a condition which must give both me and my reader pain, was it to be described here. Tom raved like a

1 vight: fight.
2 Having scoured the whole coast of the enemy: having completely defeated the enemy.
3 Don Quixote: hero in the novel by the Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616). The first part was published in 1605 and the second in 1615. The book tells the story of Don Quixote, a man who has read so many stories about brave errant knights that in a senile and confused state, he believes himself to be a knight and sets out to fight injustice in the name of his beloved maiden Dulcinea del Toboso. The adjective "quixotic", at present meaning "idealistic and impractical", derives from the protagonist's name.
4 knight-errant: a wandering knight travelling in search of adventure.

madman, beat his breast, tore his hair, stamped on the ground, and vowed the utmost vengeance on all who had been concerned. He then pulled off his coat, and buttoned it round her, put his hat upon her head, wiped the blood from her face as well as he could with his handkerchief, and called out to the servant to ride as fast as possible for a side-saddle, or a pillion, that he might carry her safe home.

Master Blifil objected to the sending away the servant, as they had only one with them; but as Square seconded the order of Jones, he was obliged to comply.

The servant returned in a very short time with the pillion, and Molly, having collected her rags as well as she could, was placed behind him. In which manner she was carried home, Square, Blifil, and Jones attending.

Here Jones having received his coat, given her a sly kiss, and whispered her, that he would return in the evening, quitted his Molly, and rode on after his companions.

Critical Points

Tom Jones: Literary Sources and Structure

Fielding is generally considered to be an innovating master of high originality. He himself believed he was "the founder of a new province of writing". In breaking away from the epistolary method of his contemporaries, Fielding devised what he described as "comic epics in prose", and *Tom Jones* may be characterised as the first modern novel in English.

His art of fiction writing is best embodied in his great work *Tom Jones*. In his writting of the novel, Fielding draws on a variety of literary sources. It is a picaresque narrative, showing a dispossessed young man's peregrinations around the country, accompanied by a faithful servant who acts as character-foil to him. The French and English medieval and Elizabethan romance is also used in the novel, embodied in the use of the idea of a journey, and a love plot dominated by the aristocratic character, involving a conflict between passion and duty.

The novel is well organised in spite of its great length. Firstly, Fielding exploits the birth-mystery of Tom to counteract the effect of episodicity. Secondly, he uses many characters in more than one role to advance an ethos and illustrate a scheme of moral taxonomy. Fielding also takes the

opportunity at the beginning of each book to discourse on some general moral or social issue, and then proceeds to a narrative situation in which the issue is concretised. Samuel Coleridge admired the book's plot as one of the three most perfect in literature.

Questions

1 Fielding dramatises a village quarrel in the grand epic style in Chapter IV. What effect does the author achieve?
2 Do some research on the definition of what Fielding himself described as "comic epics in prose", and cite examples from the selected text to summarise some of the features of the term.

Class Activities

Work with your class mates:

Retell the story to each other of the village quarrel scene using your own words, and rewrite the scene in a non-epic narrative.

QUOTATIONS

The prudence of the best heads is often defeated by the tenderness of the best of hearts.

—Henry Fielding

Without adversity a person hardly knows whether they are honest or not.

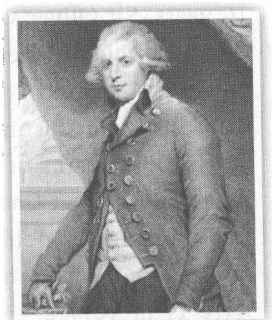
—Henry Fielding

Unit 18

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816)

Richard Brinsley Sheridan *was an Irish playwright and Whig statesman.*

Life and Writing


Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Sheridan was born in Dublin in 1751. His father was an actor and a manager, and his mother was a writer.

At the age of 11 Sheridan was sent to Harrow School, and left at the age of 17. He was then placed under the care of a tutor. His father trained him in daily elocution, and put him through a course of English reading. He also had fencing and riding lessons.

Sheridan went to London to write for the stage. His first comedy, *The Rivals* (1775), has gone on to become a standard of English literature. Having quickly made his name and fortune, Sheridan bought a share in Drury Lane in June 1776. His most famous play *The School for Scandal* was written in 1776 and first performed the next year, followed by *The Critic* (1779), an updating of the satirical Restoration play. The only dramatic composition during the remaining years of his life was *Pizarro*, a tragedy produced in 1799.

A well-established dramatist, Sheridan was also a Whig politician. He entered the Parliament in 1780, and remained a member until 1812, when he failed to secure a seat. His last years were harassed by debt and disappointment. Sheridan died in poverty, and was buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

The School for Scandal

The School for Scandal is universally recognised as Sheridan's masterpiece, and one of the greatest comedies of manners in English.

Plot Summary

Sir Peter Teazle's ward Maria is courted by two brothers Joseph and Charles Surface. Lady Sneerwell, a malicious gossip and founder of the School for Scandal, wants to marry Charles and spreads false rumours about an affair between Charles and Lady Teazle in an attempt to make Maria reject Charles. Meanwhile, Joseph is attempting to seduce Lady Teazle in order to win her favour, and thus the favour of Sir Peter, which will serve his interests with Maria.

The brothers have a rich uncle, Sir Oliver, whom they have not seen for 16 years. Sir Oliver visits them both incognito to test their characters before deciding which of them shall inherit his fortune. At first shocked by Charles' profligacy, he prefers the charming younger brother; but gradually he discovers that Joseph is a sanctimonious hypocrite and he chooses Charles.

Sir Peter learns of the plotting between Joseph and Lady Sneerwell, that the rumours about Charles and Lady Teazle are deliberately made up, and that his wife is merely a victim of Joseph's flattery. He therefore reconciles with his wife, and decides that Charles deserves to marry Maria. Lady Teazle, who has had a narrow escape from ruin, delivers an epilogue warning of the dangers of scandal-making.

A play-scene from *The School for Scandal*

Act I

Scene I Lady Sneerwell's[1] *Dressing-room.*

Lady Sneerwell *discovered at her toilet*; Snake *drinking chocolate.*

Lady Sneer. The paragraphs[2], you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted[3]?

