LITERATURE IN ENGLISH 1550-1660

Paper-I

Section C & D

M.A. English (Previous)

Directorate of Distance Education
Maharshi Dayanand University
ROHTAK – 124 001

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Contents

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PAPER-I **Max. Marks : 100**
Time : 3 Hours

Note: *Students will be required to attempt five questions in all. Question 1 will be compulsory. This question shall be framed to test students' comprehension of the texts prescribed for* ***Close Study****. There will be one question on each of the Units in all the four Sections. The students will be required to attempt four questions (in about 200 words each) one from each section.*

The other four questions will be based on the texts for ***Close Study*** *with internal choice i.e. one question with internal choice on each of the four units. The students will be required to attempt* ***One*** *question from each of the* ***Four*** *unit.*

Section C

Unit 6 **Christopher Marlowe**
Edward-II

Unit 7 **Ben Jonson**
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Section D

Unit 8 **Thomas More**
Utopia

Unit 9 **Francis Bacon**
Essays: Of Truth, Of Unity in Religion, Of Simulation and Dissimulation, Of Marriage and Single Life, Of Studies, Of Friendship

M.A. English (Previous)
Paper I: Literature in English 1550-1660
Section C, Unit 6: *Marlowe's Edward II*

His Life and Work

Born in the same year (1564) Shakespeare was born, Christopher Marlowe was the son of a shoemaker of Canterbury. He received his scholarly education at King's College, and at Cambridge. Later, he became Archbishop Parker's scholar of divinity in 1580. He also probably acted as a government secret agent at Rheims, the centre where Englishmen were trained as Jesuits in preparation for return to an underground movement reputedly working for the overthrow of Protestantism in England. When he wished to proceed for the M. A. degree of Cambridge in 1587, and the university authorities expressed suspicion that his presence at Rheims might be due to Catholic sympathies, a letter was sent from the Queen's Privy Council, stating that "he had done her Majesty good service, and deserved to be rewarded for his faithful dealing." During the years following, when Marlowe's centre seems to have been the London of the playhouses, he became for the fellow-poets of his age, at least when they were not carried away by their feelings of jealousy against him owing to his early success as a dramatist, "the Muses' daring."

Reputation:

Strangely, as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Marlowe's works were almost wholly unread and his name was hardly known. The Romantic critics recovered his fame and raised him to a great eminence as the special forerunner of Shakespeare. But as late as 1900 hardly anything was known of the man, except about his birth and parentage and his having been slain in 1593 in a tavern brawl. Only in the twentieth century the researches of scholars, both laborious and brilliant, have thrown light upon the facts of Marlowe's life. These researches have now made possible to estimate the personality which moulded his extraordinary and exciting poetry, and which his literary contemporaries praised by such terms as "translunary" and "divine". Souls of poets dead and gone continue to speak to the world by two voices: by their achievements in letters and by their character in life. These two are never altogether distinct, yet they never wholly merge. It will be useful to consider in both aspects the impression which Marlow leaves.

Blank Verse:

It was Ben Jonson who characterized with immortal felicity Marlowe's achievement: "Marlowe's mighty line." Unriming decasyllables (iambic pentameter) had been written before him by several sixteenth century poets,

such as Earl of Surrey, Sackivelle, Gascoigne, Peele, Spenser and Kyd. Various, and yet similar, purposes seemed to have prompted these poets for the use of blank verse: the desire to approximate the Virgilian hexameter or the (Horatian) vehicle of contemporary satire in Gascoigne, the effort of Ciceronian eloquence in the play of Peele. They were all rather exotic ambitions, and except in Peele's few lines they produced exotic effects. It was Marlowe who changed the sow's ear into the silken purse. When he enjoyed it, blank verse became at once what Shakespeare, Milton, and so many others have shown that it can hardly cease to be, the most expressive and the greatest of English metres.

Few poets have equalled the ability that Marlowe posse of condensing the entire lyric into a single verse. In *Tamburlaine* and *Dr. Faustus* particularly, there are lines that glitter and writhe like burnished serpents. Note, for example, the following:

(i) For *Tamburlaine*, the scourge of God, must die.
(ii) I'll burn my books! Ah, Mephostophilis!
(iii) And ride in triumph through Persepolis.
(iv) Still climbing after knowledge infinite.

Marlowe can lay bare a mind in the moment of irrevocable descision. For instance, the following lines respectively form *Dr. Faustus* and *Tamburlaine*:

(i) And all is dross that is not Helena.
(ii) A God is not so glorious as a King.

Marlowe could also sum up with a divine finality one of the greatest truths of human experience. Note, for instance, the following:

(i) And where Hell is, there must we ever be.
(ii) Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight.

Romance:

Marlowe's second achievement as a dramatist was in teaching English drama what Spenser was teaching verse narrative, the meaning of romance. As the first great romantic dramatist Marlowe taught the difference between living and life. The writers before Marlowe had dealt with the externals of living: restless living, as in the lover's pains of Wyatt and Surrey; fashionable living, as in Lyly; foolish living, as in Gascoigne's satires; evil living, as in Greene. The caustic radiance of Marlowe's mind burned through these externalities and revealed the protoplasmic life within. Smug questions grow impossible. Does Tamburlaine live well or ill? Does Faustus live wisely or unwisely? Does Barbas act justly or unjustly? As well ask whether a mountain ought to tower in sterile grandeur above the pleasant useful meadows, or whether the ocean has a right to roar. Life is the thing, not how, or where, or why one lives. In some of the most dynamic lines that ever accompanied the apparition of newborn Athene, Marlowe spoke the message of romance:

> From jigging veins of riming mother-wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,

> We'll lead you to the stately tent of war.

As one can see here, with Marlowe on the scene, the time of homely and dalliance is past; the age of vision is at hand. From this moment the great crusade is on. Excelsior is the motto of every man. The votaries of life burst their manacles, and, in the words of the last of Marlowe's Stuart followers:

> O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense or rare, with head, hands, wings, or feet.
>
> (*Paradise Lost)*

pursue their war. The avennes through which the chase proceeds are as numerous as the lives of men: regal ambition, knowledge, the sacred hunger for gold, the thirst for friendship, or the consuming fire of love. These are the topics of Marlowe's chief plays. But there is always life ahead, life which

> Wills us to wear ouselves and never rest.

and makes of us all crusading knights,

> That in conceit bear empires on our spears,
> Affecting thoughts coequal with the clouds.

It was Milton again who put into the mouth of his most romantic and Marlowesque figure the proper comment upon the careers of Tamburlaine and Faustus, Guise, Barbas, and Mortimer:

> That strife
> Was not inglorious, though the event was dire.
>
> (*Paradise Lost)*

writing before the romantic achievement of either Spenser or Marlowe was performed, Sir Philip Sidney spoke golden words of one of the finest poems of martial romance then audible to English ears:

> certainly I must confess my own barbarousness. I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet: and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style.

When the blind crowder(fiddler) was supplanted by Marlowe, "the Muses' darling," as Peele called him, and the rude style became the mighty line, the ideal poet described by Sidney stood confessed:

> He cometh to you with words set in delight proportion… and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimey corner.

For over four centuries Marlowe's works have done no less. He has been considered the sort of poet Sidney here above described, who has his words set in delight proportion. His tales have, decidedly, held children as well as old men spell bound in their power of measure and eloquence.

Dramatic Sense:

Marlowe's third great contribution to English drama was the discovery of the secret of dramatic action. It has been one of the wrong critical notions to think of Marlowe as a great lyrist who by chance blundered upon drama in search of means of self-expression. Blunders of such a quality as Marlowe's work do not take place in the case of men of genius. Nothing of the sort, for sure, happened to Marlowe. He possessed a stronger sense of dramatic values than any other native writer of his time. It is quite clear, as far as contemporary tributes and allusions help us to determine, that even Marlowe's first play, *Tamburlaine*, owed its sweeping success not so much to the splendid poetry of its lines or the romantic wonder of its story as to the brilliance of its dramatic effects. His instinct for dramatic situation is apparent everywhere in the play. The succeeding dramatists, too, paid homage to this every instinct in Marlowe. Also, it is not merely in drawing the character of the play's hero that his dramatic eye appears. The master playwright is revealed in the very first speech of the play. The five lines of Mycetes, which constitute that speech, at once tear the veil from before the gorgeous impotence of the Persian throne:

> Brother Cosroe, I find myself aggrieved,
> Yet insufficient to express the same…

The first part of *Tamburlaine* shows a certainty of purpose and method quite extraordinary in a young author's work. No less extraordinary is the power of its astounding prologue. The first act pictures the blossoming of the hero's innate ambition under the stimulation of Zenocrate's beauty and the threat of the thousand horsemen of Theridamas. This act ends with the establishment of the moral ascendancy of the shepherd over, first, his intended captor, and, then, his destined bride. The second act shows this transmuted into actual accomplishment, as the shepherd's imagination is fired by the picture of the royal conqueror riding in triumph through Persepolis. The act concludes with glorious finale, as the hero takes the Persian crown and sets it, Napoleon-like, upon his own head. The opening of the third act introduces the vainglorious and mighty Bajazet, most redoubtable of the Scythian's foes, threatening vast ruin to the upstart. The third act rises rapidly to the climax of the play, the battle of Ankara. When the act comes to an end, the new king of Persia is the supreme ruler of all Asia.

The fourth act of *Tamburlaine* is a masterpiece of dramatic construction. Here, the conqueror has reached the height of his career. His boasted fortune seems to be preparing to forsake him now. The first scene shows a storm gathering in far-off Egypt. The Soldan summons his hordes:

> Awake, ye men of Memphis! Hear the clang
> Of Scythian trumpets; hear the basilisks
> That, roaring, shake Damascus' turrets down!

The third scene shows Egypt and Arabia on the march, which seems apparently irresistible, and confident of victory. As the clouds of storm gather,

Tamburlaine, careless of the future, vaunts himself in the height of tragic *hybris.* He enjoys himself in the humiliations of the captive Bajazet and Zabina. Remaining blind to the sufferings of the captive women, he also remains reckless of their curses and prayers of vengeance. The whole act is, as a fourth act generally is in a successful tragedy, a breathless lull of suspense. In the last lines, Tamburlaine makes a yet more wanton demand of fortune:

> We mean to travel to the Antarctic pole,
> Conquering the people underneath our feet,
> And be renown'd as never emprors were.

As the saying goes, whoever the gods wish to ruin, they first make mad. And quite expectedly, in the final fifth act, the clouds darken and the suspense thickens. "Still doth this man, or rather god, of war" batter at the walls of Damascus, regardless of the gathering storm. Even the virgins do not move him. He vindicates his tragic consistency by their slaughter, and throws another gauntlet into the teeth of Nemesis. Then, so that the tragic pity is not lost to sight in the face of the accumulating tragic fear, the stage is cleared, and the man of war exposes in one of the grandest soliloquies the heart of the lover, the soul of the idealist:

> Ah, fair Zenocrate! Divine Zenocrate!…
> What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?
> If all the pens that ever poets held… .

This is followed by the deaths of Bajazet and Zabina, another weight in the scale of Nemesis. We see now the fate of Tamburlaine tottering in the balance. So Zenocrate thinks, as she wrestles in prayer for the life of her lover:

> Ah, Tamburlaine, my love, sweet Tamburlaine,
> That fight'st for sceptres and for slippery crowns,
> Behold the Turk and his great empress!
> Thou that in conduct of thy happy stars
> Sleep'st every night with conquest on thy brows,
> And yet would'st shun the wavering turns of war…
> Behold the Turk and his great empress!
> Ah, mighty Jove and holy Mahomet,
> Pardon my love!

Sat this point, the blow of fortune falls at last. It had been hanging in the air during two acts. Philemus enters to announce:

> Madam, your father and the Arabian king… come now,
> Ready for battle 'gainst my lord the king.

If all this is not dramatic, then one would wonder what, after all, is drama? Drama it decidedly is, and of a high quality. Marlowe maintains this quality, in fact, improves in his subsequent plays.

But now since drama has had its say, romance claims a hearing. They sound to the battle, and Tamburlaine enjoys the victory. After the two pages of reconciliation, the tragedy closes on the Greek note. We see scenes of pity and

terror, followed by serenity and clothed in infinite beauty. We should not forger that *Tamburlaine* was only the first of Marlowe's tragedies, which is considered the least mature of all. Decidedly, from his later practice he learned a good deal concerning the stage craft, or mechanics of stage presentation. But much more than any learning Marlowe was indeed a born dramatist. Such were, then, the three great tragedies(the other two being *Dr. Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta)* that Marlowe left behind in his short career of six years as dramatist. He let drop upon an astonished world what Alfred Noyes has called Marlowe's "eagle's feather of blank verse." He, along with Sidney and Spenser, planted in modern England the magic flower of romance and enriched for centuries the soil in which it grows. Also, he taught the English tragic stage more than was done by others except Shakespeare, who was the greatest of Marlowe's debtors and continuators.

Marlowe The Man:

We now know a great deal about Marlowe the man, who was the storehouse of his energy. The more we have come to know about him as man the greater his status has risen in our estimation. We do, of course, need to ignore the slanders with which modern fiction and ancient polemics had tarnished his image. Thus, laying aside the gratuitous imaginings of sick minds, we need to consider the qualities of his personality which are most clearly reflected in his writings. After all, it is the Marlowe of his plays with whom we as readers are concerned, and not the Marlowe constructed through gossips and heresays, or through Gothic imagination of those out to gothicize the distorted accounts floated by his contemporary foes. First of all, we must note that, like Spenser, he was a scholar, one of the truest of his time. He loved learning from the core of his heart, and hated ignorance equally deeply. Few English poets – perhaps none but Spenser, Milton, and Browning – have so well vindicated the literary uses of academic knowledge. In fact, Marlowe is never more the poet than when he is most the scholar. Some of the examples showing how his learning enhances the richness of his poetry are: (i) the address to Helen in *Faustus;* (ii) Tamburlaine's comparison of Zenocrate to the heroines of classical literature; (iii) Aeneas's story of the wooden horse; (iv) or the sixteenth century accomplishment in geography, astronomy, and philosophy. It was his scholarship that gave Marlowe his sense of form. This remarkable sense is reflected in the form of the single line, of the scene, and of the play as a whole. As is well known, the sense of form was precisely the rarest and most needed in Elizabethan poetry and drama. Marlowe's scholarship also gave him the scholar's passion for truth, for fair play in intellectual disputes. In that age of bigotry his was one of the few voices raised in defence of alien races and alien creeds. Better a true Turk, he said, or a consistent Jew, than a faithless and time-serving Christian. One needs just a slight knowledge of religious controversy of the age to understand why the Prelatists and Puritans alike flinched before this

reasoning and drowned the logic of the poet with cries of "libertine" and "atheist." No doubt, in certain senses, Marlowe may have been both, but the clamour must have appeared silly even to Marlowe's contemporaries, in view of the tremendous close of *Tamburlaine* and the whole mighty lesson of *Faustus,* in view of the deep earnestness of every word Marlowe wrote.

This much about Marlowe's intellectual character. As for his personal character, it reveals itself no less vividly. In the first place, he had a high opinion of himself. Although plying a "vulgar" trade, he refused to be vulgarized. There are no stories, even from his Puritan defamers, concerning him of such low associations as cling to the memory of Greene and Peele. To his friends, he was Kit Marlowe. Among his fellow scholars were Thomas Nashe, the poet Watson, the grave and learned Chapman, and Sir Raleigh. Or course, the company of his friends was as small as it was select. The printer of *Tamburlaine*, dedicating the two plays to the Gentlemen Readers in 1590, allows himself none of the usual liberties. He is but a tradesman presenting one gentleman to others:

> Great folly were it in me to commend unto your wisdoms either the eloquence of the author or the worthiness of the matter itself.

Thomas Heywood, introducing the1633 edition of *The Jew of Malta*, refers ceremoniously to this work "by so worthy an author as Master Marlowe." Also, the most gentlemanly of the publishers of the time, Edward Blount, writes a dedication of *Hero and Leander* to Sir Thomas Walsingham which, considering the dignity of the person addressed, indicates that Marlowe's friends did not feel that he had left a wounded name.

Hero and Leander:

This is the last thing Marlowe wrote. It is incomplete, which was later completed by Chapman. As it is, it is one of the most sensuous stories in all the pagan literature of Greece. Marlowe's treatment of the story is one of the purest things in Elizabethan poetry. There is not a single obscene word in the entire poem, nor a single degenerate suggestion. He sees everywhere the marriage of true minds, the cleanliness of ocean-dewy limbs and child-like souls. Even in the verse there seems to be a kind of reticence. The narrative is vigorous and straightforward beyond any other of its genre and age. It is only in his couplets that there is no fluent and suggestive ease. There is, on the contrary, a sweet hesitancy, not otherwise characteristic of the poet, which cools instead of inflaming the mind. Everywhere there is moral poise. Everywhere there are grave and tender observations, as of a soul firm fastened in its roots. For example, the following;

> For faithful love will never turn to hate.

Or

> It lies not in our power to love or hate,
> For will in us is overrul'd by fate.

Where both deliberate, the love is slight,
Whoever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?

Thus, both as man and dramatist Marlowe has always commanded respect next only to Shakespeare among the Elizabethan dramatists. In fact, his admirers continue to believe that the plays of Shakespeare were written by him. That controversy, or tall claim apart, no one can deny the high place that Marlowe as dramatist deserves. His contribution to English drama is decidedly valued mire than that of Shakespeare because he wrote his plays before Shakespeare and paved the way for the post-medieval theatre in England. The continued fascination of readers for his *Doctor Faustus* has overshadowed his other plays just as the fascination for *Hamlet* has not done in the case of Shakespeare. The fact of the matter is that his other tragedies, *Tamburlaine* and *The Jew of Malta*, are as powerful as *Doctor Faustus*.

Marlow's Development as Dramatist

There is no disagreement today that Marlowe is one of the major dramatists in English. There is also no dispute on the plea that he was most important of Shakespeare's predecessors, although he was born the same year. His poetic excellence, what Ben Jonson called Marlowe's "mighty line", is equally recognized. There are, of course, disagreements on the kind of drama Marlowe wrote as well as on the stageworthiness of his plays. *Doctor Faustus* has been staged quite often. Others not so often. But all of them are read and have received high praise from scholars and critics.

Marlowe's career in the theatre was rather short. It lasted for about six years. And if we count the two parts of *Tamburlaine* as separate plays, we have only seven plays from his pen, three of which exist in rather dubious shape. We generally place *Tamburlaine* at the beginning of his short career (only *Dido* conceivably being earlier); there are no definite clues to the order of composition of his other plays. Marlowe's contrast with Shakespeare is extreme. Shakespeare has left behind thirty-seven plays spread over more than twenty years. Also, most of Shakespeare's plays have come down to us in tolerably good shape, the only weak case being that of *Pericles.* There is also greater agreement on the chronology of his plays. Thus, it is not surprising that Marlowe is difficult to grasp, and the theatre responds to him with some uncertainty.

Marlowe died in 1593, when Shakespeare had just made a start. Marlowe belongs to the earliest phase of the Elizabethan drama. In this phase, formal rhetoric was the staple medium of high utterance. Long set speech was at that time cultivated as a matter of course. Departures into formality stood out in sharp and simple contrast. At the time of Shakespeare, the writing became much freerer, although it was only a few years after Marlowe's career. The slip from formality to informality is done with much greater ease in Shakespeare than in Marlowe.

In order to trace the development of Marlowe as dramatist we shall have to start with *Dido, Queen of Carthage,* which is viewed to be his earliest play. Although nothing was known of this play during the lifetime of the dramatist, and it was only in the year after his death that it was published under the joint authorship of Marlowe and Nashe, it is considered by broad consensus his earliest extant play. It is a reverent but rather bold version of the first, second, and fourth books of Virgil's *Aeneid*. It is written in blank verse and is divided into five acts. Some evidence suggests that the play was written when Marlowe was still at Cambridge and had not launched his dramatic career in London. The play is mainly notable for the poignant treatment of Dido's love. It is also notable for the anticipation in many of its passages of more famous ones in later plays.

The first exclusively Marlowe's play is, of course, *Tamburlaine*, the first part of which also seems to have been written before Marlowe left Cambridge in 1587. References to the play suggest that it cannot be placed much later. Nor does it show any special affinity with the London stage. As in *Dido*, the classical influence is quite strong in this play also. Although the play is based on the life of the famous Timur, who was a contemporary of Chaucer, the Persia Marlowe imagines is the Persia of Herodotus and Xenophon. Also, the Platonic element in the philosophy of the play is conspicuous. The other apparent influences are the legends of the heroic outlaw, Robin Hood, and the work of Spenser. Although Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* was not published as yet, it is quite evident that Marlowe was very familiar with at least the seventh and eighth cantos of Book I. Passages from these cantos are embroidered upon both parts of *Tamburlaine*. They hang in the play's two parts as a gracious link between the two poets. Marlowe and Spenser do not have much in common as poets, and they had perhaps never met. But the link between Marlowe's play and Spenser's poem in terms of several passages cannot be overlooked.

Maybe it was an accident that *Tamburlaine* fell into the hands of Edward Alleyn, the all dominating chief actor of the Admiral's company, but the strong affinity between the role and the actor was so perfect that Marlowe at once wrote a second part of the play. In fact, thereafter we find Marlowe committed very strongly to one-man plays. No doubt, Marlowe's own mind, too, ran in that direction. Evidence suggests that insolence of youth was fervent in him. "No one," it has been said, "has ever expressed so well a young man's emotion at the new consciousness of what a world there is, all before him." *Tamburlaine* can be called a hymn to intellectual beauty, a dramatic poem on the superiority of mind over matter. Marlowe can be considered a Carlylean before Carlyle. He summed up the doctrine of the "hero" or superman, later propounded by Carlyle, in his Scythian Shepherd's words, "I, thus conceiving…

> Shall give the world to note, for all my birth,
> That virtue solely is the sum of glory,
> And fashions men with true nobility, …

For Marlowe, as well as his heroes, *virtue* is that virile soul-stuff that enables the great man to focus all his energies upon a single goal, a "perfect bliss and sole felicity." For *Tamburlaine* the goal happens to be "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown." For Faustus, it is the superhuman knowledge, which is the ultimate in power. " 'Tis Magic, magic that hath ravish'd me," says Faustus. For Barbas also, it is the power, beauty, and romance of wealth. But all these characters are of the same stock, and their great speeches are sometimes almost interchangeable. For example, where Faustus visualizes his desire in terms of "huge argosies," gold and orient pearl, or Barbas speaks of himself as a warrior,

> That in a field amidst his enemies
> Doth see his soldiers slain, himself disarm'd.