Snake. They were, madam; and, as I copied them myself in a feigned hand[4], there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue[5] with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train[6] as your ladyship could wish. In the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done[7].

Lady Sneer. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge, she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons being disinherited; of four forced elopements, and as many close confinements; nine separate maintenances[8], and two divorces. Nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-à-tête*[9] in the "Town and Country Magazine", when the parties, perhaps, had never seen each other's face before in the course of their lives.

Lady Sneer. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake. 'Tis very true. She generally designs well, has a free tongue and a bold invention; but her colouring is too dark[10], and her outlines often

1 Lady Sneerwell: the names of most characters in the comic satire reveal the qualities of the characters.
2 the paragraphs: here refer to the paragraphs of scandals.
3 inserted: put into (the newspaper).
4 feigned hand: counterfeited handwriting.
5 intrigue: secret affair.
6 in as fine a train: in as good order or arrangement.
7 as good as done: practically accomplished.
8 separate maintenances: the husband and wife live separately, the livelihood of the wife being maintained by the husband.
9 a *tête-à-tête*: [*French*] a private, face to face interview.
10 her colouring is too dark: that she exaggerates too much.

extravagant[1]. She wants that delicacy of tint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguish your ladyship's scandal.

Lady Sneer. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least; everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look than many can with the most laboured detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own reputation.

Snake. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneer. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbour, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

Snake. I do. Here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian[2] since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of—the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character: the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a City Knight[3], with a good jointure[4], should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneer. Then, at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that

1 her outlines often extravagant: her sketches exceed normal limits.
2 to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian: besides taking Maria as his ward, Sir Peter also acts as the guardian of Joseph and Charles Surface during their uncle's absence.
3 a City Knight: a merchant in the City of London who was conferred the title of knight.
4 jointure: a sole estate limited to the wife, to take effect upon the death of her husband, for her own life at least.

love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No!

Lady Sneer. His real attachment is to Maria or her fortune; but, finding in his brother a favoured rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

Lady Sneer. Heavens! How dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles—that libertine[1], that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation—that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

Snake. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent; but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

Lady Sneer. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious—in short, a sentimental knave[2]; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England; and, above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Lady Sneer. True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house—though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our scheme.

[*Enter* Servant.]

Ser. Mr. Surface.

Lady Sneer. Show him up.—[*Exit* Servant.] He generally calls about this time. I don't wonder at people giving him to me for a lover.

[*Enter* Joseph Surface.]

Jos. Surface. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do today? Mr. Snake,

1 libertine: a person who lives an immoral or irresponsible life.
2 a knave: a dishonest and unprincipled man.

your most obedient.

Lady Sneer. Snake has just been rallying[1] me on our mutual attachment; but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us; and, believe me, the confidence is not ill-placed.

Jos. Surf. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria—or, what is more material[2] to me, your brother.

Jos. Surf. I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneer. Ah, my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you. But do your brother's distresses increase?

Jos. Surf. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

Lady Sneer. Poor Charles!

Jos. Surf. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves—

Lady Sneer. O Lud![3] you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

Jos. Surf. Egad,[4] that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter. However, it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming: I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

Jos. Surf. Sir, your very devoted.—[*Exit* Snake.] Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any farther confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneer. Why so?

1 rallying: teasing, ridiculing.
2 material: important.
3 Lud: God!
4 Egad: By God.

Jos Surf. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Jos. Surf. Nothing more likely: take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy[1]. Ah, Maria!

[*Enter* Maria.]

Lady Sneer. Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Mar. Oh! there's that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's, with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out, and ran hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneer. Is that all?

Jos. Surf. If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

Lady Sneer. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard you were here. But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you should avoid him so?

Mar. Oh, he has done nothing—but 'tis for what he has said: his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Jos. Surf. Ay, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him; for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend: and his uncle's as bad.

Lady Sneer. Nay, but we should make allowance[2]; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Mar. For my part, I own, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest[3] which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief[4].

Lady Sneer. Psha! There's no possibility of being witty without a little ill-nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick.

1 that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy: he is so wicked and so undependable that he would even betray himself in his own villainous deeds.
2 make allowance: to be lenient , to be object.
3 the jest: jeering remark with the intention to harm.
4 a principal in the mischief: a person directly responsible for the harm.

What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. To be sure, madam; that conversation, where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

Mar. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalship, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce[1] one.

[*Re-enter* Servant.]

Ser. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and, if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

Lady Sneer. Beg her to walk in.—[*Exit* Servant.] Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste; for, though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best-natured and best sort of woman.

Mar. Yes, with a very gross affectation[2] of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Jos. Surf. I'faith[3] that's true, Lady Sneerwell: whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneer. Hush!—Here she is!

[*Enter Mrs.* Candour.]

Mrs. Can. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century?—Mr. Surface, what news do you hear?—Though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

Jos. Surf. Just so, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Oh, Maria! Child,—what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

Mar. I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.

Mrs. Can. True, true, child: but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

Mar. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

Mrs. Can. Very true, child; but what's to be done? People will talk—there's no

1 traduce: slander.
2 a very gross affectation: outrageously putting on manners that are not one's own.
3 I'faith: in faith; indeed.

preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout[1] had eloped with Sir Filagree Flirt. But, Lord! There's no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

Mar. Such reports are highly scandalous.

Mrs. Can. So they are, child—shameful, shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim[2] of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill-nature of people, that they say her uncle stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York mail with her dancing-master.

Mar. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for that report.

Mrs. Can. Ah, no foundation in the world, I dare swear: no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's[3] affair with Colonel Cassino—though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

Jos. Surf. The license of invention[4] some people take is monstrous indeed.