Doctor Faustus and *The Rich Jew of Malta* are both preserved in imperfect texts. *Massacre at Paris* is preserved in even more deplorable degree. This play centers attention upon the villain-hero Guise and is likely to seem to the reader mainly a matter of a few fine soliloquies. But, as is always the case in Marlowe, the driving purpose of the play comes better in the acting. The case of *Dr. Faustus* indicates Marlowe's development as dramatist more clearly than that of any other of his plays. He was the first among the writers of the Faust legend who elicited poetry into it. He translated the quest of swinish pleasure, which the *Faustbook*(1587) pictures, into a quest of intellectual power. In the earlier, briefer, and better of the two bad versions of the text of *Dr. Faustus* which have survived, the outlines of an original five-act tragedy can be traced. But as the text stands, it divides the play into three parts. There is a grand opening, dealing with Faustus's signing of the bond with the Devil. Then, there is a magnificent conclusion. These two parts, beginning and end, are bound together by the third part, the middle, which consists of a series of discontinuous and sometimes prosaic interludes. One gets the impression that Marlowe is here attempting an interesting dramatic experiment. He seems to be attempting to give stage plausibility to the passage of a great deal of time (twenty-four years) between the beginning and the ending of the play. The effect on the stage is felt, even in the truncated text available to us, but the reader is most likely to pass from the poetry of the opening to that of the close too impatiently to observe it. It is thus Marlowe's poetry that seems to cover up the faults of his plot. This habit is not uncommon to Marlowe alone. Most Elizabethan dramatists, including Shakespeare, relied upon the power of poetry for the appeal of their plays. They covered up with this powerful, almost hypnothising, dramatic aspect the deficiencies of their plots as well as characters. Marlowe was surely the pacesetter. Others only followed him. Since he had met with success on the stage, others found him a safe model to follow.

Marlowe's next dramatic attempt, *The Jew of Malta*, shows the direction in which his dramatic art developed in the later phase of his very brief career. This play's text is available to us in a single very late quarto (1633). It looks like the restoration of a badly repaired masterpiece. Discussion of the play requires

both delicacy and diffidence. It was apparently the most steadily popular of all Marlowe's plays. But it seems to have been outrageously overlaid with alien grotesquery, particularly in the third and fourth acts. The genuine parts are remarkable for their effective stage business and melodious blank verse. As Henry Hallam remarked, "the first two acts are more vigorously conceived, both as to character and circumstance, than any other Elizabethan play, except those of Shakespeare." Swinburne also judged that "in blank verse of Milton alone… has the glory or the melody of passages in the opening soliloquy of Barbas been possibly surpassed." It was another dramatic experiment on the part of Marlowe that he aimed to present history-in-the-making as suggested by rumour concerning a contemporary Jew, in Constantinople, David Passi, and a Turkish attack on Malta, which, though excitedly discussed in the early part of 1591, did not actually take place.

Marlowe's *Edward II,* his last play, though very unlike the rest, is actually only a stage further in the development of the dramatist. It is not at all a one-man drama. But it contains the same great poetry; in fact, more mature than the earlier. Also, it is not a poetic drama in the sense in which his earlier plays are. This change is to be attributed to the growing experience of the dramatist as well as to the fact that the dramatist was now dissociated form Alleyn, perhaps by reason of the merging of the Lord Admiral's and Lord Strange's men in 1591. As a result of the aforesaid merger, *Edward II* was produced by a less distinguished company, the Earl of Pembroke's. this very company had also acted the early versions of the second and third parts of Shakespeare's *Henry VI*. We find in Marlowe's *Edward II* less declamation and more stage action. The dialogue in this last play is three times as rapid as in *Tamburlaine.* The whole emphasis has now shifted upon the business of the theatre. It becomes quite clear that in writing this play Marlowe did not have the reader in mind. No wonder that readers have resented this and deplored the lack of interest. It is not recorded that spectators ever have. It seems reasonable to admire with lamb the extraordinary dramaturgy of the death scene. One cannot therefore agree with those who find poetry lacking in the many sinewy and frugal speeches.

The element of humour in Marlowe's tragedies, earlier altogether ignored by critics, also indicates the graph of the dramatist's development. Ever since T. S. Eliot asserted that Marlowe's "most powerful and mature tone" was that of a "savage comic humour," a humour akin to that of Jonson's *Volpone,* critics have been quick to recognize this important aspect of his dramatic art. For example, it has been a critical commonplace thereafter to echo this sentiment in relation to *The Jew of Malta*. As to its applicability to his other plays, there has been less enthusiasm among critics. But Clifford Leech is one of those critics who have recognized a pervasive comic tone in *Dido, The Queene of Carthage,* in *The Massacre at Paris*, and in *Hero and Leander.* A subsequent recognition has also come about of the important part the "savage humour" plays in *Tamburlaine* and *Doctor Faustus*. No doubt, these last two are tragic plays, but the tragedy is

of the sort in which humour is at home. It insists on the coexistence of the bizarre and the puny along with the splendid within the mind and behaviour of each man, however single. It cannot be denied that in Marlowe's vision of the world, as presented in his plays, the comic is also included. More easily than Shakespeare, one gets the impression, Marlowe could laugh at his hero's aspiration and anguish. In *Edward II*, although the situation is not as complex as in other tragedies, the dramatist has not left humour out of accounr. As the mature tragedies of Shakespeare receive an enhancement in their tragic effect from the element of sardonic humour in them, so do the tragedies of Marlowe. We can compare the relation of the comic to the tragic effect between Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and *Faustus.* The effect in both the cases is the same, indicating in both a mature and complex vision of life as well as human behaviour.

In Marlowe's writing as a whole, without any relation to the dates of composition of his various plays, one can see how in different ways the humour is woven into the fabric. In his great tragedies, *Dr. Faustus* and *Tamburlaine*, it is part of the tragic plot, of the tragic response to the world, where it adds to the complexity of the tragic response, intensifies it without destroying the tragic content of the response. On the other hand, in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Massacre at Paris* the humour is more assertive. Although it is as savage as in his great tragedies just mentioned, it is not given a place alongside the sense of a man's greatness. What these later plays present is a wry picture of a world of small men who dream of greatness and play out their atrocities. Whether in Barbas or Guise, these small men expose their smallness even in the moments of highest ambition. In *Edward II*, there is subdued tragedy as well as subdued comedy. The titular hero commits blunders and undergoes suffering, as do Mortimer, Isabella, and Gaveston. We do sympathize with them. We are also shocked by the sad end they meet, but Marlowe designs to keep them throughout the action of the play at the mercy of circumstance. He lingers with pity over each and every error they commit. The humour in these plays is in proportion to the modest dreams the characters cherish for their future. All the same, a fund of humour is available whenever the need is felt in the action. For instance, in the baiting of a bishop by Edward and Gaveston, Edward's infatuation, in the climbing antics of young Spencer and Baldock, in Warwick's cruel jibe at the condemned Gaveston, in Lightborn's petty joy in executioner's skill. In the case of *Dido* and *Hero and Leander,* however, the relationship between the serious and the comic is different from that in any of the plays just discussed. Although both stories end in death, the dominant tone in each remains that of a gentle and delighting humour. The affairs of both men and gods are seen as a spectacle engagingly absurd.

T. S. Eliot, in his essay on Marolwe, has drawn our attention to the comic element in the style of *Dido.* According to him, here is a style "which secures its emphasis by always hesitating on the edge of caricature at the right moment."

What can be more easily available to the common audience is the humour of situation or character rather than the humour of style. And there is no dearth in Marlowe's plays of that type of humour. Of course, it is never for its own sake as it generally is in festive comedy. It is always functional in the play's design. It contributes to the tragic effect, be it a scene or a character to which humour is related. Ther is the humour that shows itself indirectly, invoking the discreet smile, the detaching shrug. But there is also the humour, which shows itself directly, putting to ridicule, at times, even gods and goddesses. We see how gods are made petty through their mirroring of human conduct. Although in all other respects, *Dido* and *The Massacre at Paris* are slighter and far less organized than *Tamburlaine*, the directly comic moments are more shrewdly managed in these plays.

Hero and Leander has the quieter humour of *Dido*, but it is far more expert in its control. The following couplet makes clear the comic intent of the dramatist:

There might you see the gods in sundrie shapes,
Committing headdie ryots, incest, rapes:

Such a comedy comes through in every line of the description of gods. Rarely have the gods been treated with such concentrated fun. Marlowe is often charged with the overdoing of comedy, but the poem is so consistent in tone that we are made at ease in a world of extravagance. At times, an unexpected extension of the satire to the condition of human society brings the parallel between gods and men before us in a new way. In this poem of Marlowe, comedy grows more vigorous as the love affair develops. The humour in *The Jew of Malta* and *Dr. Faustus* presents larger problems than are touched on here. But we do need to recognize the presence in Marlowe's plays and poems the variety of humour, and its high degree of integration with the fabric of his writing. The fact that his unfinished, probably his last work, is a major comic poem shows how Marlowe as a poet-dramatist grows from a passionate poet seeking situations of tragedy to a dispassionate dramatist designing plots of comic love poem. An index of his remarkable growth is the fact that while he is lyrical in his tragic drama, he becomes dramatic in his comic love poem. Had Marlowe not died young, his verse might have moved toward the intense and serious great poetry. Like some great painting and sculpture, it attains its effects by something not unlike caricature. His undying comparison with Shakespeare is, decidedly, not without a reason.

Thus, although Marlowe's career as dramatist lasted only six years, cut short by his untimely death, the growth in a very short span, as in the case Keats, was tremendous. He quickly matured, both as poet and dramatist, to show his mastery of bland verse, heroic couplet, and dramaturgy. His pithy phrases, proverbial sentences, and haunting melodies remain unsurpassable by subsequent dramatists. His greatest achievement lies in his creation of a typical hero carrying the Satanic blaze and yet attracting to himself generations of

mankind for his thirst for knowledge and ambition for power. The Marlowean hero seems to embody in his character the superior human intellect, the restive human soul, and the uncommon human passion for beauty and wealth. No wonder that Marlowe's name is always mentioned alongside of Shakespeare.

MARLOWEAN HERO

Defining the concepts and conventions of a particular dramatist at times may prove much more difficult than to define those of a period. The difficulties arise from various fields. One of these is the limitations of the writer's interest and sensibility, which are always debatable qualities. Another is the sources and conventions available to a particular writer, which in turn are related to both the historical conditions and the individual circumstances. Also, the degree to which the greater writers rely upon general conventions, perhaps, increases with the development of drama. Marlowe, since he came on the scene before Shakespeare and Jonson, had much less, in terms of native conventions, than they had after him. In a sense, he had to face the task of setting up certain conventions of the drama for his age. Having a tragic bent of mind, shaped by several personal and impersonal causes, Marlow created conventions for the Elizabethan tragedy. Above all, he created a hero for his tragedies, who seems to be the same man in different disguises. The same, of course, cannot be said of the tragic heroes of Shakespeare. They may share one or two qualities, but they have very different personalities, each distinctly memorable. Marlowe's is a case altogether different. In his case, the subjective stamp of the author's own personality seems so strong on his protagonists that they cease to exist, beyond a point, as individuals, as distinct personalities. On the contrary, they appear as different versions of the same personality, sharing the essential aspects of the author's own personality. Let us see what sort of the tragic hero Marlowe shaped in his plays, and what are the qualities of personality for which he gets the special name of the "Marlowean hero"!

One of the traits of Marlowe's tragedies that clearly emerges from the four great plays he wrote is that the only principle of unity in these plays is the hero himself. The earlier appearance of the Marlowean hero is Tamburlaine in his earliest surviving tragedy. The character of this hero is well defined by Meander, a character in *Tamburlaine*:

> Some powers divine or else infernal mixed
> Their angry seeds at his conception:
> For he was *never sprung of human race*,
> Since the spirit of his fearful *pride*
> He dares so doubtlessly resolve of rule
> And by profession be *ambitious*.

As can be seen, in these lines, three qualities of the hero receive special mention. One is that he has something superhuman about him, for he "never sprung of human race." We shall see that not Tamburlaine alone but all of

Marlowe's heroe's believe, more than any one else, that they are a special creation by God or Nature meant to accomplish tasks beyond the reach of common humanity. Essentially, it is a romantic trait, for the romantic hero always views himself as a "hero" among men, something of a rarity of nature, an exceptional case, not like others. In fact, to be considered one of the general lot of mankind is taken as an insult by this hero. He must be treated as someone special, someone "never sprung from human race."

Another characteristics of the Marlowean hero emphasized here is his pride. Since the hero thinks very high of himself, and is too much preoccupied with his own self, he has a pride that admits no peers, no equals among men. An inevitable corollary of this characteristics is that this megalomaniac, inflated self of the hero remains in self-inflicted isolation, carrying an aura of lone eminence, not ready to take anything from anyone. The third aspect of the hero's personality mentioned in the above-quoted lines is that of ambition. In play after play, we encounter the tragic hero who does not set any limits, certainly not the humanly possible limits, to his ambition. He aspires for ruling the whole universe. He aspires for all the knowledge of the world. He aspires for the most beautiful woman (Helen) even if she has to be recalled from the world beyond the one of human existence. He is a sort of man whose ambition knows no bounds. Quite often, as here in the case of Tamburlaine, the ambition has no definite object. If seems to exist in and by itself. His aspiring mind is drawn upward as naturally as gravitation draws a stone downward.

In his next tragedy, *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe chooses a similar sort of hero as in *Tamburlaine*. Faustus is not a king like Tamburlaine for whom "a god is not so glorious as a king"; he is a scholar hunting for an instrument which should give him god-like powers. One can see here an essential similarity in the two characters. Although not a king, the conduct of Faustus is not less than that of a king. Note, for instance, the following:

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.

In fact, Faustus considers even king inferior to himself. He seems to show contempt of kings similar to Tamburlaine's contempt for the conquered kings who drive his chariot like slaves. Note what Faustus has to say about kings, how he treats them as his inferiors:

Emperors and kings
Are but obeyed in their several provinces
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds,
But his dominion exceeds in this
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man

Ultimately, the flights of ambition of the Marlowean hero always fall short of their unbounded ambitions. What they never remember and we never forget is

the harsh reality, that they are, after all, human species and can reach only as high as the limited capacity of humans would permit them.

But since the Marlowean, hero's fate, finally, is the same as that of Icarus, his tragedy is always the tragedy of overreaching. In his attempt to do what it is not humanly possible to do he meets with his tragedy:

He profits in divinity ….
His waxen wings did mount above his reach ….
He surfeits upon cursed necromancy.

These lines from the play's Prologue prepare us, with the subtle and deliberate confusion of tenses, for the kind of hero we have to confront. Another common aspect of the tragic heroes of Marlowe is that the moment they acquire power, real or imaginary, they soon become power-drunk. Faustus, like Tamburlaine, gets intoxicated with his power to command the devil. It blinds him, again like Tamburlaine, to everything else. When Mephistopheles tells him truthfully of hell, he bluntly refuses to face it – "I think hell's a fable." Decidedly, it is this blindness of the Marlowean hero that leads him into the darkness of tragedy, into the act of self-destruction.

The hero of Marlowe's next tragedy, *The Jew of Malta*, is, once again, similar to his predecessors. When Barabas' sponsor, like Faustus, says:

I count religion but a childish toy
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.

we hear the familiar echoes here of similar pride and arrogance demonstrated by the earlier heroes. These heroes of Marlowe consider the human mind as having unbounded powers to achieve one's ambitions. For them knowledge is power, ignorance powerlessness. So, knowledge gives them power, and power ambition. Ambition takes them to Olimpian heights, it gives them pride, and pride hath a fall. That, by and large, is the course of life that each of these heroes follows, and meets with his tragic end. In the laments of Barabas also there is a new and poignant note which echoes Faustus. Some of his phrases are out of all proportions to a material loss: they give expression to general disillusion, like that of Job from which they derive:

Only I have coiled to inherit here
The months of vanity and loss of time
And painful nights have him appointed me.

The soliloquy which opens Act 2 is also full of such passages:

The incertain pleasures of swift-footed time
Have taken their flights and left me in *despair*:
And of my former riches rests no more
But bare remembrance, like a soldier's scar
That has no further comfort for his maim.

It is very much the language of Faustus. Even the despair of these heroes of Marlowe, we must note, is a case of self-indulgence. There is in it the element of romantic inflation of self, which seems projected on the silver screen of the

sky for a spectacle to mankind, although the mankind remains to them, or to any individual suffering, as in different as ever. There is also in this romantic suffering of the Marlowean hero an element of masochism, with the hero, even though unconsciously, waiting to remain as an object of attention and self-pity for the rest of the world. In their affairs, their delusion is, the whole humanity is involved. This exaggerated self-importance is a part of that self-pride which these heroes wear so much on their sleeves. Note, for instance, the following from *Faustus*:

> What wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, all the world: for which Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world: ye heaven itself, heaven itself, heaven the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy: and must remain in hell for ever – hell, ah, hell for ever! Sweet friends, what shall become of Faustus, being in hell for ever?

One can hear in these lines the hero's self-importance ringing in every word. Faustus' fate, here, is taken to be a national, an international, nay, a cosmic tragedy. "Faustus in hell" is presented as if the heavens had fallen, the impossible had happened.

Reaching the last tragedy of Marlowe, *Edward II*, we find that his hero remains the same. Edward carries the same pride his predecessors possessed. When told about the barons' objection to Gaveston's return to England, he exhibits his pride:

> Am I a king, and must be overruled? –
> Brother, display my ensigns in the fields;
> I'll bandy with the barons and the earls,
> And either die, or live with Gaveston.

When told that they do not like the titles and honours being given to his favourtite Gaveston, he again reacts with greater rashness:

> If for these dignities thou be envied,
> I'll give thee more; for, but to honour thee,
> Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment.

Of course, his pride apart, Edward sounds rather earthly compared to the superhuman ambition and eloquence of the earlier heroes. What he decidedly seems to share with his predecessors is his tragic (that is absolute) commitment to his folly, whatever it may be. Each one of Marlowe's tragic hero is committed to some folly which, the reader very well knows is not possible or practical, the hero would not desist from at any cost. In the present case of Edward, it is his commitment to the universally disliked Gaveston, for whom he loses his life as well as his crown.

Thus, the Marlowean hero is a special type of tragic hero, who is known by his excesses, not by his flaws or restraints. He is a person of tempestuous passions which know no moderation. In fact, to have an adequate understanding of this man of passions, we need to know more than Marlowe, we need to know

his age and its theory of passions. It has been observed that in the matter of passions, the literary opinion of the Elizabethan age was on the side of Aristotle and the Platonists, not on the side of the Stoics. The passions were perceived to be beneficial, provided they were kept temperate. Philemon Holland, in his translation of Plutarch's *Morals*, had observed as early as 1603, "the absurdities of the said Stoicke Philosophers, who instead of well governing and ruling the soul of man, have as much as lieth in them, extinguished and abolished the same." In the view of Plutarch, whom Holland and other Elizabethans revered, virtue arises not from the abolition of the unreasonable part of the soul, but from its ordering and moderation. Similarly, Thomas Nashe, a colleague of Marlowe, tells us that he upholds the Peripatetic view of the passions as again'st the Stoic. As he declares:

> Homer hath told me that there are
> Passions which corruption hath no share
> …… To stand at gaze
> In one position, is a stupid maze,
> Fit for a statue.

A representative Elizabethan historian like Higgins rests his judgments of tragedy on the view of passions taught by Plotinus. In introducing *The First Part of the Mirrour for Magistrates* (1574), Higgins declares that the desire of glory is admirable, provided it is kept within bounds:

> Plotinus that wonerfull and excellent Philospher hath these wonders: The property of Temperaunce is to couet nothing which may be repented: not to excede the hands of measure, & to kepe Desire vnder that yoke of Reason …. For to couet without consideration: to passé the measure of his degree, and to letle will run at random, is the only destruction of all estates …. Will you that I rehearse *Alexander the Great*, *Caesar*, *Pompey*, *Cyrus*, *Hannible*, & C. all which (by desier of glorye) felte the rewarde of theire immoderate and insatiable lustes …. I surely deme those Princes above specified (considering their factes, estates, fortunes, fame and exploytes) had neuer come to suche ende, but for wante of temperance.

This view can also be corroborated with that of John Davies of Hereford, who in the midst of a long discussion of the passions declares that Choler if kept at a mean, "yieldes most sweet effects," making the Wit and Courage great,

> And if with fury it be not disgraced,
> It should by *al meanes*, by all be embrac'd.

Thus, temperance, moderation, the mean – these constituted the recurring theme of the writers of Marlowe's time. The reasons for giving moderation the primary place in the Elizabethan ethical theory are most succinctly stated by William Cornwallis:

> Without moderation, the wit of man will serve a wrong master; without moderation, the body will rebel against the soule, without moderation, the soule yields to the body; in a word, unmoderated, both soule and body perisheth. This is she that makes the distinction betwixt virtue and vice; this is she that makes courage valor, that without moderation would be anger and then fury; this is she that separateth justice and cruelty, providence from feare, power from tyranny, majesty from pride.

When we place the Marlowean hero against the background of this debate, it becomes clear that his life is a notable example of lack of temperance. His hero like Tamburlaine belongs to the class of conquerers that Higgins laments in the quotation above. He is one of those men who would, "lette will runne at random", to destruction of the world, and to their own self-misery. The others, like Faustus, Barabas, and Edward, also belong to the same type. Only their designations differ, the essential characters of all illustrate the same fault – lack of temperance.

Next thing we need to consider for a proper understanding of the Marlowean hero is the reason for his failure to achieve moderation, or temperance. For this also, the Elizabethans had a well-established theory. Immoderation, and all its attendant perturbations of the soul, are due, says La Primaudaye, to misdirected desire. The Elizabethans considered desire natural to every soul; but those souls that through ignorance set their desire on worldly goods can never find contentment. Note what La Primandaye has to say on this:

> The Philosophers teach vs by their writings, and experience doth better shew it unto vs, that to couet and desire is proper to the soule, and that from thence all the affections and desires of men proceede, which draw them hither and thither diversly, that they may attaine to that thing, which they thinke is able to lead them to the enjoying of some good, whereby they may live a contented and happie life. Which felicitie, the most part which is good, and by following the inclination of their corrupted nature, do seek and labour to finde in humane and earthlie things, as in *riches, glorie, honour, and pleasure*. But forasmuch as the enjoying of these things doth not bring with it sufficient cause of contentation, they perceive themselves alwaies deprived of desires, and are constrained to wander all their life time beyond all bounds and measures, according to the rashness of their lusts….