Mar. 'Tis so; but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

Mrs. Can. To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—'tis an old observation, and a very true one: but what's to be done, as I said before? How will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackitt assured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy[5] and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed, that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame[6]; and that Sir Harry Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords[7] on a similar provocation. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things! No, no! Tale-bearers, as I said before, are just as

1 Gadabout: go about, meaning one who easily changes one's mind.
2 Prim: easily shocked by something rude.
3 Festino: [*Italian*] festival.
4 license of invention: the literary taken in inventing scandals.
5 had got rid of her dropsy: the implied meaning is that the widow must have had an abortion.
6 a house of no extraordinary fame: a place of bad reputation.
7 to measure swords: to be engaged in a dual.

bad as the tale-makers.

Jos. Surf. Ah! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good nature!

Mrs. Can. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance I own I always love to think the best. By-the-by, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined.

Jos. Surf. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Ah! I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits; everybody almost is in the same way: Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit—all up, I hear, within this week; so, if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

Jos. Surf. Doubtless, ma'am—a very great one.

[*Re-enter* Servant.]

Ser. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite.

[*Exit.*]

Lady Sneer. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you; positively you shan't escape.

[*Enter* Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite.]

Crab. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad, ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too. Isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

Sir Ben. Oh, fie, uncle!

Crab. Nay, egad it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade[1] against the best rhymer in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's[2] feather catching fire?—Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore[3] at Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione[4]. Come now; your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and—

Sir Ben. Uncle, now—prythee[5]—

1 a charade: a parlor game in which words to be guessed are acted in pantomine.
2 Frizzle: the word means fry, scorch.
3 extempore: without time for preparation.
4 conversazione: [*Italian*] a social gathering.
5 prythee: I beg you.

Crab. I'faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear now ready he is at all these sorts of things.

Lady Sneer. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

Sir Ben. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and, as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons[1] on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies, which, when favoured with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public.

[*Pointing to* Maria.]

Crab. [*To* Maria.] 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalize you!—You will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa[2].

Sir Ben. [*To* Maria.] Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page[3], where a neat rivulet of text[4] shall meander through a meadow of margin. Fore Gad, they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

Crab. But, ladies, that's true—have you heard the news?

Mrs. Can. What, sir, do you mean the report of—

Crab. No, ma'am, that's not it.—Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Can. Impossible!

Crab. Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. 'Tis very true, ma'am: everything is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.[5]

Crab. Yes—and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

Lady Sneer. Why, I have heard something of this before.

Mrs. Can. It can't be—and I wonder any one should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir Ben. O Lud! Ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved, that everybody was

1 lampoons: a piece of writing that attacks a person with ridicule.
2 like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa: Petrarch (1304-1374), an Italian poet, who wrote many sonnets to his lover Laura; Edmund Waller (1608-1687), a 17th century poet, who wrote many poems to Lady Dorothy Sidney, whom he celebrated as "Sacharissa".
3 quarto page: the size of a book or page given by folding a sheet of standard size twice to form four leaves.
4 rivulet of text: the text of the poem runs like a small stream on the page.
5 liveries: distinctive uniforms worn by male servants in a great household. bespoke: ordered.

sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Can. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent[1] lady of her stamp[2] as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny sickly reputation, that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes[3].

Sir Ben. True, madam, there are valetudinarians[4] in reputation as well as constitution, who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina[5] by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Can. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crab. That they do, I'll be sworn ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge[6]?—Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir Ben. Oh, to be sure!—the most whimsical circumstance.

Lady Sneer. How was it, pray?

Crab. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, I have known instances of it; for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia[7] sheep that produced her twins. "What!" cries the Lady Dowager Dundizzy (who you know is as deaf as a post). "Has Miss Piper had twins?" This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas the next morning everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of[8] a fine boy and girl: and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father, and the farm-house where the babies were put to

1 prudent: sensible and wise.
2 of her stamp: of her kind.
3 prudes: a person of extreme or exaggerated propriety concerning behaviour or speech, one who is easily shocked by sexual matters.
4 valetudinarians: sickly persons.
5 want of stamina: lack of strength or staying power.
6 Tunbridge: a hot spring near London.
7 Nova Scotia: New Scotland, in the east of Canada.
8 had acturally been brought to bed of: had given birth to.

nurse.

Lady Sneer. Strange, indeed!

Crab. Matter of fact, I assure you. O Lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

Jos. Surf. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

Crab. He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe? Sad comfort, whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

Jos. Surf. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

Sir Ben. To be sure he may; for my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say; and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

Crab. That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry[1] was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman: no man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine;[2] and that, whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

Sir Ben. Yet no man lives in greater splendour. They tell me, when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities; have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jos. Surf. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Mar. [*Aside.*] Their malice is intolerable!—[*Aloud.*] Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning: I'm not very well.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Can. O dear! She changes colour very much.

Lady Sneer. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her; she may want your assistance.

Mrs. Can. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am.—Poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be!

[*Exit.*]

1 the Old Jewry: the living quarters of the Jews in London.
2 annuities: sums of money payable yearly; tontine: a financial scheme by which the subscribers to a loan or common fund receive each an annuity during his life, which increases as the number is diminished by death, till the last survivor enjoys that whole income.

Lady Sneer. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Ben. The young lady's *penchant*[1] is obvious.

Crab. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that: follow her, and put her into good humour. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

Sir Ben. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but depend on't[2] your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. O Lud, ay! Undone as ever man was—can't raise a guinea.

Sir Ben. And everything sold, I'm told, that was movable.

Crab. I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscots[3].

Sir Ben. And I'm very sorry also to hear some bad stories against him.

[*Going.*]

Crab. Oh, he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Ben. But, however, as he's your brother—

[*Going.*]

Crab. We'll tell you all another opportunity.

[*Exeunt* Crabtree and Sir Benjamin.]

Lady Sneer. Ha, ha! 'Tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Jos. Surf. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than to Maria.

Lady Sneer. I doubt her affections are further engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing further; in the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiment.

[*Exeunt.*]

1 penchant: inclination.
2 depend on't: it's certain.
3 the wainscot: the wooden panel on the wall.

Questions

1 As is common in a comic satire, the names of most characters in the play reveal the qualities of the characters. Give character analyses on the persons who appeared in this scene, connecting the personal qualities with the names of the characters.