This can be noted that the ethical position stated here illuminates the character of the Marlowean tragic hero. The ambition to acquire power, we have seen in all the four cases of Marlowe's tragic protagonists, is actually an expression of their desire to have "riches, glorie, honour, and pleasure." Material wealth and physical beauty, ultimately, are found to be the sources of pleasure as well as pride. Their honour and glory are nothing but pomp and pride, only a set of

vanities. We know how the Renaissance moralists were never tired of pointing out that ambition was the cause of one's ruin:

> Beware ambition, 'tis a sugared pill,
> That fortune layes, presuming minds to kill.

As Pierre Charron describes,

> Ambition hath no limits, it is a gulfe that hath neither brinke nor bottome; it is that vacuity which the Philosophers could never find in Nature; a fire which increaseth by that nourishment that is given unto it. Wherein it truly payeth his master: for ambition is only just in this, that it sufficeth for his own punishment, and is executioner to it selfe. The Wheele of Ixion is the motion of his desires, which turne and returne up and down, never giving rest unto his minde.

These characteristic features of Ambition appear in Marlowe's portrait of his hero over and over again. Temburlaine and Faustus, Barabas and Edward, none can enjoy any rest. They remain insatiably greedy in their appetites Give them any amount of riches and wealth, give them any amount of glory and honour, their desires remain, in fact, become, more greedy. Their ambition keeps soaring higher and higher until and unless they burn themselves with that very fire that takes them to those heights. An allied aspect of their love for wealth and power is their love of beauty and poetry. Tamburlaine, Faustus and Edward, all have fiery passion for beauty, all have fiery passion for poetry. We can recall here Tamburlaine's passion for Zenocrate and Marlowe's for Helen. What we need to remember here is that their lust for beauty is not different from their lust for wealth and power. The beauties these heroes are shown worshiping are earthly rather than heavenly. No protestant humanist of the Elizabethan age would endorse this pursuit of earthly beauty. Their love does not ennoble them, does not raise them to any spiritual height, as it might a Dante or Petrarch. On the contrary, their love makes them impious. Their passion for poetry, too, is purely physical, surely sensuous, nothing beyond. As Gaveston, the bosom friend of Edward, reveals:

> I must have wanton poets pleasant wits,
> Musicians, that with touching of a string
> May draw the pliant king which way I please.
> Music and poetry is his delight;
> Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
> Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
> And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
> Like sylvan nymph my pages shall be clad;
> My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
> Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay.
> Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
> With hair that gilds the water as it glides,

Crownets of pearls about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive-tree,
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring; and there hard by,
One like Actaeon peeping through the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,
And running in the likeness of a hart
By yelping hounds pulled down, shall seem to die; –
Such things as these best please his majesty.

Normally, love of beauty and art (poetry) should indicate positive, ennobling qualities in the hero, but it does not really indicate any such value in the Marlowean hero. If we go by the ethics of the Elizabethan age, we must regard the hero's attitude towards beauty and art also as an expression of his misdirected or corrupted desire. The beauties he worships, or passionately desires, are earthly rather than heavenly. In his love of poetry also, the hero does not get above a pagan understanding. According to the Elizabethan doctrine, true poetry is a matter not primarily of art (or learning), but of inspiration; not a labour, but a gift; not a beauty digested by restless "heads", but, as Spenser observed, a beauty infused into mortal breasts out of the Almighty's bosom. A second effect of the Renaissance theory in respect of beauty's effect is neatly stated in a couplet of Chapman's:

Beauty in heaven and earth this grace doth win,
It supples vigour, and it lessens sin.

The physical beauty, in Marlowean hero, does effect a change, just as it does in Shakespearean, although in a very limited mearure.

Finally, the Elizabethan theory of passions enables us to comment on the nature of the Marlowean hero's fury. Tamburlaine is the best example. Among the various protagonists of Marlowe's he is perhaps the most furious. It has already been stated that the Renaissance writers were not stoic in their theory of passions. Instead of flatly repudiating inspiration, they adopted the Platonic distinction of two types of inspiration. This doctrine, well stated by Du Bartas, is that fury can arise from two widely different sources:

For even as humane fury maks the man
Les then the man: so heavenly fury can
Make man pas man, and wander in holy mist,
Upon the fyrie heaven to walk at list.

Elizabethans considered this quite an important distinction. Barnabe Barnes elaborates upon it in his *A Divine Centurie of Spirituall Sonnets*. Also, Chapman applies the dichotomy to poetic insptiration:

> There being in Poesy a twofold rapture (or alienation of soul, as the above-said teacher terms it) one insania, adisease of the mind, and a mere madness, by which the infected is thrust beneath all degrees of humanity… (for this poor poesy in this diseased and

> impostorous age, is so barbarously vilified); the other is *divinus furor*, by which the sound and divinely healthful…. One a perfection directly infused from God; the other an infection obliquely and degenerately proceeding from man. Of the divine fury, my Lord, your Homer hath ever been both first and last instance.

Thus, the Elizabethans did not believe that all things "spiritual' are divine. Instead, they thought that often the human spirit burns with what Fulke Greville called "false flames spiritual but infernal." And it is this "infernal flame" that we find in full in the person of the Marlowean hero. Tamburlaine or Faustus, Barabas or Edward, this flame, which is demonic rather than divine, satanic rather than solemn, informs their beings. Thus, even their passion for beauty and art (poetry) is an expression of the same fury, which is hedonistic rather than heavenly, demonic rather than divine.

Conclusively, the tragedy Marlowe's heroes meet with is the tragedy of uncontrolled, misdirected, and diseased passions. In that sense, they are very different from Shakespeare's heroes, the greatest of them, who are ignited in the core by the divine spark.

MARLOWEAN TRAGEDY:

Among the Elizabethans Marlowe holds a unique position so far as the dramatic form of tragedy is concerned. His tragedies, even though they share many a common trait with those of Shakespeare and others, remain a class apart. They are a rare negative form which, as Una Ellis-Fermor suggests, "might be called Satanic tragedy, the drama which oversets tragic balance, not merely by denying immanent good, but be implying a Satanic universe, a world-order behind the manifestation of event as evil as the event itself. To this kind belong, among others, some of the plays of Euripides, Marlowe's, some of Strimdberg…. This group of plays… at its height, magnitude of theme and power of passion again appear as distinguishing characteristics."

Marlowe's tragedy appears at its height in *Faustus*. The play has a characteristic form. Marlowe takes up a unique position as a tragic thinker. There is in his tragedy an implacable paradox on which rests his understanding of the universe. In his view, man's innate fallibility on the one hand, and, on the other, the infallibility demanded by inflexible law. As Marlowe expresses in *Faustus*, he sees

> Wearisome condition of humanity,
> Born under one law, to another bound.

In Marlowe's understanding, there appears only one conclusion to this paradox: "Why then belike we must sin and so consequently die." Here in the precision and finality of this deduction can be seen a vision, which is terrifying alike in tis assumptions and in its omissions. Marlowe's premise clearly implies that man is predestined to destruction by some determinate power capable of intention and

purpose. As such, in his view, the purpose of this power can only be sadistic. The world-order it seems to imply must derive from a Satanism more nearly absolute that we find in Euripides.

It must, however, be admitted that neither in *Faustus* nor in any other play of his does Marlowe state this assumption in explicit terms. Also, the implication itself rests on a few passages in his plays, especially *Faustus*. Even in a play like *Edward II* , which is perhaps the least-Satanic of his tragedies, the conclusion about the world that is stated is in no way different from the one in Faustus. Note, for instance, the following that young Mortimer utters in the play's last scene:

> Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel
> There is a point, to which when men aspire,
> They tumble headlong down: that point I touched,
> And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
> Why should I grieve at my declining fall? –
> Farewell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer,
> That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,
> Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

Here, as elsewhere in the Elizabethan plays, including Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the wheel of Fortune is generally the wheel of fire. It sends the climber tumbling down headlong. The climbing is, of course, as much metaphoric, or more, as it is material. Lear gets on to this wheel's dangerous point. Faustus reaches there. And so does Mortimer. All come tumbling down headlong. There seems (to them) something sinister in the world where this wheel of fortune governs. They feel this sinister power. They cry out, even when they are being taken away.

As Faustus, and other heroes of Marlowe, seem to suggest, evil is not only inherent in man's destiny but is also both irremediable and predetermined. Only a consistent vision of a Satanic universe could, of course, beget the initial paradox. Marlowe never raises the question: Why, if the laws of the universe be such, should man, himself a part of that universe, be so irreconcilably opposed to them? To a convinced Satanist, it should not, in fact, be a paradox. Given a sadistic and malevolent power directing the affairs of the world-order, there should not be any inducement to postulate a further transcendent power or intelligence, relating or reconciling the contradictions of man's capacity and God's demands. The problem with Marlowe is that he does not achieve a balance between two interpretations of the universe. Rather, he creates an immobility and rigidity of protest. In his drama, the spirit of man is always set against the power of the universe, but there is no equilibrium between two worlds of thought. Marlowe does not question the nature of the world-order, like Shakespeare does. He only sees it steadily and sees it evil. At least, that is what the heroes of his tragedies seem to perceive.

Marlowe seems to give a direct and outward expression to his Satanism. And the expression is so complete that it seems almost impossible to reconcile

with its finality our persistent impression of tragic mystery in his plays. One sees the force of tragedy in Marlowe's plays like *Tamburlaine*, *Faustus* and *Edward II* . One would not feel inclined to deny it at any cost. At the same time, one cannot overlook the Satanic design of the world-order being suggested equally forcefully. The problem is that of reconciliation. For if the Satanic view is accepted, then there is no tragedy. What we have is only a negative of the morality. And if his plays are accepted as tragedies, which they decidedly are, then how do we accommodate the Satanic vision, which destroys the sense of mystery about life so pertinent for a tragic world-order. Shakespeare maintains that balance, and maintains it superbly. Marlowe upsets this balance, and upsets it disturbingly. No doubt, the framework of Marlowe's thought, and the deductive process by which he arrives at his conclusions, is quite consistent within its limits, it is, in fact, unassailable. At the same time, it cannot be overlooked that it does not take into account the whole of life experience. It is true that the Satanic reading of the universe may permit Marlowe to confound Hell in Elysium and see Helen's beauty fairer than the evening air. But there remains one thing that Marlowe is not able to subjugate to that world-order which predestines universal damnation. Marlowe does not seem to consider the source from which springs his passionate judgement. His imagination seems to reveal a universe rather different from the one his Satanic reading presents. In a way, then, there seems a split in his mind which does not admit a reconciliation between the logical demonstration (which is Satanic) and the imaginative revelation (which is not Satanic).

We cannot but conclude that in this division of Marlowe's mind lies the dualism and conflict essential to the tragic mood. It does not, of course, constitute a balancing of one interpretation against another. It only reveals that the absolute Satanism is actually flawed. The reader is left with the impression of a potential balancing force to challenge its absolutism. Thus, even in the extreme case of *Faustus*, the most nearly Satanic tragedy one can find, it appears that in so far as drama is Satanic, it loses tragic balance. But in so far as it is tragic, it is not Satanic. Also, one can see in Marlowe's plays the same balancing of content by form which one sees in the plays of Sophocles. At least a partial challenge to the suffering and evil in the outer action comes from that beauty of form and style which itself gives the lie to the implication that the fundamental order of things is evil. It can be seen that this in itself implies harmony. The revelation of beauty in form can be said to be an unwitting testimony to that beneficence or immanent good of which beauty and form are manifestations.

Nevertheless, in the tragedies of Marlowe, an absolute balance is overset. The magnitude of passion and thought again become possible because the action is related to a surrounding universe greater in scope and significance than the figures and events that constitute the play's action. Even though the direct inference be to a universe of implacable evil, this does not detract from the

grandeur, though it may from the wholeness and sameness of the final impression. Also, beyond this direct influence lies the indirect and unwitting testimony to the "world of profit and delight" of the poet's vision. It resides in beauty, in form and in the unacknowledged sources of the poet's vision. And it is this which maintains a partial balance in the play, despite Marlowe's logical and intentional Satanism.

PLOT-STRUCTURE OF EDWARD II:

Compared to other tragedies of Marlowe, *Edward II* is generally considered his greatest dramatic success. However, before the question of success or failure can be settled, it is imperative to acquaint ourselves with the Elizabethan norms of dramatic construction, its rules of construction, principles and practices, which operated also in the form of conventions. One of the dramatic form popular in the Elizabethan age was the history or chronicle play. Marlowe's *Edward II* shows, on the one hand, close affinity with this popular form. Like the popular form, it has a stirring plot with a fast movement of incident as well as plenty of variety. Another popular form of drama during the Elizabethan period was tragedy. Marlowe's *Edward II* shows an equally close affinity with this form also. Like any other Elizabethan tragedy, it attempts to bring on to the stage heart-rendring scenes filled with passionate speeches, moving pathos, and high tragic grandeur. Thus, the play's plot construction involves two different techniques for its development. We see that in this play, characters not only carry the emotional burden of the play, but also sustain its plot. On the other hand, it is equally clear that the play's plot is not entirely dependent on what the characters do. Thus, Marlowe, quite cleverly, has struck a balance between a plot whose events are directed by its hero and one which develops independently of the hero and reacts upon him. No doubt, the central character, Edward II, sets certain events in motion, but he is also made to play a passive role in the plot. Thus, while the former role is required by the tragic form, the latter is required by the form of the history play.

The plot of *Edward II* is split into several separate episodes, most of which are short, but easy to follow as a close-knit, coherent and logical chain of cause and effect. In that sense, the play has a plot as defined by Aristotle, having a beginning, middle and end. The principal thread unifying all the separate episodes is, of course, the person and character of the king himself. Thus, Marlowe succeeds in making an appreciable advance in the direction of what is commonly called "character-drama". But he does not seem to be equally successful all along the line. There seem to have cropped up some problems on the way, which the dramatist is not able to handle with great success. For instance, he seems greatly intent on creating a fast-moving plot that he does not leave himself enough room for developing the emotional significance of each episode. The scenes follow one another much too quickly. Also, there are too many of these scenes. As a result, they fail to take root in our memory. If we

compare it with Shakespeare's *Richard III*, this weakness, by contrast, becomes all the more glaring. In the case of Marlowe's play, large part of the action is rather hurried and breathless, where nothing is carried through to its proper conclusion. We have long stretches of dramatic action where the language is entirely factual and the choice of words is determined by the practical necessity of keeping the plot rolling. The language is bare in that it only carries information, instruction, explanation, question, or answer. In other words, language in these stretches moves on the surface only, never permitted to move inward. No doubt, there are moments when the emotional atmosphere begins to grow more intense, but somehow Marlowe's "mighty line," for which he has been famous, is nowhere to be seen. Whatever outbursts of feeling there are, they are isolated having no reverberation in the entire scene or dialogue. Thus Marlowe's new dramatic technique does not convey much of what the set speech had earlier given us. It seems Marlowe, in this play, has not discovered a language, like that of Shakespeare's mature tragedies, which could be capable of representing every kind of incident concretely, and which was also succinct, emotionally satisfying, and forceful in expression.

This sort of structural discrepancy is particularly noticeable in scenes in which the dramatist makes an attempt to express some emotion but leaves the expression incomplete. An example of it can be seen in Act I, Scene IV, where Edward falls into a monologue as he is grieving over Gaveston's separation, and does not pay any attention to the Queen and others on the stage:

K. Edw. He's gone, and for his absence thus I mourn.
Did never sorrow go so near my heart
As doth the want of my sweet Gaveston;
And could my crown's revenue bring him back,
I would freely give it to his enemies,
And think I gained, having bought so dear a friend.
Q. Isab. Hark! How he harps upon his minion.
K. Edw. My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain,
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.
Ah! Had some bloodless Fury rose from hell,
And with my kingly scepter struck me dead,
When I was forced to leave my Gaveston!
Lan. Dialblo What passions call you these?
Q. Isab. My gracious lord, I come to bring you news.
K. Edw. That you have purled with your Mortimer!
Q. Isab. That Gaveston, my lord, shall be repealed.

This formal lament of the king for his departed "lover" is familiar enough. But it is cut short. And we are soon plunged into a matter-of-fact dialogue. Earlier, the Queen's lament when repulsed by Edward meets with the same fate; in fact, that

is cut short even more abruptly than the King's. Another instance of a similar abrupt abandoning of a lament is that of the younger Spencer when Edward is led away.

A similar sort of structural discrepancy can be noticed in the case of the play's soliloquies, especially the ones that appear in the first half of the play. While on the one hand there are mythological imagery and classical parallels, along with rhetorical exaggerations in the manner of the classical tragedies, on the other, there is very different language in the context of the play, the two being at great variance with each other. At another occasion, later in the play, the queen begins a speech of welcome to her friends on their return to England. This is quickly followed by her mournful reflection on the state of affairs at the time. Then she goes on appealing to the absent Edward. At this juncture, the younger Mortimer interrupts her to say

> Nay, madam, if you be a warrior,
> You must not grow so passionate in speeches.

This seems symptomatic of what Marlowe himself has to do often in the play when speeches go passionate. The dramatist was aware of the fact that the long-drawn set speeches in the manner of Tamburlaine would act as clogs in his new technique of rapid movement. He must have also realized that for King Edward, whom he made a passive character, very different kind of speech would be required. In Tampurlaine, his speeches become a substitute for action. Here action is swift leaving no scope for those speeches. In *Edward II* , active emotion resolves itself into a tragic passivity. So to correspond with that mood, a new style of expression was required.

However, the set speech comes into its own in the later half of *Edward II*. It becomes a legitimate feature of the dramatic architecture. That makes clear the King's role as well, that he is only a martyr. In order that our sympathies may be aroused for his suffering, investing the King's figure with pathos, dignity and splendour, Marlowe deliberately employes a different style altogether. While the king is an active partner in the action in the first half of the play, in the second half he comes to the fore only as a sensitive and suffering soul. However, it must be noticed that what would earlier have been a speech of self-revelation in the form of monologue is now addressed to another and is accompanied by sensible business. Note the dramatic compression in a speech like the following that appears in the play's later part:

> Father, thy face should harbour no deceit.
> O, hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart,
> Pierced deeply with sense of my distress,
> Could not but take compassion of my state.
> Stately and proud, in riches and in train,
> Whilom I was, powerful, and full of pomp:
> But what is he whom rue and empery
> Have not in life or death made miserable?

Come, Spencer; come, Baldock, come, sit down by me;
Make trial now of that philosophy,
That in our famous nurseries of arts
Thou suckest from Plato and from Aristotle.
Father, this life contemplative is heaven.
O that I might this life in quiet lead.
But we, alas, are chas'd; and you, my friends,
Your lives and my dishonour they pursue.
Yet, gentle monks, for treasure, gold nor fee,
Do you betray us and our company.

This short and self-revelatory speech is typical of the present scene. But in the next, which expresses the king's abdication, there are two long set-speeches, perhaps the longest in the play. The way Marlowe uses these speeches shows his powerful sense of drama. For one thing, they add depth to the symbolic transfer of the crown. For another, they endue the king's figure with a genuine pathos. Here, Marlowe succeeds in contriving one of those great dramatic situations, packed with significance, which invite deep attention from audience. At this moment Marlowe deliberately slows down the tempo, makes the episode a moving spectacle.

Edward's abdication speeches are often compared to the abdicaion speeches in Shakespeare's *Richard II.* It only shows how Marlowe succeeded in creating a form of self-revelation, which should reflect both past and present circumstances, and thereby make this episode the focal point of the plot. Here again, as in *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe dramatizes a spiritual conflict through the medium of the set-speech. Although not entirely free from sententious maxims, Marlowe attains in this set-speech the maximum effect English verse could encompass. Its richness includes a number of functions performed simultaneously. Although there are several of the king's speeches in Act IV, and some of them quite long, one should suffice, one of the shorter ones, to have a feel of the kind of speeches he makes at the end of the play:

Call me not lord; away – out of my sight;
Ah, pardon me; grief makes me lunatic!
Let not the Mortimer protect my son;
More safety there is in a tiger's jaws
Than his embracements. Bear this to the queen,
Wet with my tears, and dried again with sighs;
[*Gives a handkerchief*]
If with the sight thereof she be not moved,
Return it back and dip it in my blood.
Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I. Yet how have I transgressed,
Unless it be with too much clemency?

These speeches show much greater homogeneity of structure and subordination of the individual parts to the total effect than the speeches in Marlowe did ever before. Here character-revelation and action-movement are so blended into a single speech as had not been achieved in Marlowe's earlier plays. Here, these speeches are an example of "the dramatized and fully dramatic set speech which Shakespeare was to handle with such consummate mastery, and which he was to endow with new profoundities of thought and feeling." With this last observation by Wolfgang Clemen, we can say that Marlowe, quite like Shakespeare, although before him, is able to combine successfully the two forms of tragedy and history play in the single plot structure of *Edward II* .

There is another way of looking at the structure of the play, as is shown by M. C. Bradbrook. In this view, *Edward II* has construction of plot comparable with the best drama of the Elizabethan period, but it also marks the decline of the soliloquy, clipping of the character. As Bradbrook argues, "Marlowe's compression of his sources and his articulation of the plot has been much praised; it is evidence of this new preoccupation with construction; but it is not always realized that it is responsible for the decline of the soliloquy. In his early plays only the heroes soliloquise and then not for the purpose of making the narrative clear, but for the purpose of expressing the central feelings of the play. In *Edward II* there is no central feeling or theme; it is merely a history. These soliloquies are merely pointers indicating when they are on Edward's side and when they are not. Sometimes the change is very clumsily done: the transformation of Isabella is not at all convincing. Mortimer, before his capture, is the most reckless of the Barons; afterwards he is a Machiavel. Kent vacillates more frequently but has less of a character to pose. Edward is really a different person before and after his capture: he even becomes much older to heighten the pathos."

As we have seen both Wolfgang and Bradbrook find no fault with the chain of incidents of the play's plot in the Aristotalian sense. They praise its construction. But for the same reason they find the play neglecting or undermining the other aspects, such as character and soliloquy. They also attack Marlowe for the improbable change in characters and the abrupt shifts from pathos to stark dialogue. But much of this faulty-finding seems more for saying something not being said by others. If the play has been praised for its plot, then it must be attacked on other grounds. Of course, with a view to understanding the play's construction as a whole. Aristotle lays emphasis on the aspect of probability in the depiction of both character and incident. This kind of criticism has had its day. If one says it is a good history play, the other will say it is not good tragedy, and vice-versa. Still another can say it does not combine the two well. Also if one praises it for its plot, the other can also says it undermines character. So on and so forth.