2 The perspective of the author is an interesting topic in literary criticism. How do you interpret Sheridan's attitude towards his characters? What is the tone of the play in dealing with the conflicts?

Class Activities

Form into four different groups to discuss the main characters based on their dialogues and motives. Each group centralises on one of the characters: Lady Sneerwell, Mr. Snake, Joseph Surface or Sir Benjamin Backbite.

QUOTATIONS

Won't you come into the garden? I would like my roses to see you.

—Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Easy writing's curse is hard reading.

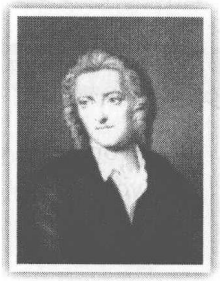
—Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Unit 19

Thomas Gray (1716-1771)

Thomas Gray *was a poet, classical scholar and professor of Cambridge University.*

Life and Writing


Thomas Gray

Gray was born in London, and was educated at Eton and Peterhouse, Cambridge. In 1739 he began a grand tour to the Continent with a friend, and returned to England in 1741. He continued his studies at Cambridge, and he remained there as a scholar for most of his life, living in seclusion, studying Greek, and writing. He was offered the laureateship in 1757 but he refused it. In 1768 he was made professor of history and modern languages.

After years of revision Gray finished his great poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751). It was first sketched in the churchyard of Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, where he stayed for a short time on his return from the Continent. He finished it eight years later. The poem was recognised immediately for its beauty and skill, and has become one of the best-known poems about death.

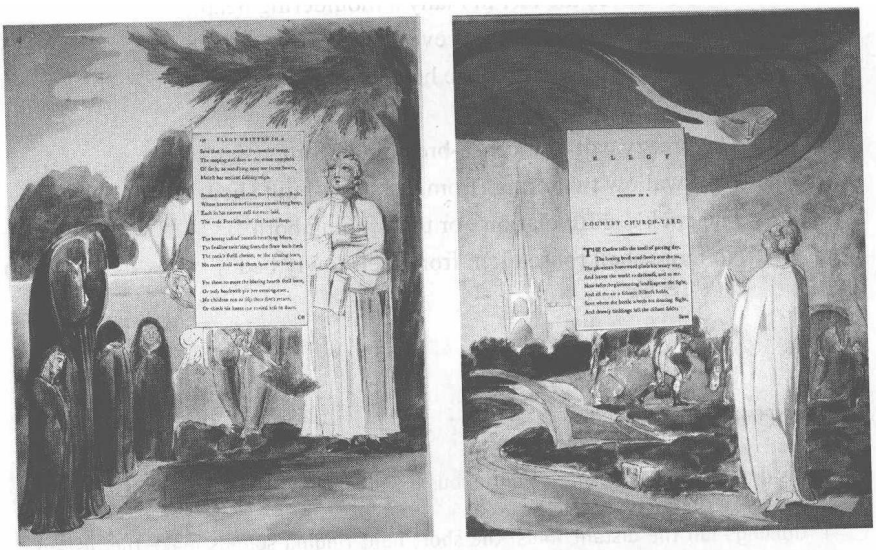
Gray did not write a large amount of poetry. His collected works published during his lifetime amount to less than 1,000 lines. Much of his verse is tinged with melancholy, and even more of it reflects his extensive learning.

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

An elegy is a poem which laments the dead. In the first stanza, the poet observes the signs of a country day drawing to a close. He is then left alone to contemplate the isolated rural scene. The first line of the poem sets a distinctly sombre tone: the curfew bell does not simply ring; it "knells", at a death or funeral. From the beginning, the poet is meditating on the nature of human mortality.

The poem invokes the classical idea of *memento mori*, a Latin phrase "remember that you must die". The speaker considers the fact that in death, there is no difference between the great and the common. He goes on to wonder if among the lowly people buried in the churchyard there had been any natural poets or politicians whose talent had simply never been discovered or nurtured. This thought leads him to praise the dead for the honest, simple lives that they had lived.

The poem is written in iambic pentameter and the rhyming scheme is *abab*.



Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard", in William Blake's *Water-colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray*. The year when Gray died, William Blake was an engraving apprentice. In 1797, Blake turned to Gray's Elegy.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea[1],
The plowman homeward plods[2] his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight[3],
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds[4];

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower[5]
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower[6],
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude[7] forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering[8] from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion[9], or the echoing horn[10],
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed[11].

1 lea: field of grass.
2 plod: walk heavily and firmly.
3 his droning flight: making a continuous low dull sound during its flight. droning: noisy like the sound of a bee.
4 tinklings lull the distant folds: the short light ringing sounds make the distant creatures calm down. folds: enclosures for sheep.
5 yonder ivy-mantled tower: the further tower of the church covered with ivy leaves.
6 bower: an enclosure formed by the ivy.
7 rude: untaught.
8 twittering: making high-pitched sounds.
9 clarion: wakeup call.
10 horn: hunter's horns.
11 lowly bed: grave.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:[1]
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe[2] has broke:
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys[3], and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry[4], the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth ever gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to These the fault[5],
If Memory o'er their Tomb no Trophies[6] raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault[7]
The pealing anthem[8] swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust[9]
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath[10]?

1 ply her evening care: be busy with her housework in the evening.
2 glebe: soil.
3 homely joys: simple and plain joy.
4 heraldry: noble birth.
5 impute to These the fault: put the blame for these poor village people.
6 Trophies: something given as a token of victory or success, here depicting the achievements of the dead.
7 fretted vault: the arched ceiling adorned with decorative patterns.
8 pealing anthem: loud sustained song of praise to God.
9 animated bust: lifelike statue of the dead person's head and shoulders.
10 the fleeting breath: the short life of the dead.

Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire[1];
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,[2]
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time[3] did never unroll;
Chill penury[4] repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed[5] caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden[6] that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton[7] here may rest,
Some Cromwell[8] guiltless of his country's blood.

1 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire: some people might have filled with heavenly passions.
2 Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed: some might have had authority over the empire.
3 Rich with the spoils of time: rich with knowledge accumulated through time.
4 chill penury: cold poverty.
5 unfathomed: immeasurable.
6 village Hampden: John Hampden (1595-1643), an English politician, who is seen as the central figure at the beginning of the English Revolution. Hampden's fame is owing to the position which he took up as the opponent of ship money (tax), the levy of which by Charles I of England without the consent of Parliament was one of the causes of the English Civil War.
7 Some mute inglorious Milton: among the dead there might be someone who had the talent of Milton, but they were silent and not glorious because they can not read and write.
8 Cromwell: Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), an English military and political leader, best known for leading the 1640 Revolution.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty over[1] a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes[2],

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed[3] alone
Their glowing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide[4],
To quench[5] the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.[6]

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble[7] strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life[8]
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,

1 scatter plenty over: give out money to.
2 read their history in a nation's eyes: the whole nation would read their life history.
3 circumscribed: restricted; confined.
4 The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide: the dead did not have to hide the truth, which must be suffering pains of inner struggling, or suppress their sense of shame.
5 quench: suppress, or put out completely.
6 heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride/With incense kindled at the Muse's flame: flatter the rich and important people with poetry.
7 ignoble: completely lacking nobility in character or quality or purpose.
8 the cool sequestered vale of life: their secluded life. sequestered: separated; secluded; isolated.

Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.[1]

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse[2],
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text[3] around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die[4].

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being[5] ever resigned,
Left the warm precincts[6] of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,[7]
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Even in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.

For thee[8], who, mindful of the unhonoured dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply[9] some hoary-headed Swain[10] may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn

1 Yet even thee bones...sigh: even these humble people have tombstones decorated with the words of an amateur poet and the pictures of an amateur sculptor. nigh: near; uncouth: clumsy, awkward; decked: adorned; the passing tribute: the respect by passers-by.
2 unlettered muse: uneducated poet.
3 holy text: quotations from the Bible.
4 teach the rustic moralist to die: teach the village people who had a moral life how to die.
5 This pleasing anxious being: this life of both pleasure and anxiety.
6 precincts: areas; boundaries.
7 On some fond breast the parting soul relies: the dead wanted to be remembered by some affectionate person.
8 thee: referring to Gray himself.
9 Haply: by chance.
10 Swain: (*archaic*) a country youth.

Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.[1]

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes[2] its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length[3] at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon[4] the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed[5] in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his favourite tree;
Another[6] came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges[7] due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH[8].

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,

1 Here Gray begins to speculate about how people would assess him after his death.
2 wreathes: circles around.
3 listless length: body.
4 pore upon: look upon; gaze upon.
5 crossed: frustrated.
6 another: another day.
7 dirge: a song or hymn of mourning composed or performed as a memorial to a dead person.
8 epitaph: an inscription on a tombstone or monument in memory of the person buried there. The epitaph here is that Gray wrote for himself.

And Melancholy marked him for her own. 120

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

No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode[1],
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

Critical Points

"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard": Comments and Significance

Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" has received extensive critical attention since its publication. Critics have long recognised the poem for its restrained and dignified expression of simple truths. In *Lives of the English Poets*, Samuel Johnson praised the poem for its universal appeal and its originality: "The 'Churchyard' abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo are to me original."

The poem was written at the end of the Neoclassical age and at the beginning of the Romantic period, and thus has characteristics associated with both literary periods. It has the ordered, balanced phrasing and rational sentiments of Neoclassical poetry, and it tends towards the emotionalism and individualism of the Romantic poets as well. Most importantly, it idealises and elevates the common people.

Gray combines traditional forms and poetic diction with new topics and modes of expression in this poem, and may be considered as a classically focused precursor of the Romantic revival.

1 abode: living place.

Questions

1 Line 36 "The paths of glory lead but to the grave" is most quoted and most discussed to illustrate the theme of the poem. How does the poem develop this theme?
2 Do you think the speaker of this poem is sentimentalising the forgotten people in the country churchyard, or giving them the recognition they deserve?
3 How often does he return from his reflections on the churchyard? What is the effect secured by these returns?

Class Activities

Writing Practice:

Visit a cemetery near you, pick the tombstone of a person that you do not know, and write a page about what that person might have been like, focusing on the social changes that the person may have experienced.

What does the length of that person's life tell you? What can you tell from where they are buried?

QUOTATIONS

Poetry is thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
—Thomas Gray

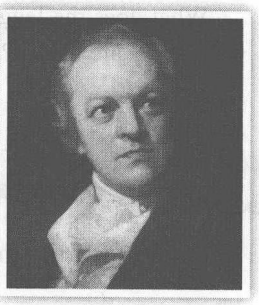
Youth smiles without any reason. It is one of its chiefest charms.
—Thomas Gray

Unit 20

William Blake (1757-1827)

William Blake *was a pioneer of the Romantic poets. His best-known poems are collected in two collections,* Songs of Innocence *(1789) and* Songs of Experience *(1794). Blake called his "spiritual life" varied, free, and dramatic while his "corporeal life" was simple, limited, and unadventurous.*

Life and Writing


William Blake

Blake was the third son of a London hosier. He did not go to school until the age of 10, learning drawing, and then he became a student at the Royal Academy of Arts. He was apprenticed at 14 to James Basire, a well-known engraver and member to the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Society. From 1779 he worked as an engraver for a bookseller. In 1782 Blake got married. His wife was then illiterate, but Blake taught her to read and to help him in his engraving and printing. They had no child.

Blake was an earnest reader in his spare time, and began to write poetry very early. His early works included *Poetical Sketches* (1783), *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and *The Book of Thel* (1791). These works showed himself to be at odds with the dominant poetic tradition of the 18th century. In his revolutionary works *The French Revolution* (1791), *America: A Prophecy* (1793), and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), he developed his attitude of revolt against authority, combining political fervour and visionary ecstasy. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793) is his principal prose work, a book of paradoxical aphorisms.