What we need to remember is that Marlowe is the first Elizabethan dramatist, laying the foundation of various dramatic forms. He does not have

the benefit of any native tradition before him. He had only the Moralities to fall beck upon. Hence he goes back and goes out to the classics and the Italians for models. We should also not forget that whatever he has done, others have taken advantage of that and gone ahead, Shakespeare in particular. We can find echoes of Marlowe in many of Shakespeare's plays. Keeping the position of Marlowe in mind, his position of being a pioneer, who laid down the foundation of the Elizabethan drama, it can be said that his *Edward II* , like his *Doctor Faustus* and other plays, is one of the greatest of its type in its own age. We must study a writer's work in the historical context in which it appears, and study it in relation to the principles and practices of its age. In the context of the Elizabethan age, in its earliest stage of drama, Marlowe's work, including *Edward II*, is a very significant contribution to the English drama. His tragic sense, his memorable heroes, his powerful speeches, his dramatic sense, and, above all, his "mighty line," as Jonson called it, leave one wondering how a pioneer, without any benefit of native peers, could accomplish all this, and accomplish so early in his life. We know he died at the age of 39, when Shakespeare had just made a beginning of his dramatic career. If we do not forget this context, the plot of *Edward II* would not be found faulty on any count. On the contrary, much would be discovered for admiration and wonder.

EDWARD II AS A HISTORICAL PLAY:

Except *Dido*, *Edward II* is the only play of Marlowe's which is not dominated by one character. Also, the character at the play's centre, the hero, is not, like Faustus or Tamburlaine, an aspiring mind. For sure, the centre of the play is King Edward, and not Mortimer. Perhaps Marlowe was influenced by the great success of Shakespeare's*Henry IV*, and thought of doing a chronical play himself. Marlowe seems to have closely followed the example of the more popular playwright. Like Shakespeare, he goes to the English chronicles. Going through Marlowe's source in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, one can see how the dramatist shows his talent for the stage by making proper selection, condensation, and adaptation to shape, out of the chronicle history of an inglorious reign, an historical tragedy. The title of the play itself suggests a chronicle: "The troublesome reign and lamentable death of Edward the Second, king of England with the tragical fall of proud Mortimer." This long title creates a little confusion by its mention of Mortimer and calling his fall tragic. This has inspired some critics to make out a case for Mortimer as the hero of the tragedy, which is very much misleading. The running-title: "The Tragedy of Edward The Second" represents the play more correctly.

Marlowe did not read history as widely as did Michael Drayton, nor did he need to as a dramatist. As a dramatist, he rightly ignored as unsuitable to his purpose much of the *Chronicles* material concerning England's war with Scotland and Ireland and France. He also ignored many a private war between baron and baron. His ignoring all those trivial disconnected details which the

Chronicles recorded shows how keen a sense of drama Marlowe possessed. He did, of course, regarded historical dating and historical sequence as wholly within his control if it led to economy and coherence, and, above all, if it led to the balance of dramatic power. As F. P. Wilson has rightly observed, "the balance of one character or motive is here essential, for this is one play in which his purpose is to illustrate weakness, not strength. Weakness does not act but is acted upon, or if it acts its actions are frustrated and ineffective. Therefore Marlowe was forced by the nature of his theme to distribute the interest over a variety of characters as he never had occasion to do elsewhere, to exhibit not only the central figure of Edward in whom the play's intention is chiefly expressed but also the agents of power and corruption who act upon his figure."

Edward II opens with the stage set for the conflict to follow. The conflict is depicted in the four movements of the opening scene. First, we see Gaveston, King's favourite, just returned from banishment. He shows great eagerness to see the king and to devise the sensuous pleasures in which both take great delight. Gaveston is not a mere self-seeker of the chronicles; he is as much infatuated with the king as the king with him. Both have a ruling passion which counts the world well lost for love and pleasure. Second, the king's quarrel with lords who are bitterly jealous of the upstart Gaveston. Here we meet the king's chief enemies – Lancaster, both Mortimers, and Warwick. Third, the reunion of king and Gaveston. We get a hint about the ensuing chaos symbolized, as in Shakespeare, by overflowing sea. See how Edward speaks:

> I have my wish, in that I joy thy sight;
> And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land,
> Than bear the ship that shall transport thee hence.

Fourth, Edward and Gaveston violently abuse the Bishop of Coventry. Thus, they add to the hostility of the lords the more powerful hostility of the Church. It is the great dramatic power of Marlowe that in a short single scene he has introduced the play's central conflict as well as the main characters who are involved in that conflict. Only Queen Isabel remains to be introduced, who soon appears to complete the tally of chief characters as well as the set of various interests involved in the conflict. Of these characters, Gaveston gets murdered in the opening of Act III; Lancaster is captured at the battle of Boroughbridge at the end of the same Act; Mortimer and Isabel alone remain important until the last Act. As the play's action progresses, their role in the personal tragedy of Edward becomes increasingly important.

Even though of subsidiary importance, king's brother, Edmund Earl of Kent cannot be ignored in the chronicle play of Marlowe. Her throws his lot now with the king now with the enemies in a futile attempt to trim the ship of the state. His concern for the king is wholly untouched by jealousy, hatred, lust, or self-interest. He can be regarded, unlike any other character in Marlowe, as a point of reference.

As a history play Marlowe's *Edward II* has similarities with Shakespeare's *Richard II*, written a few years later. Shakespeare must have known this, more so because he had acted a part in Marlowe's play. In both these historical characters there is a fundamental weakness as dramatic creations. In both there is a change, which sounds inconsistent. We see them passing from the cruelty and selfishness of power to the helplessness and suffering of powerlessness. It may have been the case in the historical character. Besides, it is not all that improbable either. For, as the hero of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* remarks, "we turn Christian in defeat." But the similarities between the two plays are superficial rather than vital. In the case of Marlowe's play we pass through a much grimmer world of evil and corruption, a much deeper and darker world than the one in *Richard II*.

The turning point in Edward's fortunes comes with the death of his dear friend, Gaveston. Temporarily his fortunes do recover with the victory at Boroughbridge, but the beginning of his end becomes the escape of Mortimer to France, where the Queen and Prince Edward have already been sent. We see in Act IV the defeat of King Edward and his capture by the forces led by Mortimer and Isabel. Here again questions of inconsistency have been raised about the characters of Mortimer and Isabel. We do, of course, face in Marlowe character changing rather than developing – a major difference between the two dramatists. Here also, these two characters change rather than develop. The protesting Ishal becomes a plotting Isabel. Reckless Mortimer becomes a ruthless Mortimer. Well, it is not all that improbable. We humans do behave like that. Consistencies of conduct in a mechanical fashion can never come from living characters. Also, after all Isabel is Edward's wife, and Mortimer has been under great influence of Isabel. The change in Mortimer from a proud and self-seeking lord to a Machievalian character after his ascendance on the defeat of Edward is decidedly surprising. He says, "Fear'd am I more than lov'd." Incidentally, one of the mxims of Machiavelli was that "it is better for a Prince to be feared than loved." Another maxim was that "A man is happy so long as Fortune agreeth unto his nature and humour." Among the characters in the play Mortimer alone, or most, calls on Fortune. When on the height of his power, he boasts that he makes Fortune's wheel turn as he pleases. He quotes from Ovid to that effect. Also, when Edward's murder is brought home to him, and he sees that his own end is in sight, we do not see in him any moral compunction but mere acquiescence in the decree of an arbitrary fate.

The most puzzling character to critics has been that of Isabel, the wife of Edward, and as such Queen of England. One thing we need to remember is that Marlowe departs from the historical character whenever the dramatic necessity so demands. Also, even in the dramatic character he would make change, even to the charge of inconsistency, whenever the dramatic purpose so necessitates. For instance, the *Chronicles* do not make any mention of an intrigue between Isabel and Mortimer before Edward's murder. Of this intrigue we do hear much

in the first two Acts, but always from Edward and Gaveston. The effect of these slanders (not truth) on the king's neglected queen is to light up his unhallowed passion for his favourite, his privado:

Like frantic Juno will I fill the earth
With ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries;
For never doted Jove on Garymede
So much as he on cursed Gavestone.

Thus speaks the queen in her soliloquy. She betrays her love for Mortimer only after she has made all efforts to retain Edward, who treats her as a hinderance in his passion for Mortimer. Her utterances like, "No farewell to poor Isabel, thy queen?" and "Yes, yes, for Mortimer, your lover's sake," keep echoing in our ears all along the large part of the play. But at long last she reveals in her soliloquy:

So well hast thou deserv'd, sweet Mortimer,
As Isabel could live with thee for ever.

And with this she continues:

In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,
Whose eyes are fix'd on none but Gaveston,
Yet once more I'll importune him with prayers.

When prayers fail, she thinks of taking refuge with her brother, the king of France. This soliloquy prepares her for what is called "guilt," but she is not yet "guilty." Mortimer keeps that in reserve until he needs it. We are given the first assurance of guilt when Isabel and Mortimer have returned from France with their victorious army. It is then that this assurance is to be lived. We are told by Kent, Edward's brother:

Mortimer
And Isabel do kiss, while they conspire,
And yet she bears a face of love forsooth.
Fie on that love that hatcheth death and hate.

In this later part of the play Isabel becomes a sort of She-Machieval. She is now cruel as well as unfaithful. She shows her skills in the art of turning and dissembling. While in public she shows great concern for the state of the country and the king's plight, in private she aids and abets every villainy of Mortimer. The play's horror is increased by the fact that in the last two acts Edward never comes face to face with his tormentors – Mortimer and Isabel. The king becomes so fear stricken that while in prison he is haunted by the idea of their torturing his young son, viewing them as the worst hounds of the species:

For he is a lamb, encompass'd by wolves,
Which in a moment will abridge his life.

And again,

Let not that Mortimer protect my son;
More safety is there in a tiger's jaws,

Than his embracements.

Edward's revulsion of feeling from contempt to pity comes about with the change of character in Isabel and Mortimer:

What, are you mov'd? pity you me?
Then send for unrelenting Mortimer,
And Isabel, whose eyes, being turn'd to steel,
Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear.

At the end, as is usual with Marlowe's heroes, Edward becomes very lonely, terrified and helpless. But he is not penitent like Faustus. Neither is Shakespeare's *Richard II*. They resembles Lear in that they "did ever slenderly know themselves," but, unlike Lear, they never come to know themselves. The *Chronicles* present Edward penitent, but Marlowe finds no use for penitence in his purpose. His concern for his son becomes uppermost, but he remains unwise about his own follies:

Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I. Yet how have I trangress'd,
Unless it be with too much clemency?

The *Chronicles* give full narration to the humiliation and murder of Edward. The details are pitiless, sordid, and, in fact, horrifying. Here, Marlowe leaves out nothing. Such stuff is to his taste as dramatist. He uses all of Holnished and adds more from Stow. For instance, the washing and shaving of the king in puddle water is added from Stow. Compassion does not seem to come easily to Marlowe. Cruelty attracts him immensely. An evidence of this is the macabre scenes of cruelty in *Edward II* which are not there in Shakespeare's *Richard II*. The two plays become very different in their endings. Marlowe creates a professional murder, his own invention, who revels in the art of handling his victim:

You shall not need to give instructions;
'Tis not the first time I have killed a man.
I learn'd in Naples how to poison flowers;
To strangle with a lawn thrust through the throat,
To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point;
Or whilst one is asleep, to take a quill
And blow a little powder in his ears:
Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down.
But yet I have a braver way than these.

This "braver way" is reported by the *Chronicles*. But, it seems, it was too much even for Marlowe, or for the Elizabethan audience. The red-hot spit (metal spike) which Lightborn (the professional murderer) orders to be prepared is not called for. But the victim's wail (of the murdered Edward) rang through the theatre, as it did, according to Hollinshed,

> Through the castle and town of Berkeley, so that divers being awakened therewith (as they themselves confused) prayed

heartily to God to receive his soul, when they understood by his
cry what the matter meant.

Marlowe's tragedy of *Edward II* resembles, in its ending, more the Jacobean tragedies than those of Shakespeare. It is too much of torture to suit the tragic effect. Rather than effect the Aristotelian catharsis, it instigates outrage. Marlowe's pet theme for tragedy is personal ambition and he does well there as in *Doctor Faustus*, but he does not do as well in a historical tragedy. The latter suffers from comparison with Shakespeare's. The changes in characters are too abrupt and drastic to sound plausible.

MAJOR CHARACERS IN EDWARD II:

Among the characters in *Edward II*, those of Edward, Gaveston, Mortimer and Isabel are more important than the others. They are more important because they form the foreground of the play's action, while others constitute the background necessary for the main players to act. The others are only a part of the context. Edward is the hero of the tragedy, the central character whose story the play dramatizes. Gaveston is the principal cause of Edward's tragedy. Mortimer is the foil to the hero, a sort of rival in both love and politics. Isabel is not merely the wife of Edward, a counterpoint to Gaveston, but also a partner with Mortimer in the business of overthrowing the king, her own husband. Hence these four character deserve much greater attention than do the others. Also, it is these four character who are developed by the dramatist, who grow during the course of the play's action, and whose fortunes undergo the tragic change in the Aristotalian sense. Let us, therefore, take up, one by one, these four major characters, and try to understand what they are like.

KING EDWARD II:

King Edward is the hero of the play. The entire action of the play revolves around him. Also, he is shown more fully than any other character. As such, he takes greater space in his speeches and soliloquies than any other characters. The play opens with his letter being read out by Gaveston, his favourite,

'My father is deceased! Come Gaveston,
And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend.'

We soon learn how Gaveston has been in banishment. His return, which too soon takes place, becomes the cause of the king's trouble. Not being a "noble" (of baron's birth, a lord) he is highly hated by the council of Lords. They tell Edward to either banish him again or face rebellion. They even threaten him of deposition, of removing him from the throne of England. Edward is adamant in the beginning. He is not prepared to sacrifice his friend at any cost:

I cannot brook these haughty menaces;
Am I a king, and must be overruled? –

Brother, display my ensigns in the field;
I'll bandy with the batons and the earls,
And either die or live with Gaveston.

This emotional commitment to Gaveston becomes the tragic flaw of Edward's character. Like the unbending hero of any tragedy, he is not prepared to compromise. Hence he breaks. Ultimately, he loses his kingdom, his wife, and his life. His end is highly tragic. There is a certain rashness in his character. He rashly reacts to whatever the barons say or do, and that involves him in all kinds of troubles.

Edward's love for Gaveston is more than male friendship. He is so enamoured of him that his love for him becomes a substitute for his love of his wife. As Mortimer remarks, "the king is love-sick for his minion." When finally he is forced to banish Gaveston to Ireland, his parting is too painful for him to bear:

Rend not my heart with thy too-piercing words;
Thou from this land, I from myself am banished.

When Gaveston is around, he would not care to even look at his wife. He treats her most rudely. When she asks, "Wither goes my lord?" his reply is "Fawn not on me, French strumpet! Get thee gone!" When she persists, he goes to the extent of accusing her of adultery. To her answer that on whom, if not her husband, shold she fawn, even Gaveston has the cheek to tell her:

Or Mortimer! With whom, ungentle queen –
I say no more – judge you the rest, my lord.

Gaveston may have played his part in poisoning the king's ears against his wife, making him suspicious about her relation with Mortimer. She may have also given him sufficient reason to so suspect his wife. But he does suspect her right from the beginning:

Thou art too familiar with that Mortimer,
And by thy means is Gaveston exiled;
But I would wish thee reconcile the lords,
Or thou shalt ne'er be reconciled to me.

When Isabel succeeds in reconciling the lords through Mortimer, she proves the suspicion of her husband. In fact, that makes even the reader to think about this relationship. Later, Isabel and Mortimer get together to oust the king and kill him. Around that time, she openly shows her love for Mortimer. They live together in the royal palace almost as man and wife, although without any formal marriage.

Edward's love for Gaveston determines his love and hate for others. His attitude to people is, "love me, love my dog." In this excessive passion for Gaveston Edward shows that, like any lover, he can ignore everything. He ignores his duties as king. He ignores his duties as husband. His love for one is proving costly for the kingdom. All accuse him of squandering the realm's

treasure on his flatterers like Gaveston, Mortimer puts it in plainer words than does anyone else:

> Uncle, his wanton humour grieves not me;
> But this I scorn, that one so basely born
> Should by his sovereign's favour grow so pert,
> And riot it with the treasure of the realm.
> While soldiers mutiny, for want of pay,
> He wears a lord's revenue on his back,
> And, Midas-like, he jets it in the court,
> With base outlandish cullions at his heels,
> Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show,
> As if that Proteus, god of shapes, appeared.

Edward neglects his country and kingdom for Gaveston, and has to pay for it by losing his crown and life. It is just like Antony losing his land and life for Cleopatra. The passion for Gaveston is as strong with him as Antony's for Cleopatra.

Excessive passion for anything, power or beauty or friendship, makes you blind to reality. Your vision of people gets coloured. Your view of the conditions in your kingdom becomes indifferent. It is this blindness that afflicts Edward. As Mortimer and Lancaster accuse him, it is not just the barons but commons also who are ready to rebel against him, while the neighbours launch aggressions:

> Look for rebellion, look to be deposed;
> Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
> And, lame and poor, lie groaning at the gates,
> The wild Oreyl, with swarms of Irish kerns,
> Lives uncontrolled within the English pale.
> Unto the walls of York the Scots make road,
> And unresisted drive away rich spoils.

All these warnings are wasted on Edward. His indulgent character knows no bounds. He is more given to entertainments with Gaveston than to the affairs of the realm. Hence the tragic conflict between duty and pleasure:

> The idle triumphs, masks, lascivious shows,
> And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston,
> Have drawn the treasury dry, and made thee weak;
> The murmuring commons, overstretched, break.

Tragedy, as Aristotle has defined it, is always caused by a flaw in the hero's character. The flaw is always the lack of balance in the passion or perspective of the central person, the hero. Here, it is so obviously there in Edward. He is so excessively in love with Gaveston that he becomes abnormal in his response to men and matters. He utterly fails to discharge his duties as king. Hence the tragic end.

Edward draws our pity and fear for him. Although for his own flaw, he falls and suffers. And his suffereing makes him an object of our pity and fear leading to the tragic catharsis. We shall not be so sympathetic to him had his suffering been merely for his mistakes. But that is not the case. He suffers as much for the villainy of others as for his own mistakes. His wife betrays him. She joins Mortimer. Mortimer proves Machiavellian. He conspires and intrigues to replace Edward both as king and husband. And he does succeed, though not for long. Thus, like King Lear in Shakespeare's play, Edward is more sinned against than sinning. Hence our pity for him. And it is in his suffering that he becomes wiser though sadder; he gets ennobled in suffering. See, for instance, the following:

> The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
> But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
> Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;
> But, when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,
> He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
> And highly scorning that the lowly earth,
> Should drink his blood, mounts up to the air.
> And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
> The ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,
> And that unnatural queen, false Isabel,
> That thus both hath pent and meued me in a prison;

Here, as usual in epic and tragedy, the comparison of the King's wound with that of the lion is meant to elevate his character. Like the lion among animals, the King is among men: superior to all, even in suffering. It is interesting that in these literary forms of the feudal times, it is conveniently forgotten by the character as well as the writer that the analogy also means that the kingdom is also like the forest, where the only right is the might. And the play does prove the point: we find how the entire conflict is for power, and how for power even your wife sides with those to whom the power has shifted.

Edward turns to self-pity in his worst condition as prisoner waiting for execution. Of course, he is ill-treated. But suffering breakes him. He no longer sounds a lion. Power prevails, as it has been doing earlier. This "dauntless mind" had signed his favourite's banishment under pressure from the barons, although earlier he roared a long time insisting to the contrary. Similarly, the "dauntless mind" becomes in prison more like a lamb than a lion. All that pomp and pride are gone now, for it was with the crown, not an inborn quality of character. See how he moans now in suffering, reminding us of Lear in his last days, going about moaning and pitying his own plight:

> But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
> But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
> My nobles rule, I bear the name of King;
> I wear the crown, but am controlled by them,

By Mortimer, and my unconstant queen,
Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy;
Whilst I am lodged within this cave of care,
Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,
To company my heart with sad laments,
That bleeds within me for this strange exchange.
But tell me, must I now resign my crown,
To make usurping Mortimer a King?

His dauntless mind's outpourings and protestations notwithstanding, he does resign his crown; just as he had signed, in the same manner, the banishment of Gaveston. We find that all along the play the king's rhetoric and his conduct do not really match with each other, nor perhaps are they meant to match by the dramatist. It seems Marlowe wishes to show, as does Shakespeare, that, after all, kings, too, are men, as common as others, once the crown is taken away. Also, like Shakespeare's Lear, Edward, once he has lost the crown and is facing the inevitable death at the hands of the rebels, turns philosophic, even religious, and sermonises about life and human nature. Addressing the Abbot, in whose hiding he was hoping to escape capture a little earlier, Edward pontificates the following:

Father, thy face should harbour no deceit.
O! hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart,
Pierced deeply with sense of my distress,
Could not but take compassion of my state.
Stately and proud, in riches and in train,
Whilom was, powerful, and full of pomp:
But what is he whom rule and empery
Have not in life or death made miserable?
Come, Spencer; come, Baldock, come sit down by me;
Make trial now of that philosophy,
That in our famous nurseries of arts
Thou suck'dst from Plato and from Aristotle.
Father, this life contemplative is heaven.
O that I might this life in quiet lead!
But we, alas! are chased; and you, my friends,
Your lives and my dishonour they pursue.

Marlowe, like Shakespeare again, shows how power makes you blind, puts a veil on your eyes, and how adversity gives you insight into the realities of life. It is now after losing the crown, becoming no better than a beggar, that Edward longs for a retired life of peace.

One more thing we need to note about Edward is that in adversity as well as in prosperity, he shows that he is a man of imagination. His speeches are highly poetic, full of similes and metaphors, imagery and alliteration. No wonder then that he is fond of poetry, plays, masks and such other

entertainment. Thus, he may not be a successful ruler, he is certainly a likeable human being. He loves those close to him, and he stakes his life for them. He is emotionally rich. And that makes him a greater tragic hero; for, like Lear, he may be rash, but he is rash owing to his rich emotions. He does err, but he errs on the right side. He is not given to deceit or intrigue. His tragic life, especially the end, is very touching.

YOUNGER MORTIMER:

Young Mortimer is the antagonist in *Edward II* , just as Edward is the protagonist. As a lord at the court of kind Edward, he is more critical of the king's style of functioning than any other lord. He stands out as the king's opponent right from the play's opening:

> I cannot, nor I will not; I must speak. –
> Cousin, our hands I hope shall fence our heads,
> And strike off his that makes you threaten us.
> Come, uncle, let us leave the brain-sick king,
> And henceforth parley with our naked swords.

In a way, he is as uncompromising, even more, as Edward. If Edward's demand is "love me, love my dog", his is, as Elder Mortimer puts it, "if you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston." He is quick of temperament as well as of intellect. He perceives the situation quite quickly and acts like the lightening. While others try to persuade the king to banish Gaveston, he has no patience with persuations. He thinks clearly and acts cleanly. Unlike Edward, he is not passion's slave. He is always clear headed and determined:

> Ah, that bewrays their baseness, Lancester!
> Were all the earls and barons of my mind,
> We'd hale him from the bosom of the king,
> Ant at the court-gate hang the peasant up,
> Who, swoln with venom of ambitious pride,
> Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

This firmness of mind that Mortimer shows here, he shows all along the play's action. Others may waver or become pitiful, he never gives a second thought to what he has once decided. After the decision he gets wholly focused on the execution of his decision. Until his decision is executed, he remains preoccupied with the pros and cons of the situation in hand.

If he is amenable to any influence it is that of the queen Isabel. Right from the beginning, he shows extra regard for her, and an attachment to her person. The way he changes his own decision to banish Gaveston and single-handedly persuades all others to agree to his revision of the case, and all because Isabel asked him to do so, shows how much amenable he is to her influence. However, even his regard, and, laterly revealed, love for Isabel cannot weaken his will on any issue of significance. When he has to change his decision on Gaveston, he changes his plan also. He uses the situation to his

advantage. Now he plans to kill him, which to him is better than leave him free in Ireland in the name of banishment. And when the occasion arises, he is the first to attack Gaveston: "Villain, thy life, unless I miss mine aim." He does not miss his aim, but he only wounds Gaveston. And when he finds that Gaveston is only wounded, not dead, he swears, "By heaven, the abject villain shall not live." He has the courage to call a spade a spade. He tells the king in no uncertain terms that his frolicking with his favourites is ruining both treasury and administration of the realm. He also has the rare courage to tell the king, "Who loves thee, but a sort of flatterers?" and does not stop at that. He goes a step further and forces the king to see reality. Not that the "blind" king does, but Mortimer certainly acts as an alarm bell for him:

> Thy court is naked, being bereft of those
> That make a king seem glorious to the world;
> I mean the peers, whom thou should'st dearly love:
> Libels are cast against thee in the street
> Ballads and rhymes made of thy overthrow.

His bluntness is like Hotspur's in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, and so is his hot temperament. But it is a sign of the complexity and conceit of his character, that when it comes to intrigue and scheming, he is the coolest of all and most secretive. Even his affair with Isabel remains a secret with him until the time it can be revealed without any threat to his position at the court.

Mortimer is a true politician. He never attacks Edward as a person; he always attacks him as king. Also, he never attacks him in the name of personal vengeance; he always does it in the name of his country and its people. He rebels and instigates others to rebel against the king, but he does so always in the name of the nation, for saving the honour and integrity of the crown of England. One can see how cleverly he conceals his ambition under the cloak of patriotism; just as he conceals his love for Isabel under the garb of regard for the madam queen. He reveals his affair with her only after Edward is deposed and captured and he himself has become a de facto king:

> Fair Isabel, now have we our desire;
> The proud corrupters of the light-brained king
> Have done their homage to the lofty gallows,
> Be ruled by me, and we will rule the realm.

But even as he makes love he is not unmindful of the situation of the realm and how it has now to be managed to their advantage. He is not like Edward whom pleasures would so consume that all else would be forgotten. Mortimer is just the opposite of Edward. He does not mix business with passion; the two remain separate, and he has the capacity to attend to both at one and the some time. Note, even while he talks of loving Isabel without any inhibition now since all their adversaries have either gone to the gallows or captured, he is engaged in thinking out the next steps to be taken at once:

> In any case take heed of childish fear,

For now we hold an old wolf by the ears,
That, if he slip, will seize upon us both,
And gripe the sorer, being griped himself.
Think, therefore, madam, that imports us much
To erect your son with all the speed we may
And that I be protector over him;
For our behoof, 'twill bear the greater sway
Whenas a king's name shall be under writ.

Although he knows he has no choice but to accept Edward's son as successor to the throne and that he cannot himself take over as king of England, he does not sacrifice his interest. By becoming the official protector of the adolescent king he knows he will be king for all purposes. Hence his self-interest is upper most.

The way he gets Edward murdered, and then gets the murderer himself eliminated shows how cunning he is at the game of political intrigue. But in the Elizabethan drama, the villain always gets his villainous due; he, too, gets destroyed or destroys himself. No doubt, he becomes power-drunk, forgets himself for a while. He thinks Mortimer would henceforth control the destiny of all in the kingdom:

As thou intend'st to rise by Mortimer,
Who now makes Fortune's wheel turn as he please,
Seek all the means thou canst to make him droop,
And neither give him kind word nor good look.

When it comes to dealing with his enemy, no one can be as cruel and ruthless as Mortimer. Note how he instructs here for the physical and mental torture of Edward, for his utter humiliation. And yet the nemesis always follows; the villain cannot escape his destiny. He must get the punishment. Call it "poetic justice." But it is always there in the Elizabethan tragedy, Marlowe's and Shakespeare's included. Like Edward's pride had a fall, so shall be Mortimer's. His pride is more, not less, than Edward's: "All tremble at my name, and I fear none." The murder of Edward ultimately does get revealed. His son, now king Edward III, comes to know of it, and he makes it known to all. As Isabel says, "I feared as much; murder cannot be hid." And hence Mortimer gets death for death. The new king orders his execution:

Ah, Mortimer, thou knowest that he is slain;
And so shall thou be too – why stays he here,
Bring him unto a hurdle, drag him forth;
Hang him, I say, and set his quarters up;
But bring his head back presently to me.

Now, like Edward, he, too, comes to see the reality of life. The wisdom comes to him, too, and as late as to Edward:

Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which when men aspire,
They tumble headlong down: that point I touched,

And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should grieve at my declining fall? –
Fairwell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer,
That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,
Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

This tragic awareness does dawn upon him at the night fall of his life. It is in keeping with the Elizabethan conventions of tragedy. Both the hero and the villain come to see the mirror of life at the end of the conflict. The tragedy is inevitable. It comes when pride and pomp dominate life. Wisdom follows tragedy, when contemplation and quiet rule the mind. Like any villain of Elizabethan tragedy, Mortimer, too, stands exposed at the end of the day. All his intrigues and machinations get known, and they come to nothing in that he, too, does not achieve what he aspired for. Blood for blood follows, death for death. He dies a dog's death, unsung, unremembered.

QUEEN ISABELLA:

By virtue of being the wife of king Edward II, Isabella is the queen of England. She hails from the royal family of France, where her brother is the king. Right from the play's opening we find her suspected by her husband of being unfaithful to him. To this suspicion on the part of her husband she responds with resentment and protest. On the other hand, she is aggrieved on account of her husband having greater passion for Gaveston than for her. Now, whether she starts looking for love elsewhere because Edward neglects her or he seeks love in Gaveston because it is not available from her is not made clear by the dramatist. In fact, in the beginning, we feel Edward is unnecessarily suspicious of Isabel's relation with Mortimer, and she is being ill treated by him. However, by the time we come to the later part of the play, we find that Edward was not altogether wrong. Maybe she is driven to seek love in Mortimer, and, later, becomes even an ally in the disposition and death of her husband. Whatever be the starting point, the relationship between the two is shown jarring from the very start. Gaveston, of course, is a very strong cause for the marital disruption.

Significantly, the first time we see Isabel in the play, she and Mortimer are in conversation; she and Edward are shown together later. Marlowe would not have so arranged it without a purpose. As she steps on to the stage, young Mortimer asks him, "Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast?" To this Isabel responds at some length, rather unusual for a first meeting. He is a lord at the court, and she is the queen. Besides they speak to each other with a certain degree of confidence and with a certain amount of intimacy. Note with care the following from Isabel:

Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,
To live in grief and baleful discontent;
For now, my lord, the king regards me not,

But doats upon the love of Gaveston.
He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,
Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;
And when I come he frowns, as who should say,
'Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston?

The fact that she can discuss her personal life with Mortimer (and she does not do so with any other male in the play, and strangely, there is no other female) clearly shows that Edward's suspicion is not without foundation. There is some intimacy between the two which is more than mere acquaintance. At the same time, there is decidedly something rather unnatural in the relationship between Edward and Gaveston. For otherwise he would not neglect his wife and his kingdom for the love of a friend. But he does, and Isabel is legitimately aggrieved.

Isabel's influence on Mortimer is demonstrated more than once. The best instance in the early part is her getting the Gaveston banishment decision reversed, and so easily:

Then let him stay; for rather than my lord
Shall he oppressed with civil mutinies,
I will endure a melancholy life,
And let him frolic with his minion.

She addresses him "sweet Mortimer" or "gentle Mortimer", and even prevents him from taking arms against the king:

Farewell, sweet Mortimer; and for my sake,
Forbear to levy arms against the king.

And he always faithfully does all that she tells him to do. One sees two faces of Mortimer; one, the firy, impatient, ruthless, outspoken Mortimer, who appears in dealing with all others; second, the cool, patient, sweet Mortimer, who appears in his dealings with Isabel. It is only in the later part of the play that both become determined to depose the king and eliminate him altogether so that they can have their ambition to enjoy the fruits of love and power unhindered. The change in Isabel, more than in Mortimer, seems so drastic that one feels the absence of a link between the two phases of her life. In fact, this difficulty arises in the case of all the three major characters; something which we do not experience in Shakespeare's *Richard II* or any other of his major plays. Either the relationship between the two as well as their characters are not wholly revealed in the earlier part or they are so subtly suggested that the reader does not easily comprehend the complexity of both until the entire action is completed. Maybe, these two characters, who are involved in an illicit activity of adultery and the illegitimate activity of deposing the king, need to keep their true characters and plans hidden until their ambitions have been realized. Whatever be the case, one does feel that there remains a gap between the early and later parts in the development of the play's action. As Aristotle says, the characters nor the events should surprise us. Of course, there are hints all along

in the play's action about what is to follow. And yet one remains a little dissatisfied, certainly with the revelation about Isabel's character.

What makes the whole thing about Isabel implausible is that she does not sound insincere in her claims and pleadings made to the king about her love for him, and yet she goes to the extent of conspiring not only to get him deposed but also to get him murdered. It becomes dramatically difficult to reconcile the two Isabels. Note, for instance, the Isabel of the early part; when Edward bids farewell to Gaveston, she feels hurt when the king ignores her altogether. Here is the situation dramatized:

Q. Isabel. No farewell to poor Isabel thy queen?
K. Edward. Yes, yes, for Mortimer, your lover's sake.
Q. Isabela. Heaven can witness I love none but you.
[Exeunt all but Queen Isabella]
From my embracements thus he breaks away.
O that mine arms could close this isle about,
That I might pull him to me where I would!
Or that these tears, that drizzle from mine eyes,
Had power to mollify his stony heart,
That when I had him we might never part.

In the Elizabethan convention of the soliloquy the speaker discloses her or his true self. There is no reason to believe here that Isabel is playing a deception on the king or the courtiers. Had that been the case, she would not be saying all that she says here in her soliloquy.

However, the same Isabel is shown, in the later part, a willing and determined accomplice of Mortimer in overthrowing her husband from the throne and getting him brutally murdered. Now note how the same queen behaves so very differently:

Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel,
Be thou persuaded that I love thee well,
And therefore, so the prince my son be safe,
Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,
Conclude against his father what thou wilt,
And I myself will willingly subscribe.

Here she is not merely ready to allow Mortimer to "conclude against" her husband as Mortimer desired but also offers to join herself in the task of eliminating him. Thus, the two positions are completely antithetical to each other. If Gaveston were the cause of "jar" between them, he is no longer there, and therefore she could easily get close to the king and maintain her position as wife, unless, of course, the relationship with Mortimer were stronger than the marital. In fact, now, for no obvious reason, she goes to the farthest extent of feeling unsafe until her husband Edward was murdered:

But, Mortimer, as long as he survives,
What safety rests for us, or for my son?

Mortimer being a practical man, living by deed, not by word, always demands explicit expression. We have seen how categorical he has always remained in his dealing with the issue of Gaveston. He never brooked any ambiguity from any one on the issue. Here, again, he wants a clear-cut answer from Isabel as to what she would like to do with her deposed and captured husband:

Y. Mortimer. Speak, shall he presently be dispatched and die?

Q. Isabel. I would he were, so 'twere not by my means.

It gives one creeps to hear Isabel say so. Where is the Isabel of that soliloquy who wanted to embrace the entire island of Britain to not let go her husband and love him for ever? When it comes to the killing of Mortimer, her response is very different. She wants him to be spared. She makes an appeal to her son (now king) to let him live:

For my sake, sweet son, pity Mortimer.

And then,

As thou receivedest thy life from me,
Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer!

Isabel never made any such appeal for saving her husband. In fact, she got him murdered. Had she wanted, Mortimer would have spared him, her influence being so strong with him. Edward is proved right in the later part of the play. And that changes our response to her from pity and sympathy to indifference and antipathy. With this wide gap remaining between the two images of Isabel, the character remains rather unconvincing.

GAVESTON:

If Edward is the hero and Mortimer the villain in *Edward II*, then Gaveston is the subject of the play. It is he who is the bone of contention between the king and the barons. It is he who becomes an issue of the kingdom. It is he who splits Edward from his wife as well as his people. And it is Gaveston for whom the king goes in war against barons and earls. And it is also for Gaveston that Edward the king loses his crown, and finally his life. Obviously, then, he is the subject of *Edward II* . Marlowe's intention to place him at the play's centre as subject is clear from the very opening. The play opens with Gaveston reading a letter in a street in London. He is the king's favourite. Even when Edward was only a prince, he was his favourite. In fact, on that very count he was banished. Now since Edward's father is dead and he himself has taken over as the King of England, he has called Gaveston back from exile to remain with him. Gaveston is an upstart, a flatterer, and given to the pleasures of life rather than to mind the affairs of the realm. One recalls here Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, where Prince Hal, on becoming the king, puts his friend Falstaff behind the bars. He does so because he would have no distraction from his duties as king. On the other hand, Marlowe's prince calls back his entertaining friend forgetting altogether his duties as king.

Gaveston is a flatterer whose only business is to keep the king humoured, whatever the cost in terms of finance and administration. Note how he plans his proximity to the king:

> I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
> Musicians, that with the touching of a string
> May draw the pliant king which way I please.
> Music and poetry is his delight;
> Therefore, I'll have Italian masks by night,
> Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
> And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
> Like Sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;
> My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
> Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay.
> Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
> With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
> Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
> And in his sportful hands an olive-tree,
> To hide those parts which men delight to see,
> Shall bathe him in a spring; and there hard by,
> One like Actaeon peeping through the grove,
> Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,
> And running in the likeness of a hart
> By yelping hounds pulled down, shall seem to die; –
> Such things as these best please his majesty.

The elaborate programme of arranging daily entertainment for the king shows how the royal personage is fond of music, poetry, drama and mask. Such a taste would be taken as a sign of culture, of a superior sensibility. The king and Gaveston do show this superiority over others, especially the barons whose only preoccupation seems to be politics. However, three things need to be noted here: one, that there is in this entire programme a clear indication of the king's addiction to these entertainments as a thrill for his senses, a food for his appetites; second, Gaveston, on his part, would not organize these activities for their own sake. His express purpose is to have a hold over the king; and, finally, these entertainments seem an expensive affair, especially when they have to go on round the year and for long hours every day. The barons have these very things to hold against the king – that he is under the influence of such jesters as Gaveston, that he is too much committed to frolicking with Gaveston to spare any time for serious business of ruling the realm, that he squanders the treasure on these inessentials while his soldiers rebel for non-payment of their salaries.

Of course, Gaveston is a professional flatterer. His sole motive is to please and humour the king so that he can secure plum titles and continue to have hold on the king. That he is a flatterer is evidenced by his response to the king's gestures towards him. Here is one such response:

It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
As Caesar riding in the Roman street,
With captive kings at his triumphant car.

It is such extravagant expressions that please the extravagant king. The two seem to be made for each other – one given to hedonistic pleasures, the other master of the art of flattery. No wonder then that Gaveston is the king's favourite, and to such an extent that the entire band of courtiers is jealous of him and bitter with the king to the point of rebellion. Not only that, he is so close to the king that even the king's wife takes him as her rival. As she feels, and the kingdemonstrates profusely, her husband loves him more than he does her. Gaveston grows a master of Edward's passions in a manner that he can treat the queen more disgracefully than even the king himself. In the presence of the king, he can tell Isabel to go and hang on the shoulders of Mortimer because the king would oblige her not. She can only protest helplessly, which shows how much higher the status he enjoys in the affections of the king. Note how the poor queen lodges her protest to him:

In saying this, thou wrong'st me, Gaveston;
Is't not enough that thou corrupt'st my lord,
And art a bawd to his affections,
But thou must call mine honour thus in question?

Well, not only that he has the cheek to call the queen's honour in question, he has succeeded in making the king himself believe of that accusation about her.

Gaveston could get away with his insults to the queen. She is too weak as woman and wife that she has no means of her own to hit him back. But Gaveston makes the mistake of growing insulting to the barons and earls also. His proximity to the power that be, the king, has gone into his head. He treats himself not only equal to the barons but even their superior, because closer to the king. See how he retorts to the barons when they object to his position at the court:

Base, leaden earls, that glory in your birth,
Go sit at home, and eat your tenant's beef;
And come not here to scoff at Gaveston,
Whose mounting thoughts did never creep so low
As to bestow a look on such as you.

This cost him dear. These earls and barons have been against him all along, more for his not being of noble birth, but also for his arrogance as an upstart at the court. Proud as they are of their noble birth and the power they enjoy in the ruling set-up, they become uncompromising on the question of Gaveston. Their insistence is that either the king banishes him or they go in war against the king to overthrow him. They do go to war, get defeated, are captured, and finally done to death. But not all of them. To Gaveston's misfortune Mortimer escapes,

and he causes havoc in collaboration with the queen. Young Mortimer sums up the view barons hold of Gaveston:

> Thou proud disturber of thy country's peace,
> Corrupter of thy king; cause of these broils,
> Base flatterer, yield!

Gaveston thus despised by the proud and powerful barons is captured, and then finally done to death. His lover king remains a helpless watcher of the drama of death. Gaveston faces the end of his life like a poor beggar:

> Weaponless must I fall, and die in bands?
> O! must this day be period of my life?
> Centre of all my bliss! An ye be men,
> Speed to the king.

Thus he dies hoping to have a meeting with the king before his death, which he was granted by the "gracious" barons. But this was not to be. He gets murdered on the way.

Through the case of Gaveston, which is the subject of the play, Marlowe seems to raise the question of status by selection, which the barons do not accept. The king is in no position in that feudal age to undermine the power of the barons. Gaveston's humble origin is all that the barons hold against him. All else is out of rage and jealousy. He is always called by them with contempt as "base", "peasant", "slave", "minion", etc., just because he does not belong to the nobility. No commoner can be acceptable to them as a part of the power structure. It is their privilege and they protect it at all costs. The king has to pay for not honouring their exclusive right of remaining at the court, for inducting a commoner among them. Marlowe being himself of a humble origin (a shoe-maker's son) may have questioned the privilege indirectly, although it is presented, not as a poser, but only as a fact of history. It is not a matter of chance that his heroes in other plays also come of humble origins and it is only through their personal effort that they come to possess wealth, knowledge and power. In an age like the Elizabethan in which he lived and composed, he could not have raised such a question, without the heavy risk of his life, in any direct or palpable fashion.

MARLOWE S MIGHTY LINE (VERSE):

Praised by Jonson for his powerful verse (mighty line), Marlowe has enjoyed the status of a pioneer of both Elizabethan drama as well as dramatic blank verse. As A. C. Swinburne observed, "the father of English tragedy and the creator of English blank verse was therefore also the teacher and the guide of Shakespeare." T. S. Eliot finds two misleading points in this statement. In his view, Kyd, and not Marlowe, was the father of English tragedy, or had at least as good a claim to the title as Marlowe. Also, Eliot thinks that Surrey had a better claim than Marlowe to be called the creator of English blank verse. As for Marlowe's being the teacher of Shakespeare, Eliot views the claim to be rather

tall. He does agree to the relevance of all the three observations. But he finds the claim a little exaggerated.

Whatever be Eliot's reservations on Swinburne's claims for Marlowe, no one has ever questioned his significant contribution to the development of drama as well as blank verse in the English language. How much more others contributed, or how less, is beside the point; for that is a matter of comparative evaluation of poets, not acceptable to all as a sensible critical effort. Let us therefore remain confined to Marlowe's contribution alone to the development of the blank verse for English drama. One of the qualities of Marlowe's blank verse, which Eliot points out, is its "lyric" effect. Note, for instance, the following from *Tamburlaine*:

Like to an almond tree y-mounted high
Upon the lofty and celestial mount
Of evergreen Selinus, quaintly decked
With blooms more white than Herycina'a brows,
Whose tender blossoms tremble every one
At every little breath that thorough heaven is blown.

Spenser, the "master of melody", as Eliot calls him, may have influence Marlowe in this aspect of his blank verse. There is a powerful presence of this aspect in *Tamburlaine*, but not in other plays of Marlowe. That is because each play has its individual tonal effect to be achieved through some special emphasis in the verse used. Spenser's influence seems obvious, for note the following from *The Faerie Queene*:

Like to an almond tree y-mounted high
On top of green Selinis all alone,
With blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
Whose tender locks do tremble every one
At every line breath that under heaven is blown.

The music of Spenser's lines is of course more smooth and regular; that of Marlowe's lines not so smooth and regular. But the two have a kinship that adds a new dimension of poetry to English drama.

In Marlowe's blank verse, as Eliot has pointed out, there is a measure of economy not present in Spenser's verse. In Marlowe it is quite common. Note, for instance, the following from *Doctor Faustus*:

Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the queen of love.