By adding supplementary poems to *Songs of Innocence*, Blake printed *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* in 1794. These two collections

reflect what he calls "two contrary states of the human soul". His later "prophetic" poems, *Four Zoas, Milton* and *Jerusalem*, were created in the spirit of the Biblical prophets during 1802-1820, a proof of his declaration that "all he knew was in the Bible" and that "The Old and New Testaments are the Great Code of Art".

Blake lived a life of isolation and poverty in most of his lifetime. He followed his "divine vision" in writing poems. He claimed that he actually saw the angels and strange figures which he portrayed and engraved.

Blake printed most of his books of poems by himself with relief etching, a method he called "illuminated printing". His engravings enrich the meaning of his poetry and are as valuable as his poetry. In his 60s Blake devoted himself to pictorial art. He produced hundreds of paintings and engravings, the famous ones including a representation of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and a series of illustrations of Dante, on which he worked hard until his death. William Blake died at home on 12 August 1827. Unable to pay for a funeral, Blake was buried in an unmarked grave in the Non-Conformist Bunhill Fields in London where his wife was buried four years later among other notable figures of dissent like Daniel Defoe and John Bunyan. A grave marker now stands near to where they were buried.

I must create a system, or be enslav'd by another man's.
I will not reason and compare: my business is to create.
—Jerusalem

In 1957 a memorial to Blake and his wife was erected in Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey, London.

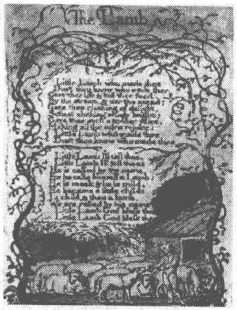
From *Songs of Innocence*, 1789

The Lamb[1]

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,

1 The lamb here is the symbol of peace and purity. One interpretation of the lamb in the poem is meant to represent Jesus as a gentle, peaceful man, as in many of Blake's works.

By the stream, and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?



Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek and he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee.
Little Lamb, God bless thee.

The Chimney Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry " 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"[1]
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd: so I said
"Hush, Tom! Never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned or Jack.
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

1 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep: which is sound of the chimney sweeper's street cry.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins and set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the Sun.

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

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

Holy Thursday[1]

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
Came children walking two and two, in read and blue and green,
Grey headed beadles[2] walked before, with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames waters flow.
Oh what a multitude they seemed, these flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit, with radiance all their own.
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged man, wise guardians of the poor;
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door[3].

1 In the Anglican Church, the Thursday sees celebration of the ascension of Jesus, which is 39 days after Easter. It was a custom on this day to march the poor (often orphaned) children from the charity schools of London to a service at St. Paul's Cathedral.
2 beadles: lower church officers appointed to serve as usher and to keep order.
3 drive an angel from your door: cf. Hebrews 13.2: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

From *Songs of Experience*, 1794

Holy Thursday

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand[1]?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are fill'd with thorns:
It is eternal winter there.

For where-e'er the sun does shine,
And where-e'er the rain does fall,
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appall.[2]

The Chimney Sweeper

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying "'weep!'weep!" in notes of woe!
"Where are thy father and mother? say?"
"They are both gone up to the church to pray.

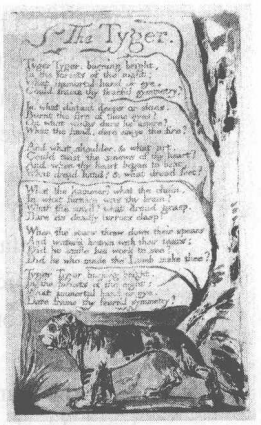
"Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil'd among the winter's snow:
They clothed me in the clothes of death[3],

1 usurous hand: the hand of an usurer who lends money, especially at exorbitant interest rate.
2 The last stanza pictures an ideal world where there is plenty of sunshine and rainfall and the babies will never feel hungry and their minds will never be threatened by fear.
3 the clothes of death: in black.

And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

"And because I am happy, and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury:
And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King
Who make up a heaven of our misery."

The Tyger



Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry[1]?

In what distant deeps[2] or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews[3] of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil[4]? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?
When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,[5]
Did he smile his work to see?

1 thy fearful symmetry: the well-proportioned body of the tiger that arouses fear.
2 deeps: seas.
3 sinews: muscles; tendons.
4 the anvil: iron block on which a blacksmith shapes heated metal by hammering it.
5 When the stars...with their tears: when the blacksmith waved the hammer on the red-hot iron, the fire sparkles like shooting stars in all directions which are often called angels' tears by children. But the phrase "threw down" is ambiguous and may signify that the stars either "surrendered" or "hurled down" their spears.

Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

London

I wandered through each chartered street[1],
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles[2] I hear.

How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackening[3] church appalls;
And the hapless[4] soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace walls.
But most, through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot's curse
Blasts[5] the new-born infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the marriage-hearse[6].

1 chartered street: a street which is given liberty but also ironically preempted as private property, and rented out.
2 the mind-forged manacles: restraints forged for the mind.
3 blackening: the wall of the church was blackened by the smoke.
4 hapless: unlucky.
5 blasts: ruins, destroys.
6 blights with plagues the marriage-hearse: spoil the marriage hearse with decease. hearse: the vehicle for carrying a coffin in a funeral. In Blake's time, there were a great number of prostitutes wandering in the street of London who spread venereal disease to men and through men to their wives, thus destroyed the marriage.

Critical Points

Songs of Innocence and *Songs of Experience*: Contrast and Progress

Songs of Innocence expresses the poet's delight in life, even in the face of sorrow and suffering. These poems praise the beauty of nature and the innocence of the child, with a language which a child loves to hear and can learn by heart. Here, nature is in pious harmony as symbolised in his poem "The Lamb".

Songs of Experience, created five years later, is that of poems in which the atmosphere is sad and gloomy. The poet drew pictures of poverty and distress, and showed the sufferings of the miserable. In the sorrow tone of these poems, there is a voice of anger, a wish for freedom, and a passion for liberty and revolution.