Now compare them with the following from Spenser:

Upon her eyelids many graces sate
Under the shadow of her even brows

Milton followed Marlowe in this measure of economy, although it occurs in the form of monotony. Marolwe for his part outgrew this habit and avoided monotony. Marlowe's verse accomplishments, to quote Eliot once more, are notably two: "Marlowe gets into blank verse the melody of Spenser, and he gets

a new driving power by reinforcing the sentence period against the line period. The rapid long sentence, running line into line, as in the famous soliloquies [of *Tamburlaine*]… marks the certain escape of blank verse from the rhymed couplet, and from the elegiac or rather pastoral note of Surrey to which Tennyson returned."

Marlowe's verse becomes more mature in *Faustus* and *Edward II* , where it turns conversational, acquiring more dramatic power. Here, he breaks up the line to achieve greater intensity. In these later plays, he is able to develop a new and important conversational tone in the dialogue. One can note from the following how powerful an effect of dialogue Marlowe has the ability to achieve:

> And this above all the rest: because we hear
> That Edmund casts to work his liberty,
> Remove him still from place to place by night,
> Till at the last he come to killingworth,
> And then from thence to Berkeley back again;
> And by the way, to make him fret the more,
> Speak curstly to him; and in any case
> Let no man comfort him if he chance to weep,
> But amplify his grief with bitter words.

Conversational tone cannot go any further than this, nor the intensity achieved through the breaking of lines. But Marlowe's habit of turning speeches rhetorical, a peculiar Elizabethan traits borrowed from the Italians, is never absent in his plays. That aspect has its own value, which Shakespeare later continued and perfected. Note, for instance, the following:

> Friends, whither must unhappy Edward go?
> Will hateful Mortimer appoint no rest?
> Must I be vexed like the nightly bird,
> Whose sight is loathsome to all winged fowls?
> When will the fury of his mind assuage?
> When will his heart be satisfied with blood?
> If mine will serve, unbowel straight this breast,
> And give my heart to Isabel and him;
> It is the chiefest mark they level at.

Such uses of rhetoric for an effective delivery of emotion, for achieving the desired effect on the audience, is quite common in Marlowe as well as Shakespeare. To conclude, it can be said with Eliot, "But the direction in which Marlowe's verse might have moved, had he not "dyed swearing", is quite un-Shakespearean, is toward this intense and serious and indubitably great poetry, like some great painting and sculpture, attains its effects by something not unlike caricature."

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

1. M.C. Bradhook. *Elizabethan Stage Conditions*. Cambridge University Press, 1932.
2. M.C. Bradhook. Themes and Conventions of *ElizabethanTragedy.* Cambridge University Press, 1935.
3. Dauglas Bush. *Prefaces to Renaissance Literature*. W.W. Norton & Company. INC., 1935.
4. Una Ellis-Fermor. *Christopher Marlowe*. Landon, 1927.
5. J.B. Steane. Marlowe: *A Critical Study. Cambridge* University Press, 1964.
6. Clifford Leech (ed.) *Marlowe: A Collection of Critical Essays.* Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.

QUESTION BANK

1. Discuss Marlowe as a "child" of the English Renaissance.
2. Write a note on Marlowe's art of tragedy.
3. Examine the case of the Marlowean hero.
4. Discuss *Edward II* as a chronical or history play.
5. Discuss *Edward II* as a tragedy.
6. Discuss *Edward II* as a Marlowean hero.
7. Examine the role of Gaveston in *Edward II.*
8. Write a note on the plot-structure of *Edward II.*
9. Examine's Marlowe's art of characterization, considering the major characters in *Edward II.*
10. Who is the hero of *Edward II* – Edward or Mortimer? Give evidence from the text in support of your argument.

M.A. English (Previous)
Paper I: Literature in English 1550-1660
Section C; Unit 7: Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*

Ben Jonson was born in 1572. As such he was eight years junior to Shakespeare. He died in 1637, which was over twenty years after the death of Shakespeare in 1616. Although just a few years younger than Shakespeare, Jonson belonged to an age different from the age of Shakespeare. Whereas Shakespeare remained a representative figure of the Elizabethan age, Jonson became the major poet and dramatist of the Jacobean period. Also, whereas Shakespeare became the chief writer of the romantic drama, Jonson emerged as the father of the neoclassical drama in England. Let us first have a look at the age of Jonson, which in the history of English literature is known by the name of Jacobean.

Jonson's Age

As the Elizabethan age (1558-1603) was coming to a close, two important trends emerged contrary to the spirit of the age of Shakespeare. One of these trends was the rise of class consciousness. Not that this consciousness was not there before. Like any other social phenomenon, it had been evolving itself for a long time. But it acquired a sharpness in social behaviour unknown in earlier years. The other important trend at the end of the sixteenth century was the rise of social discontent. The great ardours and endurances of the Spanish war were now past and the piper was to pay. During the Elizabethan period, the distribution of wealth had got seriously out of balance. Queen Elizabeth had been ruling for over forty years. This was too long a period for any sovereign to maintain popularity and peace. She, too, had refused to make any concessions to the passage to time. She did win wars for England, but she also brought economic hardship for the people of England. The wages of wars have to be paid by the people. Thus, in a situation like the one Elizabeth created for her country, discontent was quite natural. The nation's mood turned sullen, and even cynical. The world looked bleak to the politicians, to the gentlefolk of moderate means, and particularly to young people looking for careers in the government.

The spirit of the age found expression in a series of plays, marked by quarrelsome and rebellious nature, which were acted at the time by the students of Cambridge University. These plays had come out in temporary contravention of their habit of Latin drama. One of these plays was *Club Law*, which was produced at Clare Hall in 1599. It was a dramatic lampoon on the Mayor of Cambridge and other leading citizens of the town. The cruelty of the lampoon was increased by inviting the very persons who were attacked in the play. These persons, along with

their wives, were forced to sit through the performance of the play. Our mind automatically goes to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where the hero, outraged by the moral degeneration of Denmark, arranges a play-within-play, invites the usurper king and his accomplice queen, along with their attendant lords, for showing them the mirror image of their moral decadence. *Club Law* may have given Shakespeare the idea of play-within-play.

Another satirical attempt in this series was the *Parnassus* triology (1598-1602), which was acted in St. John's College of Cambridge University. The triology was more broadly critical as also more ambitious in literary terms. In its mood of brutal exposure of the age, the triology shows church livings are sold to illiterate boors and scholarship has no market value. In the world depicted here only obscene literature sells, leaving no scope for the serious. The following lines from the triology indicate its satiric intent:

Henceforth let none be sent by careful sires,
Nor sons, nor kindered, to Parnassus hill,
Since wayward fortune thus rewards our cost
With discontents, their pains with poverty.
Mechanic arts may smile, their followers laugh,
But liberal arts bewail their destiny.

Thus, irony and satire emerge as the chief instruments of Jacobean comedy, replacing jest and humour of the Elizabethan. Realism comes to replace romance, folly comes to replace love. The nowhere lands of *Utopia, Arcadia* and the Forest of Arden are now replaced by the actual locations of real contemporary towns with the characters representing the dominant habits of the people of that age. In times of hardship, naturally, romance would sound false, reality a keen concern not possible to overlook.

An excessive interest in contemporary letters is, for sure, not a healthy symptom in a University. In the plays just mentioned, we find an unusual interest in the literature of the period. There is a scene in one of these plays (Bodenham's *Belvedere*) where a list is read out of names beginning with Edmund Spenser and ending with Kit Marlowe. It is made out here that the renowned Elizabethan men of letters – Greene, Marlowe, Nashe, and the rest – had left their bones on the shoals against which they were being driven. Even Spenser, who had the highest abilities and the brightest prospects had now just died, as gossips said, for wants of bread. These satirists, although amateurs in the art of drama (being just the university students), adumberated the more mature, and also typical, satirical spirit of the Jacobean period. The change from the Elizabethan to the Jacobean can be said to have been professionally and formally launched by Chapman and Jonson.

The fortunate collobration between Jonson and Chapman, both of whom worked for Philip Henslowe, the director of the Admiral's company, led to the birth of the classical comedy or satirical comedy on the English stage. Both were exceptionally learned and ethical minds, and their combined literary might gave great effect to a change the times were calling for. Chapman and Jonson were quick to recognize that the chronicle and romantic types of drama were models of the past. Hence, the two set out together to make the theatre more realistic while making it more classic. A typical example of the tragic as well as the comic form is Chapman's *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1596), in which he combines Marlowe's tragic heroes into one character and makes him the hero of his comedy. It is a flippant but amusing play. The hero is a conquering Tamburlaine, "yet but a shepherd's son at Memphis born." He is also a great lover like the Jew of Malta. No doubt, the play of Chapman echoes Marlowe in various ways, but there are also passages of rank burlesque, such as the line "And Stern Bebritius of Bebritia."

The drama of the Jacobean period heavily relied on Italian borrowings – Italian plots, Italian models from Plautus and Terence in comedy and from Seneca in tragedy, and Italian thought from Machiavelli. Intrigue emerged as the main dramatic device of plot as well as a chief human trait reflecting the contemporary cynicism about human nature. In comedy, correcting human follies through satirical exposure became the major concern of the dramatists. Chapman and Ben Jonson adapted a theory of humours, shaping each character to represent a particular humour or dominant trait of human nature. Early in 1597, came out Chapman's *Comedy of Humours*. In 1598, came out Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*. Both contributed to the development of the theory of humours. Chapman's play is representative of the Jacobean comedy in that it employs familiar plot devices and portrays familiar character types that we come across over and over again in the comedies of the age. Lemont, the central figure, who is a "minion" of the king, shows the humour of Jonson's Knowell and Wellbred for collecting and exposing gulls. He devises, just as the central characters do in Jonson's comedies, such situations as would bring out the humours of the various odd characters to be corrected of their oddities. Here, we come to see the Puritan lady, the old man with the young wife, the old woman with the young husband, the father suspicious of his young daughter, the wealthy fop, and ultimately the king and queen, all converging at Verone's inn. At this inn, just as in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones*, all depart freed of their follies, more wise, and with no harm done.

The plots of Jacobean comedies, dependent as they are on the most dependable device of intrigue, are very complicated. Since each character comes out with a fresh intrigue up his sleeve in every situation, for the common reader it often becomes difficult to keep track of the various threads woven into the

complicated pattern of the plot. Characters, since they are shaped to reflect one or another humour or dominant trait of their personalities, are perforce rather flat, not round; they are static rather than dynamic; simple rather than complex. The device if intrigue is no less dominant in the tragedies of the Jacobean period. Here, the thinker of the Renaissance, Machiavelli, came very handy to the Jacobean dramatists. The tragedy of intrigue, as it came to be known among other names, naturally would have the dominant villain, so dominant that the hero or heroine would fade into the pale shadow of the villain's giant figure. Like Iago in Shakespeare's *Othello*, the villains of Jacobean tragedies occupy the centre-stage in their respective plots, with their intrigues moving the actions in the directions they designed.

No less powerful influence on the Jacobean tragedy was the Italian dramatist Seneca, who provided the model for the revenge tragedy. The tragedy of the age relied on the familiar Senecan plot devices of revenge, torture, ghost, etc., and came to be rightly called the tragedy of blood or the revenge tragedy. John Webster of all the Jacobean dramatists made a mark in this type of tragedy. His famous tragedies, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, stand out as the best among the large number of tragedies written by over a dozen Jacobean dramatists, including Dekker, Marston, Ford, Beaumont and Fletcher. The overemphasis on blood and torture scenes in these tragedies made them melodramatic; they heavily relied on terror. It is for this reason that Jacobean tragedy is also given the name of sensational drama or melodrama.

Another powerful influence of Seneca on the tragedy of the age can be seen in the aspect of eloquence, which is quite a prominent feature of the Jacobean tragedy. The Senecan tragedy was eloquent because it was written, not for the stage, but for recitation. Naturally, what on the stage can be accomplished by incident and acting is to be achieved through the power of the word. Hence, following the Senecan model, even though the Jacobean dramatists wrote for the stage, they inducted powerful speeches in their plays, making up for their deficiencies in dramatic effects of action. Since dramatists like Webster and Chapman were gifted poets, they made full use of the Senecan eloquence to add to the impact of their tragedy of blood. No wonder that it is the speeches of the villains in these tragedies which are the most eloquent. One use of the eloquence these dramatists made is similar to the one Shakespeare did; both Shakespeare and the Jacobean dramatists used eloquence to enlist sympathy for the villain, to ennoble his otherwise despicable character. For it was through the device of eloquence that they brought out the innate humanity of their villains, showing that they were not altogether irremediable.

Thus, common to both comedy and tragedy of the Jacobean period are the elements of intrigue and satire. While the component of satire is a natural ally of comedy and therefore easily blends with the comic plot, it does not so easily get assimilated into the plot of tragedy. The interests of tragedy and satire being very different from each other, the two strands tend to stand apart, not permitting the plot to become a unified whole. For example, while tragedy demands an intensification of action, satire requires a wider canvas to cover the social scene. The two interests come into clash at the very base-line of the plot, resulting in one of the major weaknesses of the Jacobean tragedy. No wonder that these great tragedies sound great only in their powerful eloquence, which seems to stand outside the plot interest that runs subsidiary to the overwhelming impact of individual speeches. This kind of disruption of the plot is just not there in the great tragedies of Shakespeare. One reason perhaps is that despite Shakespeare's use of eloquence, the tragic intensity of his plays remains unaffected because the eloquence is an attribute of the tragic hero on whose characters is focused the tragic plot as well. The same cannot be said of the Jacobean tragedies, which are marked by weak heroes and heroines and strong villains and villainesses.

Although not so powerful as satire and eloquence, the rhetorical trait of the Jacobean drama – tragedy as well as comedy – cannot be overlooked altogether. Of course, the Jacobeans did not take recourse to "poetic justice," as later did the eighteenth century dramatists, but their moral concern, their eagerness to expose and improve, does not remain unnoticed. It always overflows the bounds of the Jacobean plots, tragic as well as comic. Chapman's *The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey* (1631) is, once again, the best example of the Jacobean moralism. In this play Chapman upholds, without any disguise, the thesis that "only a just man is a free man." In order to show the righteousness of the Stoic Cato, in contrast with the ambition of Caesar and of Pompey, he becomes sympathetic with both the others and makes all three mouthpieces of the doctrine of Stoicism. Although the title suggests otherwise, Cato remains the hero of the play. He is the Senecal man with courage enough not to seek his ends by violence. Later, Addison's only tragedy *Cato* makes an interesting comparison with Chapman's play.

With this much of elementary but essential background of the age of Jonson, we can now look into the life of our dramatist. Although the contemporary tirade has been against the biographical reading of literature, it cannot be denied that a knowledge of the writer's life, and of his work, is of great advantage to the reader wanting to understand and appreciate his writings. To know a writer's life does not necessarily mean that his life would be used as the key to unlock the secrets and mysteries of his works. Even when we keep that knowledge to ourselves, not using it as a critical tool of interpretation, its very being there in our mind would help illuminate many a mystery otherwise hard to unravel. Critical trends do come and

go like fashions, the permanence of a writer's relevence to his work cannot be ignored. "Death of the author" may sound very startling and revolutionary, it does not make much sense when it comes to an understanding and appreciation of a writer's work. For the creation of art is not possible without there being a creative will. Let us therefore try to know what kind of man Ben Jonson was who created for himself a permanent place in the tradition of English poetry and drama, remaining even after four hundred years, one of the greatest among the English writers. He is always remembered, along with Shakespeare, as the founder of a tradition, which tradition is different from the one founded by Shakespeare. The two are generally remembered together, and yet the two are remembered for two very different contributions they made to the development of English language, English poetry, and English drama.

JONSON'S LIFE

Compared to the life of Shakespeare, which is less known to us, much more is known to us about the life of Ben Jonson. One obvious reason seems to be the difference between the two personalities. For while Shakespeare lived a rather quiet life, and quietly retired in his later years, Jonson lived in the hub of London life, joining issues and controversies, writing critical prose as much as he wrote creative poetry and drama. Still, there are some gaps in his biography, which would remain unknown to us as well as to subsequent generations in future. Unlike Shakespeare, he was highly conscious of his importance as a man of letters. In fact, he was rather proud of the fact that while Shakespeare knew "little Greek and less Latin" (Jonson's own words about Shakespeare), he himself was one of the most learned among the writers of his age, especially in the classical literature in Greek and Latin. The sources of material on his life are both his own writings as well as the writings of his contemporaries, friends as well as foes. Both sources put together provide ample material to draw a picture of the man that Ben Jonson was.

Ben Jonson was born at Westminster in 1572, eight years after the birth of Shakespeare and Marlowe, both of whom were born the same year. He was the son of a clergyman, born posthumously a month after the death of his father. His father was more of a gentleman than a devout. As such he did not prosper in his days, since worldly fortunes were dependent those days on one's religious allegiance. If the allegiance was favoured by the ruling outfit, one would get a chance to prosper. But if the allegiance was out of favour with the ruling outfit, one would be denied all opportunities of making good in life. Jonson's mother, after his father's death, married another person, which brought her better fortune but worse social standing. The man she chose to marry was a master bricklayer. It is a well established fact that Jonson studied at Westminster school, where the great educationist, William

Camden, was the second master. Also well known is the fact that after his schooling, Jonson could not proceed to either of the two universities (of Oxford and Cambridge) England had in the sixteenth century. Instead, he had to work as an apprentice to a bricklayer. Perhaps his stepfather put him on to his own profession. And with this, his stepfather thought, ended his parental responsibility towards the stepson.

Since Jonson joined, soon after, the wars in the Low Countries, he could not have remained for long in the profession of bricklaying. He is said to have killed in the wars a foe in single battle. Nothing more is known about the incident. As he returned from the wars in 1592, he soon got married at the age of twenty. Not much again is known about his marital life except what one can conclude from his remarks that his wife was "a shrew but honest." Some historians have concluded from this remark that perhaps his married life was not very happy. We need not go into the implications of the remark, since it is not of much consequence so far as his career as poet and dramatist is concerned. One does not even know the context of the said remark. In all probability, it may have been made as a casual or comical remark, given the temper and training of Jonson the writer of comic plays and possessor of great wit. There cannot be any doubt about the profession he adopted immediately after marriage, or even before. It is well known by now that Jonson acted in many plays, including Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy,* some of his own plays, and some of Shakespeare's. In Kyd's tragedy, he played the role of Hieronimo. This shows that as actor he had some standing in the theatre world of London, just as Shakespeare had a standing of his own in that world.

There has come out clear evidence over the years of Jonson's affiliation with the theatre. From the year 1597 onwards, this affiliation had been continuous. There is also a record of a four pound loan advanced to him about the same time. It was perhaps an advance given to him for completing a play called *The Isle of Dogs*. But this very occasion of the play took Jonson to prison. He also did further dramatic writing for Henslowe, besides *The Isle of Dogs*. But he earned his first, and great, reputation with the production of his *Every Man in His Humour* in 1598. The success of his great comedy led to an unfortunate tiff with a fellow actor, leading to a duel that resulted in the death of that actor. This showed Jonson the prison door for the second time in two years. It seems his temperament was rather volatile, which did not permit him to avoid contentious situations. This is also borne out by the fact that later in his dramatic career, he was involved in the war of the theatres. In contrast to Jonson, Shakespeare remained unprovoked and aloof from such situations of unbecoming behaviour.

Clearly, Jonson was a comic genius and a classical scholar. His comedies are superb both in terms of wit and humour as well as in terms of classical architechtonic. He observes with ease the principle of three unities recommended

for drama by the first law given in literature by the Greek writer, Aristotle. Jonson also observes with an equal ease the principle of decorum, making his language appropriate for his various characters. As for wit and humour, no other contemporary of his could excel him in the exhibition of wit and creation of humour. Of course, his humour is generally satirical, for his moral purpose always accompanied his wit and humour. He did try his hand at tragedy as did most of his contemporaries. But unlike most of his contemporaries, he did not achieve much success in the production of tragedy. His attempt to make addition to *The Spanish Tragedy,* a *Richard Crookback,* and then *Sejanus* met with very little success on the stage. Even as literature, they do not compare in any manner with the high quality of his comedies.

After the accession of James I to the throne of England (Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 to be succeeded by James I) Jonson collaborated with Inigo Jones for many years for writing the masques, which were very popular in the age of Jonson. Out of the total number of thirty seven masques, produced at the court of James I, Jonson alone wrote twenty. After the reign of James I, which ended in 1625, Jonson continued writing masques for five more years. It was during this very period, too, that Jonson wrote his famous comedies, although there remained no dearth of distractions and troubles at home and abroad. One of the problems Jonson faced during this period was fresh chances of landing in the prison the third time. As a distraction came a tour of Europe which Jonson had to undertake as a tutor of the son of Sir Walter Raleigh. Despite all these problems, however, he was able to produce his famous comedies, namely, *Volpone, or The Fox* (1606), *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609), *The Alchemist* (1610), and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). He did write a tragedy also, namely *Catiline, His Consperacy* (1611), which, like his other tragedies, was not a success. Obviously, the fact that Jonson succeeded only as a writer of comedy and masque shows that he had no genius for other forms of drama. That is why, whenever he acted against his grain and attempted dramatic forms other than masque and comedy he invariably met with failure.

Jonson, being more worldly-wise in practical matters than Shakespeare, got his collected works published in Folio form in 1616, whereas Shakespeare's plays were put together in the Folio form seven years after his death in 1616. In the case of Shakespeare, the Folio edition of his plays was prepared by two actor-friends of the dramatist. In 1616, Jonson was the first dramatist who felt, or acknowledged, a feeling that dramatic productions were important enough to justify formal preservations. Incidentally, the death of Shakespeare in 1616 also marked the end of Jonson's great period as a dramatist. Whatever plays he attempted after 1616 were a miserable failure. He was not successful like Shakespeare, who wrote superbly until his last play *The Tempest*. Nor was Jonson a versatile genius like

Shakespeare who wrote comedies, tragedies, tragicomedies, histories, romances, etc., all the different forms of drama. His range, therefore, compared to that of Shakespeare, remains rather narrow, confined only to classical comedy and masque.

Jonson's life and opinions did not, however, end in 1616. He went on foot to Scotland in 1618, where he visited his famous contemporary poet, William Drummond of Howthornden. The two famous men of letters, thus, got opportunity to exchange notes on life and literature. This resulted in the publication of the notes of their conversation, done by Drummond, which have been considered a valuable source of information for the material on Jonson's life and on literature. Jonson's attainments as poet and dramatist earned him an M.A. degree, which Oxford University offered him in 1619, as a recognition of his contribution to English drama and poetry. Jonson was also awarded a pension by the king of England. Thus, he became, in effect, the first poet laureate of England, although without a formal title given to him. Around the same time, Jonson received recognition from his younger contemporaries as the main arbiter of poetry. He came to be surrounded by a group of admirers and followers, who came to be known as the "Tribe of Ben." These poets of younger generation, largely from Scotland, liked to be called the "Sons of Ben."

Jonson's fame was also followed by bunch of misfortunes. In 1623, a fire destroyed his entire library, including his own works in progress. Among many precious writings, his notes for a poetical treatment of his trip to Scotland were also destroyed by the fire. Also included in this lot were Jonson's manuscript of an English grammar. Only a rough draft of the said grammar remained. His enthusiastic patron, James I, died in 1625, leaving Jonson less important. In 1628, he suffered a paralytic stroke, which left him almost an invalid. The plays he produced during this unfortunate period of the 1620's met with very little success. His only valuable work of this period is, for sure, his notes and comments on reading, preserved in a volume called *Timber, or Discoveries*. In 1637, Jonson died and was buried in Westminster Abbey – a place reserved for honouring the poets and other important persons.

After going through the important events and outputs of Jonson's life we can now attempt a few generalisations about his career as man of letters. The very first thing that strikes about Jonson is that he was a man of vast learning. Although he did not have the benefit of university education, as had his senior University Wits, his learning of the classics was no less. He could be called self-taught, just as Shakespeare was, with the difference that Shakespeare did not have the benefit of ancient languages of Greek and Latin. His commitment to classical norms and standards was very strong, so strong that he himself became the lawgiver in his own country. The same cannot be said of Shakespeare, because neither in precept

nor in practice does Shakespeare show any firm commitment to classical norms and standards.

Another generalisation that we can make about Jonson as a writer is that his output was substantial. He wrote a large number of comedies, some of which rank among the greatest. Besides, he produced even a larger number of masques, most of which were highly popular. He did not, of course, succeed as a writer of tragedy. Although he ranks next to Shakespeare as dramatist, his influence on the succeeding English drama was greater than that of Shakespeare. Most dramatists of the Restoration period chose to follow him as the model of classical comedy. Dramatists like Shadwell made an announcement to that effect. His spirit as dramatist and wit was pervasive, affecting the art of characterisation, of structure, and of moral and didactic tone. No other contemporary of Jonson, including Shakespeare, could claim that honour. Maybe, Shakespeare was too great and complex to be easily amenable to imitation.

Still another observation which can be made about Jonson's work is that his poetry had a profound impact on English literature. His simple, direct, and chaste, but carefully wrought, lyrics, contrasted quite sharply with the Spenserian tradition of overdone melodious lines of ornate diction. It also sharply contrasted to the stylised and hyperbolic poetry of complaint followed by the Elizabethan sonneteers in the tradition of Petrarch, the famous Italian Renaissance humanist. The cavalier poets of the Restoration period were the followers of Ben Jonson. These poets continued a parallel tradition to that of the Metaphysicals initiated by John Donne, which combined wit and hyperbole with dramatic and rhetorical effects. The best known followers of Ben Jonson among the cavalier poets was Robert Herrick. Andrew Marvell, though grouped with the Metaphysicals, combined also the virtues of Jonsonian tradition, unifying thereby the two major poetic traditions of the seventeenth century in his songs and lyrics.

The last observation that must be made on the writing career of Jonson is that his critical writings constitute an important step in the development of English literary criticism. Although he did not write a formal treatise on criticism like Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*, his critical writings, contained in his prefaces and in *Timber, or Discoveries*, are no less valuable. Derived largely from his classical learning and based on his strong commonsense, his critical observations are unforgettable. Note, for instance, his tribute to Shakespeare, which was included in the first Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays:

> He was not of an age, but for all time!
> And all the Muses still were in their prime,
> When like Apollo he came forth to warm
> Our years, or like a Mercury to charm!
> Nature herself was proud of his designs,

And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other Wit.
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
But antiquated, and deserted lie
As they were not of Nature's family.
Yet must I not give Nature all: thy Art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
For though the Poets matter, Nature be,
His Art doth give the fashion. And, that he,
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat Upon the Upon the Muses' anvil: turn the same,
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame;
Or for the laurel, he may gain a scorn,
For a good Poet's made, as well as born.
And such wert thou.

Although seemingly a panegyric in praise of the bard of Stratford (Shakespeare), it defines the poet, the poetry, the relation between genius and art, besides the chief merits of Shakespeare as a poet – his being a poet of Nature, his being for all times, his richness of imagination, his largeness of vision, etc. Jonson's critical views expressed here have been of seminal importance for the neo-classical critics. We can see how he adumbrates Dr Jonson's views on Shakespeare. Thus, his critical sense is as sharp as his comic wit.

Jonson's Work

It is generally said that Jonson entered the English theatre like a plague and was considered, for quite some time, an affliction. The first play with which his name was associated was *The Isle of Dogs* (1597), which is a lost comedy. It was written by him in collaboration with Thomas Nashe – one of the group of dramatists known as University Wits. Since the comedy was so pungently satirical, it outraged the authorities, and to such an extent that they ordered the closure of all theatres. Not only that, they also imprisoned Jonson and the other actors in the Marshalsea, which lasted for four months, from July to October 1597. At this stage of his dramatic career, Jonson was both actor and writer. By 1598, Jonson had written another comedy named *The Case Is Altered*, which was comparable to Chapman's *All Fools*. Jonson's second comedy was modlled on Plautus, whereas Chapman's was modelled on Terence. Like Chapman, Jonson also developed classic themes into a comedy of modern-day Italy. To this very early period of

Jonson's career perhaps also belongs the original form of *A Tale of a Tub*. It is now extant only in its revised form done much later than the time of its original composition.

Jonson's fame as dramatist actually began with the first play by him which the Chamberlain's company acted. The play was named *Every Man in His Humour*. It is now widely accepted, as reported by Rowe in 1709, that it was after Shakespeare's personal intervention that the company agreed to accept the play. It is also widely agreed that Shakespeare himself acted a part in the play when it was produced sometime in September 1598. Jonson's play became an instant success of its day. As the text then stood, it looked another superficial Italian comedy, set in Florence. It was concerned with the classical devices of the duel of wits between father and son and the stratagems of an intriguing slave. But behind the superficial Italian plot there could be seen a keen analysis of contemporary English life. This subtext, so to say, of the play came into greater prominence when later Jonson revised the play for his Folio of 1616. He gave the play's characters English names and also introduced a vast apparatus of pungent London allusions. Essentially, Jonson's play is an arraignment of an era bent upon buying social status at a small cost. Jonson lashes, through a variety of one-track "humour" characters, the English middle class craze for gentlemanliness. For instance, the country cousin type, Stephen, thinks he can pass for a gentleman by reading a book about hawking. Similarly, the city youth type (the fop), Matthew, seeks the same end by pretending to be a poet. The same way, the coward type, Bobadill, is able to win temporary respect by making tall-talk about his fencing, and by the elegance with which he swears and takes tobacco. The most intelligent of the young men, Knowell and Wellbred, choose to make an avocation of exploiting the fools they meet for the gratification of their own vanity.

It seems, having got sick of the insincerities of its time, the public of Jonson's age welcomed his satire with great delight. The play made such an impact on the public that persons like Samuel Rowlands, who was the liveliest commentator of Jonson's time, made a strong appeal to all the poets of his day to follow Jonson:

> Good honest poets, let me crave a boon:
> That you would write, I do not care how soon,
> Against the bastard humours hourly bred
> In every mad-brain'd, wit-worn, giddy-head.
> At such gross follies do not sit and wink;
> Belabour these same gulls with pen and ink.

Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* was staged at the Globe theatre in 1599. Incidentally, it is at this very theatre that most of Shakespeare's plays were staged and of which Shakespeare was a share holder. Jonson became so proud of his

success that he got the play published the very next year (1600). He published it with a signed dedication to the gentlemen of the Inns of Court, considered arbiters of elegance of Jonson's day. Here, as well as elsewhere, Jonson's attempt was to use stage as a means of caustic satire, which the censors were prohibiting in print. In this sense, Jonson's plays belong to the literary movement which produced the satire of Hall and Marston – contemporary dramatists of Jonson.

Elated by the success of his dramatic method, Jonson pressed the same technique for greater bite of satire in his next play, *Every Man Out of His Humour.* In this play, there is no such thing as a dramatic plot. It only consists of dramatic episodes and acute psychological generalisations. The characters still have the Italian names, but they are no longer living in Italy. They are shown inhabitants of the "Fortunate Island," which in the apparent language of irony is none other than England. Jonson has picked up ten or twelve types of social misfits, puts them in situations where they exhibit their egoistic folly through four acts of the play. In the fifth act, which moves faster than the others, each of these gulls is kicked, by the very logic of events, "out of his humour." Thus, they are reformed from an abnormal state of mind into a more normal one. Jonson does not leave things at that. Like Bernard Shaw, he also adds to his play a preface, where he puts a clever list of "the characters of the persons," in which each is neatly impaled, like the insects in a laboratory collection. The list is accompanied by an inordinately heavy mass of running commentary, using four persons out of the lot as mouth pieces of the author for showing the wisdom of the method. There is no direct evidence to what Shakespeare's company thought of this play. But the fact that it chose not to stage the play clearly implies that it did not consider the play rewarding enough. In fact, it was several years after their staging of *Every Man in His Humour* that Shakespeare's company accepted another play of Jonson.

Jonson's next comedy was *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), which he sold to the boys of the Queen's Chapel. Compared to his first success, it is a rather slighter piece. But in terms of satire, the play is even more aggressive than the earlier ones. In a number of other ways, this new play also adumbrates the later dramatic development of the author. Unlike the earlier plays, it ends in an authentic masque. It also includes the loveliest song that Jonson had as yet written:

Queen and Huntresse, chaste, and faire,
Now the Sunne is laid to sleepe,
Seated, thy silver chaire,
Stated in wonted manner keepe:
    Hesperus intreats thy light,
    Goddesse, excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade

Dare it selfe to interpose;
Cynthias shining oxbe was made
Heaven to cleere , when day did close:
Blesse us then with wished sight,
Goddesse, excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy cristall – shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou, that mak'st a day of night,
Goddesse, excellently bright.

In giving elaborately satiric definitions of courtier types this play goes much beyond *Every Man Out of His Humour*, and prepares for the "characters" of Overbury and Earle. The song itself is a last dramatic tribute to the aged queen, Elizabeth of England. As in Lyly's play, she is portrayed as Cynthia. The author himself appears in this allegorical play, originally as Criticus, but later in the 1616 text magnified into Crites, the Judge. The allegoric form adds stately grace to the burly figure of the author. Crites is shown to be the man who is always right. He receives the Queen's fabulous praise for both his wisdom and poetry. At the end of the action, Crites writes himself Cynthia's warrant to purge society, along with his chosen companion, Arete, or virtue:

Dear Arte, and Crites, to you two
We give the charge: impose what pains you please;
Th' incurable cut off, the rest reform.

Such bumptiousness on the part of Jonson was intolerable to most people, especially the fellow dramatists. Hence, the author incurred both outrage and laughter of those who count in the world of letters. Even his admirer, Marston, gibed at him in his revised anti-war play, *Histriomastria*, in *Jack Drum's Entertainment,* and elsewhere.

Marston's gibe (or jeer) at Jonson set in motion what came to be known the war of theatres. The kind of person Jonson was, he immediately responded to Marston's jeers and wrote a satirical comedy *Poetaster* (1601). It begins with Envy (an allegorical figure) hopefully rising "to damn the author." But the mailed prologue of the play *Poetaster* treads it underfoot. Although not one of the greatest comedies of Jonson, *Poetaster* is, for sure, one of the most amusing. The scene is set in Rome in the reign of King Augustus (that is first century A.D) with the chief poets of the age as its leading characters. There are also the patrons as well as enemies of these poets. Jonson himself becomes Horace, the great law-giver of

literature, and praises him profusely. Marston is presented as poetaster in the person of Cripinus. Perhaps clear from the thinly veiled allegorical characters, those satirized in Jonson's play took to their pens as quickly as Jonson had done earlier and wrote counter-attacks on the author of *Poetaster*. Maybe, Jonson himself gave out the names of his would-be victims in his play, Dekker, one of these victims, had a play ready for counterattack about the same time Jonson's *Poetaster* reached the stage. Dekker's play, entitled *Satiromastix, or the Untrusting of the Humorous Poet,* appeared simultaneously both at the Globe and at Paul's.

In this war of theaters Jonson decidedly had an upper hand. One obvious reason for the superiority of his satire was that, like Dryden and Pope later, he raised the particular figure of his attack to the level of type. On the contrary, the poetasters made their attack a little too personal to offer ridiculous figure of permanent interest. The only advantage of Dekker's play is that like a biographical book it provides a vast wealth of information about Jonson as man and writer. For instance, Jonson's slowness in composing plays, his self-esteem, his career as bricklayer and barnstorming actor, his poverty and psycophancy to the powerful, his killing of an actor and escape from Tyburn prison by his "neck-verse," his "parboiled face," that looked "for all the world like a rotten russet apple when 'tis bruised," and his habit of epigramming his friends are all put down in the dramatic portrait with the precision of a master realist. The fact that the printed text of *Satiromastix* was in demand as soon as it was published shows that the two playhouses where the satirical comedy was staged must have gone full. Realizing his own vulnerability Jonson withheld his retaliation for a time. In fact, in a dignified "apologetical dialogue" to *Poetaster* he withdrew from the war of theatres and took to writing classic tragedy.

In a way, by launching on a fresh venture, Jonson rescued himself through his composition of *Sejanus* (1603). It is a historical drama of ponderous ethics and meticulous scholarship. It does display the kind of greatness that Chapman's later tragedies show. Seeing some merit in the play, Chapman, as well as Marston, wrote complementary verses for the first quarto that came out in 1605. It is felt by some critics that Chapman may have had a hand in the composition of the stage version of *Sejanus*. It was this play, after *Every Man in His Humour*, that Shakespeare's company chose to stage . The company later also acted Jonson's Roman tragedy of *Contiline's Conspiracy* (1611). Even though he was on the verge of retirement as an actor, Shakespeare himself performed a part in *Sejanus*. Now the war of the theaters had ended. Two things seem quite clear here from Shakespeare's conduct during this period. One, that he was above the usual level of mutual bickerings in which his fellow-dramatists frequently indulged. Second, that the fact Shakespeare chose to stage Jonson's plays, although not all of them, shows

that he did see merit in his younger colleague and advanced whatever encouragement he could to help him to do well as a dramatist.

Jonson's experience as a comic realist served him well in *Sejanus*. The play gives an impressive realistic representation to the imperial Rome. It presents the tall characters as enlarged or darkened figures of various humours. In the development of Jonson as dramatist, it represents an important stage. Its significance becomes all the more clear when its successor *Volpone, or the Fox* follows in 1606. This dreadful comedy, too, was acted by Shakespeare's company, which had by now become the King's. Magnificent in its own way, the play supposedly takes place in modern Venice. The play's theme of greed comes from Jonson's study of the enormities of ancient Rome. Jonson once again uses here his usual allegorical method of making his characters represent different humours. He further intensifies it by adopting the method of the beast fable. By representing his characters as animals, Jonson is able to caricature the human types into ludicrous figures. Here, the chief villain among the characters is called the Fox. His agent is the Fly (Mosca). His dupes are the birds of prey, namely crow, vulture, and raven. Although the technical perfection of the play is a little marred by the induction of a sub-plot, its human appeal is a good deal increased. This sub-plot concerns three characters from England now placed in Italy. Jonson does establish a link between the sub-plot and the main-plot, but it remains a tangential link, leaving the two rather unintegrated. Considered critical opinion has favoured *Volpone* as the finest of Jonson's plays, although Dryden gave the palm to his next composition.

The next play of Jonson, *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609) is as much closer to farce as *Volpone* is to tragedy. Both these plays are so well organised and so much life-like that either of them would have assured Jonson's place as the greatest satirical dramatist England has ever produced. But even these two are surpassed by Jonson's next play, *The Alchemist*, which has been considered the crown of his career as dramatist. This last was produced in 1610, making in tonal terms the exact centre of the two. It has perfect economy of construction. As has been aptly remarked, in this play every word and gesture counts in the final effect. Here, the fusion could go no further. The place is not only London; it is only a part of London, the fashionable Blackfriars quarter where Jonson himself lived. It was from this very place that he had signed the dedication of *Volpone*. The entire action remains restricted to the Lovewit's house – mostly inside the house, partly outside at its door. The time of the play's action is the year of the plague (1610), which was raging the city as Jonson wrote. The total time taken by the action is only as much as the actual time the actors have to remain on the stage. All the characters are motivated to act by a single spring, the desire to grab something in return for nothing. Three of the total of twelve characters are rogues, seven are dupes, representing five classes of people that could be seen any time at Blackfriars. This

variety includes the young, professional law clerk, the luxury merchant dealing in tobacco and other courtly wares, the pleasure–loving knight, the two Puritan preachers, and the wealthy young man up from the country with his sister. The remaining characters, Surly and Lovewit, are neither quite rougue nor quite dupe, but potentially both, as the play's action gradually reveals. This picture, so very real, was so much familiar to Jonson. He knew his Blackfriars neighbour too well to make any mistake when it came to picture them in words and deeds. His presentation of these specimen of general human nature was as much without romance as it was without poetic justice. Above all, the presentation was absolutely without any bitterness. It decidedly lacks the harshness of *Volpone* as it enforces its moral with a more cleansing laughter.

The problem with achieving perfection in art, or in any other activity of life, is that it cannot be easily repeated. The precision that Jonson had achieved in *The Alchemist* could not be repeated without its growing stale. In that sense, his later comedies are surely inferior to what he had achieved in this and the two other comedies preceding it. As it has been rightly characterized, Jonson's comic art was like a jealous mistress. As he got distracted more and more, from 1610 onward, by his famous masques, his comic art distanced itself from him more and more. As his new love demanded more and more attention, his earlier love got neglected. Despite this distraction, however, two very important plays were produced: *Bartholonew Fair* in 1614 and *The Staple of News* in 1626. The former is, in fact, the complement of *The Alchemist,* which presents a picture of the other side of London. Here, on this side of Paradise, so to say, the lower classes congregate at Smithfield during the famous August fair. Compared to *The Alchemist,* it takes a larger canvas and many more characters, but Jonson finds much the same people there and much the same vices. The characterisation and satirisation are as brilliant as in the best of his comedies. What makes it inferior to Jonson's very best is the lack of neatness in its structure.

The other of the later plays, *The Staple of News,* ridicules the impostures of the new business of journalism. Here, the scenes of satire are as brilliant as anywhere. As Swinburne said in praise of Jonson, "no man can knew anything worth knowing of Ben Jonson who has not studied and digested the text of *Every Man in His Humour, The Fox, The Alchemist,*and *The Staple of News;* but any man who has may be said to know him well." Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) and *The New Inn* (1629) are, surely, on a lower plane, but they do have greater romantic charm than any other play Jonson had written since *The Case Is Altered*. As Jonson grew older and sadder, and his classic certitude relaxed, in some ways he became more Elizabethan. His best expression of this side of his dramatic art can be seen in the beautiful fragment of pastoral drama that he left uncompleted, *The Sad Shepherd*. Thus, Jonson completed his dramatic journey from the classical

chastity of form, through the gay abandon of the masques, to the romantic comedies of the Elizabethan kind.

JONSON AS A POET

As Drummond's records of Ben Jonson reveal, "in his merry humour he was wont to name himself The Poet." Jonson was not as great a poet as he was a dramatist. Nor was he, as a poet, among the greatest Elizabethans or the Jacobeans. Jonson was very much aware of his middling position as a poet. He himself esteemed Donne the first poet in the world in some things. His appreciation of Shakespeare, which has already been quoted in these pages, is perhaps the most just, even if generous. But Jonson, for sure, is the Poet, the norm and centre for the measurement of his fellows. Even those who began by detesting his bravado came to appreciate this aspect of his status as a poet. Jonson seems so normal to us that, apart from the outstanding plays and lyrics, we tend to overlook his greatness. But, without any doubt, his greatness is in almost every line he wrote. If an average poetic line of Jonson is read, reread, memorised, and lived with, will assay higher and wear better than the more striking lines of lesser poets. In Matthew Arnold's words poetry for Jonson was a "criticism of life." The criticism that he offered could not, of course, be an easy thing for the author or for the reader. As he put it in his commemorative poem on Shakespeare,

> For though the Poet's matter Nature be,
> His Art doth give the fashion; and that he,
> Who castes to write a living line, must sweat,
> …….. and strike the second heat
> Upon the Muses' anvil.

The reader of Jonson's Epigrams, Forest, and Under-Wood may, in the first instance, get repelled by the products of this sweating Titan. The reason for such a response is that Jonson hammered his verses into their hard and shining felicity, making the reading a little demanding. But once the reader has tried the quality of the metal and workmanship, he would find most other men's poetry (the men of his time) seem rather paltry. What is peculiar to his poetry is, not an intensification of emotion, but an acceleration of the intellect. For example, even when he writes in flattery of the fashionables adorning the court, he writes with his whole thinking mind and with proud assertion of the dignity of thought. Note, for instance, his address to the Countess of Rutland:

> Beauty, I know, is good, and blood is more;
> Riches thoughts most: but, Madame, think what store
> The world halt seen which all these had in trust,
> And now lie lost in their forgotten dust.
> It is the muse alone can raise to heaven,

And at her strong arm's end hold up, and even,
The souls she loves;

The greatest beauty of Jonson's poetry is that one feels in it the reason singing. Whenever there comes an over-sweetness of melody, it is invariably curbed by the run-on verses and occasionally inexact rhymes. Besides, there is in his poetry an Augustan urbanity, especially in his shorter poems, which none of his contemporaries could equal. Also, no one in the age of Jonson could express more tenderly true sorrow. His epitaph "on my first daughter" is a noble thing, and his lines on the death of his son are nobler still:

Rest in soft- peace, and, ask'd, say here doth lye
Ben. Jonson his best piece of poetie.
For whose sake, hence-forth, all his vows be such,
As what he loves may never like too much.

His exquisite stanzas on the death of a boy actor could not have been equalled by any other of his age. Equally unachievable for his contemporaries was the poetry that comes out in his epitaph on the girl "Elizabeth." Note, for instance, the following:

Underneath this stone doth lie
As much beauty as could die.