Many poems in the two collections contradict each other. There are poems that bear the same title, but contradict in their meanings. The Chimney Sweeper in *Songs of Innocence* forgets his misery because God comes to him and promises him that he'd have God as his father and never want joy. In *Songs of Experience*, the Chimney Sweeper curses at God and priests and king "who made up a heaven of our misery". Those that have different titles also have their counterparts. For instance, the Lamb in *Songs of Innocence* has become the Tiger in *Songs of Experience*.

The contrast between the two books marks a progress in the poet's outlook of life: the former presents a world of light, peace and harmony, and the latter reflects darker side of its main themes.

Questions

"The Lamb"

What is your interpretation of the image of the lamb? According the poet, who made the lamb? What is the relationship between the lamb and the maker?

"The Tyger"

What is the central metaphor the poet uses to describe the tyger's maker?

In what ways is the tyger different from the lamb? How do you understand the differences if they have the same maker?

"London"

Who are the people of London described in the poem? What do they have in common? What metaphors and images does the poet use to illustrate the theme of the poem?

Class Activities

Writing Practice:

Write two essays or poems on the same topic, expressing different views or mood.

QUOTATIONS

To me this world is all one continued vision of fancy or imagination, and I feel flattered when I am told so. What is it sets Homer, Virgil and Milton in so high a rank of art? Why is the Bible more entertaining and instructive than any other book? Is it not because they are addressed to the imagination, which is spiritual sensation, and but immediately to the understanding or reason?

—William Blake

What is now proved was only once imagined.

—William Blake

Unit 21

Robert Burns (1759-1796)

Robert Burns *was a Romantic poet in the late 18th century, and the best known of the poets who have written in the Scottish language.*

Life and Writing

Robert Burns

Burns was the eldest of the seven children born to a cotter. His mother introduced him to Scottish folk songs, legends and proverbs when he was a child. At various schools Burns was given a thorough grounding in English, including classic authors from Shakespeare onwards, and a knowledge of French and mathematics. He read voraciously for himself, and began to write occasional verses when he was still at school. In his spare time he helped his father with heavy farm work. The experience of poverty and injustice as a youth increased his belief in the equality of men, and he became an ardent supporter in the early days of the French Revolution.

When his father died in 1784, he and his brother continued to farm at Mossgiel, which is often mentioned in his poems during this period, including "The Cotter's Saturday Night", "To a Mouse", "To a Mountain Daisy", "Holy Willie's Prayer", and many others. He was much influenced at this time by a novel *The Man of Feeling*, a book he loved "next to the Bible".

He wrote prolifically, but never thought of publishing them until 1786 when he needed money to emigrate to Jamaica because of both financial and domestic problems. He sent his poems to a publisher; his first book, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, thus appeared. It contains poems depicting Scottish rural life with tender compassion and good humour. The poems were so well received that he immediately became a national celebrity. He gave up the plan to go to Jamaica

and was accepted by the literary and aristocratic society of Edinburgh.

Burns worked for his last 10 years on projects to preserve traditional Scottish songs for the future; at the same time, he continued to write and publish his own works. Burns helped to preserve over 300 songs, which include many of his best-known lyrics, such as "Auld Lang Syne", "A Red, Red Rose", and the battle song "Scots Wha Hae".

In 1788 Burns married Jean Armour. He still worked on farm, and took the duties of an exciseman. In 1791 he gave up his farm. Burns' health began to give way. He died of his long-standing rheumatic heart condition at the age of 37. On the day of his burial, more than 10,000 people came to mourn and express their respect.

Robert Burns is now regarded as the national poet of Scotland. Burns' Night, effectively a second national day, is celebrated on every January 25, and is still more widely observed than the official national day.

Scots, Wha Hae

"Scots, Wha Hae" is a calque on the English "Scots Who Have"; the traditional Scots idiom would be "Scots That Haes". Robert Burns wrote the lyric in 1793, in the form of a speech given by Robert the Bruce before the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, where Scotland maintained its independence from England.

Burns sent the lyric to his publisher at the end of August 1793, with the title "Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn", and a postscript saying that he had been inspired by Bruce's "glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient". This is a patriotic song of Scotland which served for a long time as an unofficial national anthem of the country.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace[1] bled,
Scots, wham Bruce[2] has aften led,

1 Wallace: Sir William Wallace (c.1270–1305) was a knight and Scottish patriot, who led a resistance to the English occupation of Scotland during significant periods of the Wars of Scottish Independence. wi': with.
2 Bruce: usually known in modern English as Robert the Bruce, was King of Scotland (1306–1329). He was one of Scotland's greatest kings, as well as one of the most famous warriors of his generation, eventually leading Scotland during the Wars of Scottish Independence against England.

Welcome to your gory bed[1]
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour:
See the front o' battle lour[2],
See approach proud Edward's power[3]
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha will fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?[4]
Let him turn, and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,[5]
We will drain our dearest veins[6]
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!

1 gory bed: bloody bed.
2 the front o' battle lour: the front of battle field looks dark and threatening.
3 Edward's power: Edward II (1284–1327) was King of England from 1307 until deposed in 1327. During his reign, Robert the Bruce was steadily re-taking Scotland. His progress was so great that he had occupied all the fortresses save Stirling, which he besieged. In June 1314 Edward led a huge army into Scotland in the hope of relieving Stirling, but his ill-disciplined and poorly led force was completely defeated by Bruce at the Battle of Bannockburn. Henceforth Bruce was sure of his position as King of Scots.
4 Wha sae base as be a slave: who is so base as to be a slave?
5 By oppression's woes and pains,/By your sons in servile chains: (we swear) by the miseries and sufferings of the oppressed, and by your sons who are fettered in chains like slaves.
6 drain our dearest veins: shed our last drop of blood.

Liberty's in every blow![1]
Let us do[2], or die!

For A' That and A' That[3]

Is there for honest poverty,
That hangs his head,[4] an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toil's obscure and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,[5]
The man's the gowd[6] for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,[7]
Wear hodden-grey[8], an' a' that;
Gie[9] fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man, for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show[10] and a' that:
The honest man, though e'er sae poor[11],

1 Tyrants fall in every foe!/Liberty's in every blow: we will be killing a tyrant in every enemy we fight; we will be winning liberty in every blow we strike.
2 do: fight.
3 The song was once sung the day of the reopening of the Scottish Parliament. The poem is composed of five iambic tetrameter. The even numbered lines are rhymed with each other, with an end either "an' a' that" or "for a' that'. For A' That: in spite of all that. A': all.
4 Is there for honest poverty/That hangs his head: is there anyone who hangs his head because of his honourable poverty?
5 The rank is but the guinea's stamp: the high social position is only the special mark imprinted on a coin. the guinea's stamp: picture on a coin. A guinea is a former British gold coin worth 21 shillings.
6 gowd: gold.
7 What though on hamely fare we dine: what does it matter if we eat homely meal?
8 hodden-grey: coarse grey cloth.
9 gie: give.
10 tinsel show: showy and worthless appearance.
11 though e'er sae poor: though ever so poor.

Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord,[1]
Wha struts[2] an' stares and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof[3] for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star and a' that,[4]
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak' a belted knight,
A marquise, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might[5],
Guid faith he mauna fa' that[6]!
For a' that and a' that,
Their dignities and a' that,
The pith o' sense[7] and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank that a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
Shall bear the gree[8], and a' that
For a' that and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that.

1 yon: yonder; birkie: young man; ca'd: called.
2 struts: walks in a pompous and self-satisfied way.
3 coof: fool.
4 riband: ribbon of special colour worn to indicate membership of knightly order; star: a star-shaped badge indicates rank, honour or award.
5 aboon his might: above the power of the prince.
6 he mauna fa' that: he must not claim the power.
7 pith o' sense: the essence of good judgement.
8 bear the gree: get the reward.

My Heart's in the Highlands[1]

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of Valour[2], the country of Worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths[3] and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

A Red, Red Rose[4]

O my luve[5] is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O my luve is like the melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

1 the Highlands: a mountainous region of northern Scotland, north and west of a line from Dumbarton in the west to Stonehaven in the east, famous for its rugged beauty; and known for the style of dress (the kilt and tartan).
2 valour: the qualities of a hero or heroine; exceptional or heroic courage when facing danger.
3 straths: a valley of considerable size, through which a river runs.
4 "A Red, Red Rose" is a 1794 song in Scots by Robert Burns based on traditional sources. The song is also referred to by the title "My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose" or "Red, Red Rose" and is often published as a poem.
5 luve: love.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass[1],
So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand miles!

Auld Lang Syne[2]

Chorus
For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,[3]
For auld lang syne!

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,[4]

1 bonnie lass: pretty, beautiful girl.
2 This poem is one of Burns' best-known songs. The song is commonly accompanied by a traditional dance. The group who are singing form a ring holding hands for the first verse. For the second verse, arms are crossed and again linked. For the third verse everyone moves in to the centre of the ring and then out again. The song's name is in Scots, and may be translated literally as "old long since", or more idiomatically "long ago", or "days gone by".
3 We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet: we'll drink another cup of friendship.
4 And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp: and surely you'll drink your fill.

And surely I'll be mine,
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;[1]
But we've wandered monie a weary fit[2]
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine;[3]
But seas between us braid hae roared[4]
Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine,
And we'll tak a right guid-willie[5] waught
For auld lang syne.

Critical Points

Robert Burns' Poetry: Themes, Tradition and Influence

Burns' poems and songs are permeated with the Scottish national spirit, and he himself has widely been acclaimed as the national poet.

The themes of the majority of Robert Burns' poems reflected the spirit of the historical age. Many of his poems dealt with problems including: republicanism (since he lived during the French revolutionary period), Scottish patriotism, Scottish cultural identity, class inequalities, gender roles and

1 We twa hae run about the braes,/And pou'd the gowans fine: we two have run about the hills, and pulled the beautiful field flowers.
2 But we've wandered monie a weary fit: but we've wandered many a weary foot.
3 We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,/Frae morning sun till dine: we two have paddled in the brook from morning sun till dinner time.
4 seas between us braid hae roared: seas have roared broad between us.
5 guid-willie: good will.

poverty of the actual existence.

Burns' poetry was nurtured by the Scottish cultural traditions. Many of Burns' most famous poems are songs with the music based upon older traditional songs. Many of them were created while drinking and entertaining friends. His love poems and songs express tender feelings that came from the bottom of his heart. Thus drinking, friendship, the pleasures of life, sorrows and joys of humble Scottish farmers constitute the common themes of his poetry. "A Red, Red Rose" is filled with a man's hearty, generous and sincere love for his dear lass. "Auld Lang Syne" reminds people that old friends should never be forgotten.

Burns, who wrote with equal facility in English and in his native Scots, and whose genius is marked by spontaneity, directness, and sincerity, is generally classified as a proto-Romantic poet. He greatly influenced William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Charles Lamb, the Romantic essayist, declared that "Burns was the god of my idolatry."

Questions

1 What qualities of a man are affirmed in "For A' That and A' That"? How are these qualities related to the history and ideology of the nation and the age?
2 What is the theme of the poem "Scots, Wha Hae"?

Class Activities

1 Talent Show: Poetry Reading Contest
   Step 1 Every student chooses one favourite poem written by Burns, and read aloud in class.
   Step 2 The winner is announced according to the applause received.
   Step 3 As a prize, the winner may appoint one classmate to read a poem as dedicated to him (any poem from the whole textbook).
2 Sing the song "Auld Lang Syne" in the last class of the semester.

QUOTATIONS

I pick my favourite quotation and store them in my mind as ready armour, offensive or defensive, amid the struggle of this turbulent existence.

—Robert Burns

Firmness in enduring and exertion is a character I always wish to possess. I have always despised the whining yelp of complaint and cowardly resolve.

—Robert Burns

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