Jonson's juniors took him as a model lyricist of the song books. They considered him unapproachable in this form of poetry. His plays may be full of his stinging satire, his songs are free of this edge. Of course, he did not regard himself a love poet. He would comically admit that he did try to become a love poet, but love fled from him. He could laugh at himself as easily and freely as he laughed at others. For instance, he admits his "mountain belley" and his "rocky face,"and a weight "full twenty stones of which I lack tow pounds" (means 278 pounds). But the Jacobeans demanded love songs in their plays and in the masques, which Jonson received as trifles but made them immortal. So, out of the materials no less diverse than his learning he fabricated songs which are as purely Elizabethan and as enchanting today as anything his age produced. One of the earliest of these songs is the stately hymn to queen Elizabeth in *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), which is considered to date the most classically perfect lyric in English. The lyric in full has been cited in these pages. Another most popular even today is the one Jonson introduced in the climactic scene of *Volpone*. It is one of Jonson's marvelous adaptations of Catullus,

Come my Celia, let us prove,
While we may, the sports of love;
Time will not be ours, for ever:
He, at length, our good will sever.
Spend not then his guifts in vaine.

Sunnes, that set, may rise againe:
But if once we loose this light,
'Tis, with us, perpetual night.
Why should we deferre our joyes?

An even more remarkable song is Jonson's "Drinke to me, only, with thine eyes," which is one of the most popular lyrics in the English language. Jonson had bewitched some passages of Greek prose into cadences to make this song. He put it into a lover's mouth in his play *The Devil is an Ass* (1616). This became for the "Sons of Ben" the model of excellence in lyric poetry. Note the beauty of the song's cadences:

Drinke to me, only, with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kisse but in the cup,
And I will not looke for wine.
The thirst, that from the soule doth rise,
Doth aske a drinke divine:
But might I of Jove's Nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

Jonson's songs in his plays added to the comedy a special charm of their own, so much so that these songs made for themselves a separate place outside the plays. The plays may have grown less interesting to us, but not the songs. They continue to charm the reader irrespective of time and place. In other words, as the time has gone by, these songs have proved to be more universal than the plays in which they appeared. Jonson's masques, too, relied a good deal on the appeal of the songs, which the dramatist always inducted in his stage compositions. In these one-night spectacles, which Bacon called "but toys," Jonson buried gems of song now seldom uncovered. Jonson remained the pattern for the Restoration singers. He has been well described as the real father of the Augustan Age. His influence, as a matter of fact, was much broader than this. For instance, we need not ignore the fact that he was master as much of the ode as he was of the lyric and the song. His odes are of an intricate and entrancing music which do not appear again in English poetry before the nineteenth century. Wordsworth is one of those English poets who seem to have sought inspiration from the odes of Jonson. One can, for instance, trace the "source" of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" in Jonson's following piece:

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk doth make man better be,
Or standing long on Oak, three hundred years,

To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere.
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May:
Although it fall and die that night,
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

No one would insist that Ben Jonson was the greatest poet of his time. But under the impact of his colossal mind and art, critics have, age after age, found it hard to believe. He remains an important dramatist of England and the founder of neoclassical drama and poetry in English. But his songs and lyrics, which he used as ornaments for his plays, are no less irresistible to read even today. They remain a source of joy for ever.

THE ALCHEMIST

Before we launch upon a detailed discussion of Jonson's play, *The Alchemist,* it may be useful to explain what alchemy is and what was its status in the seventeenth century England. Also, we may like to ask why Jonson chose to write a play on the alchemist. Alchemy was the medieval forerunner of chemistry. It was based on the supposed transformation of matter, concerned particularly with attempt to convert base metals into gold or find a universal elixir. An alchemist is one who practices alchemy. In his play, *The Alchemist*, Ben Jonson substitutes belief in alchemy and fortune-telling for the legacy hunting of *Volopne* as a symbol of the desire for easy money. Although it was a science of the Medieval Ages, alchemy was not out of vogue even in the age of Jonson. Lot of people in the seventeenth-century England took alchemy seriously, believing that metals could be converted into gold, and that there were practioners who could successfully perform the miraculous experiments. The belief was so strong and widespread that even monarchs were tempted to employ alchemists. Common people could be easy targets of swindlers, who would pose to know the science and cheat the credulous of their valuables. There were numerous instances of cheating in the name of alchemy. In 1565, even Queen Elizabeth is said to have hired an alchemist who was expected to produce 50,000 crowns a year. He did not succeed in the promised miracle, so he was imprisoned in the Tower of London where he probably died. In 1604, very close to the writing of The *Alchemist,* a Scottish practitioner of the science, Seton, had managed to convince many that he had been successful in his experiments. In this trade, so to say, the names of Dee and Kelley have been famous in the history of alchemy. A book published on the subject in 1668 assumed that Ben Jonson's play contained personal satire directed at these two gentlemen. One Dr. Simon Foreman is said to have been thriving in the practice of

alchemy around the year 1610. He died in 1611. The fact that Sir Francis Bacon considered it necessary to render alchemy the deference of serious refutation in his *Sylva Sylvanum*, one of his Latin philosophical works, clearly shows that this pseudo-science was still a force to reckon with in the age of Jonson and Bacon.

The fact that the pseudoscience of alchemy could continue to have hold on people's mind, despite its repeated failures, only shows that the temptation to get rich quick is one of the fundamental weaknesses in civilised man. Greed for gold, in other words, is an almost universal trait of mankind. Added to this general weakness of most people were two other factors which made possible the continuing hold of such a false goddess as alchemy. One of these factors was the power of rumours, which would always make one or another success story credible to the greedy believers. The rumour would always locate the success story in another place and at another time. In such a case, no verification is ever possible. Such stories assume the status of a myth, which always has a hold on human mind. In Jonson's play also, it is used as a device. Ananias, a character in the play, supplies in Act III with one such rumour. Another factor for its continued hold on people's mind was the alchemist's justifications of failure inbuilt in the requirements of the science. Thus a swindler could always depend upon some flaw in the procedure, or upon someone's deviating from the strict morality of the profession. For example, in Jonson's play, the character Mammon can believe that his impure thoughts were the reason for the failure of the experiment. No wonder that the swindler would wear holy man's guise to lend credence to the business of alchemy. Jonson uses this popular belief as a symptom of people's greed for gold, giving no credence to the pseudo-science of alchemy. He had absolutely no faith in it. But he also knew that lot of people had. And he took it only as a general human weakness. Hence, he chose to satirise this general human weakness and show a mirror to people for a possible reform in their character.

THE PLOT OUTLINE

There is a gentleman named Lovewit who lives in the city of London. Since plague has broken out in the city (in the year 1610) Lovewit decides to leave London and go elsewhere to escape the plague. Before leaving, he calls his butler, or "housekeeper" and entrusts to him the care of his spacious house in his absence. This butler is named Jeremy, who is a man of greater enterprise than his master could ever imagine. In the absence of his master, Jeremy comes upon a destitute couple, namely Subtle and his woman confederate Dol Common. Subtle professes to be an alchemist. When the three get together, they devise a plan to swindle the gullible, using the Lovewit mansion as their base of operations. All the three have talents of their own in the art of cheating. So, they put their heads together and

decide to launch the operation of swindling the credulous by promising them the alchemical wonder of converting their cheap metals into gold. This partnership of the three swindlers has problems from the very formation. There are internal dissensions. Each feels he has made greater contribution than the other towards raising the mutual fund and wants, therefore, greater share of the booty. The female partner, Dol, has to maintain peace between these two suspicious and contentious males. She is able to manage a peace between them, but always at the nick of time, just before the next client is about to come.

The action proceeds with the exploits of these swindlers. Subtle is presented as a skilled alchemist as well as an astrologer, a palm as well as face reader. Undoubtedly, he is not a master of any of these trades; he is only a jack of all these trades. Besides, all of these trades are pseudo-sciences, which flourish just because people are desperate to know and to have a better luck. No rationalist would have any faith in these sciences (or arts). The other swindler is Face, who is sometimes disguised as captain. He is presented as a man-about-town. Face puts on other disguises also. Dol Common's role is to assist these two whenever a female is required to enact a scene of swindling. Her activities include prostituting also, perhaps her regular profession. If that helps them fleece a victim, she is always available for her services. With these roles defined, and each ready to perform towards the common goal of swindling customer after customer, their operation begins at the Lovewit mansion.

The first client the trio is able to hook is a Dapper, who wants to be charmed with luck in gambling. They ask him to escalate his desires. Subtle reads his fortune and tells him that his good luck follows from his aunt, the Queen of Fairy. Thus motivated, Dapper leaves to bring more money. Their next client (or victim) is a Drugger. He is actually selling tobacco and wants to open a new shop. He wants his horoscope read, wants advice on the right orientation of his merchandise, and wants to know and have the lucky sign for his business establishment. Now arrives an old client named Sir Epicure Mammon. He is a man of wild dreams. He is also accompanied by a friend named Surly. Mammon has engaged Subtle to manufacture for him the philosopher's stone. Here, Subtle poses to be a pious scholar. Face poses to be an apperentice alchemist with Subtle. They promise to produce the philosopher's stone in a short time, but for making it possible he will have to maintain purity of thought and nobility of intent. To attract him further to their trade, they permit him access to Dol. They present her to him as the Lord's sister who has gone mad on the subject of theology. So, Dol is presented to Mammon as Lord's sister. In matters other than theology, they say, the Lord's sister is sane. Face promises Mammon to help him woo the Lord's sister. But, Surly, Mammon's companion, is not convinced of all this. The appearance of Dol convinces him further that they are cheats, out to swindle his friend. He feels that

the place is a bawdyhouse, not a house of honest business. He starts making plans to expose the trio of swindlers.

Just as Mammon is leaving, promising Face (posing as servant) to woo Dol later, another client arrives. His name is Ananias, who represents the Puritans. He, too, wants the philosopher's stone, which would convert any metal into gold. Subtle becomes a little rough with Ananias when the latter insists that the Puritans will advance more money only after they are shown some results. At this very moment reappears the Drugger. Face, now disguised as captain, assures him of success in the near future. Drugger suggests another customer, a young and wealthy squire, who along with his wealthy widowed sister, has just arrived in the city of London. Seeing a great opportunity in the new prospect, Face induces Drugger to persuade the new comers to visit the Lovewit's mansion for a meeting with Subtle the Alchemist. Face manages to encourage Drugger to believe that the latter has great prospects of getting married to the wealthy widow sister of the young squire.

As the play covers only one day's events at the Lovewit mansion, the action has to be accelerated a little. Now Ananias, along with his partner named Tribulation arrives. Subtle succeeds in convincing them of the efficacy of his science of alchemy. He negotiates with them for financial support to his useful project. He also suggests to them that he has the ability to change pewter into Dutch dollars. Impressed by Subtle's suggestions, but having some doubt on certain points of law, they leave to consider his proposals. Their anxiety is about coining and casting. They know that coining is illegal, but they are not sure whether casting, too, is illegal. Meanwhile, Face, who has been absent for a while, returns and reports the acquisition of a fresh customer for Dol. This new catch is a Spanish count who has just arrived in the city of London. Dapper also arrives at this juncture for an introduction with his aunt, the Queen of Fairy. Dol is prepared to play the part of Dapper's aunt, but the scene is interrupted by the arrival of Drugger along with his friend Kastrill. Greatly impressed by Subtle, fully convinced that the alchemist is capable of teaching him the art of quarrelling like a gentleman, Kastrill leaves to bring his sister to the Lovewit mansion. As the swindlers are blindfolding Dapper for a meeting with his aunt they are interrupted by the arrival of Mammon. In a speed post hurry, they hustle, blindfold, and gag Dapper into the privy.

Here follows another interesting scene, in which Dol and Mmmon are in turn interrupted and whisked into another room on the arrival of Kastrill and Dame Pliant. Versatile genius of sorts as Subtle is, he also professes his skill in matchmaking. Kastrill gets soon convinced that Subtle is a reliable matchmaker, and leaves the future of his sister in the hands of this wise man of London, Subtle the Alchemist. Since Dame Pliant is an attractive catch in terms of wealth, both

Subtle and Face become contenders for the match. They quarrel on the subject of suitability and legitimacy of marrying the rich widow. This competition between the conspirators becomes a continuous source of mutual distrust and ill will. Now arrives the Spanish count, who is actually Surly in disguise. For a moment, the trio of swindlers is caught in surprise, as Dol is busy making love to Mammon. Since Dol is not available at present, they quickly decide to trick Dame Pliant into substituting for Dol. To manage the moment, they pretend that Subtle forecasts her marriage to a Spanish count. Their assumption is that since the count knows Dol for a prostitute, he would not be prepared to marry Dame Pliant who is being presented as Dol. Thus, each thinks he will be able to spare for himself the hand of Dame Pliant and her, more attractive, fortune. So, in another part of the house, the duo of swindlers quarrel once again over Dame Pliant, this time not to claim her, but to push her to the rival's share.

In another scene, Mammon's courtship of the mentally ill lord's sister is progressing according to plan. As the knight inevitably mentions something, it triggers Dol's fit. And it is precisely such a situation that Subtle has been waiting for. Just as the Alchemist accuses Mammon of carnal desires, an explosion follows close by in the house. It relates to the Alchemist's experiment for producing the philosopher's stone. Now the entire effort, he says, comes to not. He attributes the experiment's failure to Mammon's sinfulness. This completes the gulling of Mammon. He forefeits his deposits because he did what he was told not to do – not to have evil intents. The other affair between Surly (the count of Spain) and Dame Pliant does not progress as planned. Surly exposes the swindlers' plot. As they were talking before the Spanish count, presuming he would not know English, Surly (in disguise as count) understood it all. Surly now proposes to Dame Pliant (actually Dol), indicating the gratitude she should feel for him. But when he has to encounter Subtle, the plotters, he discovers, come up equal to the occasion. As each of the other gulls enters, Face enlists him against Surly. Now, Kastrill is, for obvious reasons, very eager to quarrel; Drugger knows that Surly is his debtor in his shop; Ananias sees in Surly's Spanish dress the ultimate abomination. Thus, Surly is driven off by the very people he offered help.

Nearing the last phase of the play's action, the goings-on of the trio of swindlers are suddenly brought to an end by the surprise return of Lovewit, the owner of the mansion. Now Face, Lovewit's servant, who in connievance with Subtle and Dol, was carrying on the business of swindling in the absence of his master, finds himself in a soup. Love wit is briefed by his neighbours on the mysterious goings-on in his house all the while he was away. Now, Face disguises himself as Jeremy, the butler of the house, who has not been seen by any one for several months. Questioned by the master on what he has heard from the neighbours, Jeremy (known as Face) tries to convince him that all that the

neighbours have reported is utterly false. As things have come crowding and come unexpectedly for the swindlers, they forget the presence of Dapper in the house whom they had blindfolded and gagged. He has managed meanwhile to rid himself of his gag. As he calls out, Jeremy has no choice but to make a confession before his master. Lovewit, who loves jest (true to his name), readily forgives his servant, especially because the servant promises him the entire loot and a rich window for wife.

Thus, to save himself, Jeremy cheats his partners in swindling, and just a short while before they are able to cheat him. As promised, Jeremy immediately arranges Lovewit's marriage with Dame Pliant. But before Lovewit is able to possess his booty and his bride, the entire band of gulls arrives. While Mammon and surly are accompanied by police, Kastrill has come prepared to fight, the Puritans to get back the goods given to the swindlers. While Lovewit send off each of them by turn, he agrees to return to Mammon whatever of his property is left, provided he procured warrant from the police. But to do so Mammon would have to admit his gullibility. So he chases off the others, and outblusters Kastrill, who loves Mammon for his feat. At the end of the satirical sport, effected through the game of swindling, Lovewit alone stands benefited. Face, Subtle and Dol find themselves precisely in the same position in which they began. Face is again Jeremy, wandering in the streets of London.

The Play's Structure

Ben Jonson, being a complete classicist, always cared to observe in his plays the principle of three unities as prescribed by Aristotle and Horace, and practised by the Roman dramatists like Plautus and Terence. In terms of structure, *The Alchemist* has been unanimously acclaimed as the perfect comedy. Coleridge considered it one of the three best constructed works, the other two being Sophocles' *Oedipus* and Fielding's *Tom Jones*. The perfection of the plot structure is all too apparent. We have the unity of place in that all that happens in the play happens at one place only – the house of Lovewit. No part of the action, not even the fraction of a part, takes place anywhere else. Similarly, there is an equally perfect unity of time. The entire proceedings at the house of Lovewit, although largely in his absence, take place within the limits of a single day. No doubt, there is a time gap between the beginning and the end, but the action, by and large, remains confined to a single day. Aristotle, on his part, considers even the time of one year a reasonable span for a play's action. But Jonson, following the classical dramatists of the ancient Greeko-Roman tradition, reduced it to only one day in most of his comedies. As for the unity of action, that too is perfectly observed, as there is no sub-plot, nor any variety of incidents. The entire action centers around the trio of swindlers who hook a few people in there net, but get exposed at the end

owing to the internal logic of intrigue. In fact, in *The Alchemist* the relation between material and form is so nearly perfect that it tends to appear fortuitous.

The plot, no doubt, is highly complex, not simple. The complexity arises from the fluent use of intrigue and disguise. Characters come and go under various guises and identities. They plot against each other, defeating one intrigue by another. Consequently, a thick web of intrigues and disguises gets erected, in which the common reader is quite likely to lose track of persons and their plots. But the master artist that Ben Jonson is, he holds these intrigues like the magician does the various balls, throwing them into air all in a single action, embracing the goings and comings of all of them. Thus, one of the most complex plots in English comedy is wound up to its harmonious conclusion without violation of character in the smallest degree. The play's elements are base, contemptible, and hypocritical, there being no suggestion of tragedy, that indefinable breath of passion which flowed and yet heightened the quality of *Volpone*. Here, it is the language and mood of pure comedy. Jonson as dramatist is completely detached, staying at ample distance from all of his characters, watching them to the smallest detail, grouping them in the surest proportion. One wonders at the subtle dance in which he sets the motley chorus to revolving motion. It is truly Jonsonian spectacle, free from the excursion of poetry and power quite frequent in early plays. He forbids us to take it as a serious and enduring comment upon human frailty.

It *The Alchemist* has been rightly considered the highest reach of Jonson's art as dramatist. In its form and structural technique we recognize the masterly hand of a supreme, self-constituted artist. The spirit that animates the characters in the play's action, whose movements make the play's form, remains critical and undramatic in *The Alchemist*.

When all is said and done, however, it must be admitted that there remains in the perfection of the play's structure a certain mechanicality of maneuvering. The way each character is made to arrive right at the moment when the other need to be relieved, the way each character is to leave when the other is about to arrive, and the way disguises are to be arranged and changed to carry on the game of intrigue, does reduce the play's structure to a mechanical exercise. One reason is, of course, the dramatist's deliberate attempt to keep the reader distanced from the characters. As against Jonson's comedy, a comedy of Shakespeare would immediately involve the reader in the affairs and fortunes of its characters, making him impatiently and passionately wait for the next happening. Here, in the case of Jonson, whatever is to happen is to happen for fun, but fun with a sting in it. In other words, the dramatist's satirical intent, his moral purpose behind the satire, affects the play's course as it does in real life. For hammering home the moral message, for striking at the object of satire, the dramatist has to contrive the movement of the plot. It is

this important aspect of Jonson as dramatist, therefore, to which we must now turn for an appropriate understanding of his art of satirical comedy.

The Alchemist as Satire:

Ben Jonson's distinction as dramatist lies in his conscious critical purpose, which controls the construction of each of his plays, tragic as well as comic. It is this element, more than any other, which makes him so very different from his contemporaries. All the dramatists of the age of Jonson can be called artists by instinct, theatre-men by profession, and moralists, if at all, by fits and starts. Whenever they outgrew the moralist in them, which they generally did, their work was that of artists conforming with ease to the popular and professional demands upon their art. Consequently, their work reflected not only their own individual preoccupations but also the mood of their times. In the case of Ben Jonson, the moralist always came first, if only by a short length. He was a considerable artist too, but it was his speciality that his ethical principles not only largely controlled the subject-matter of his art, but, transmuted into aesthetic theories, controlled also its form. It may be argued that perhaps he crippled himself as an artist by imposing his moral purpose upon his art. One may speak of a divided mind as one of the results of such an imposition. What helps conceal this division is the unified surface of purpose that his plays present to us. At the same time, it is this very fundamental division of his mind which is responsible for our inability to conceive of his work as a whole. But whatever be the effect upon his ultimate achievement, one thing is quite clear, that the strictness of his literary standard, coming quite early in the Jacobean age, was of immense value in setting up a standard of subject-matter, thought and structure to serious critical comedy.

Although with a distinction, Jonson's commitment to satirical comedy was not altogether new to him. As a matter of fact, satire appeared as an essential aspect of the humanist attitude in the Renaissance. It was this component of Humanism, along with some others, which brought a change from the Medieval to the Renaissance outlook on life. Actually, Humanism in satire involved a change from the medieval outlook, which was still available in Barclay’s translation of *The Ship of Fools* (1508), or in Gascoigne’s *Steel Glass* (1576). It was a change from the denunciation of irony, from the tone of the preacher, to that of the wit. Yet, since the writers of the age of Jonson attacked the social pretensions intertwined with “civility”, they reverted to popular mockery and the theme of Folly. For the writers of this age, who were also the English contemporaries of Cerventes (the author of *Don Quixote*), Folly was a theme of complex associations, ranging from folk-games to journalism, poetic satire and the stage. The satire in the age of Jonson recalled the duality of the simpleton, the duality of the public jester, the duality of a universal human impulse. In the early Renaissance, Folly had been

presented either as "the eighth deadly sin" of Barclay and the Morality writers, or else, with Erasmus, as man's presiding genius, binding him in superstition and selfishness, but also spurring him to heroism, to love, and to poetry. By the time Jonson came on the stage in the Renaissance, these contrasts had been sharpened. The Puritan condemned the paganism of country sports, like the May-games, with their primitive leader, the Fool; while popular feeling reacted against "civility" through the heroes of rogue stories and jest books, through farces and jigs.

This reaction reached the Elizabethan theatres in the 1580's, when Tarlton and Kempe replaced the Morality Vice with clown-commentators reminiscent of *Piers Plowman*, the typical countryman. For example, one such clown – a distant forerunner to the role of Kent in Shakespeare's *King Lear* – is "a plain man of the country" in the pseudo chronical play *A Knack to Know The Knave…* (1592). His name is Honesty, and he is given the part of unmasking and punishing an up-to-date set of rogues. Hence, while the Puritans condemned the "craft, mischief, deceits and filthiness" of popular entertainment, journalists like Chettle and Nashe defended it as "anatomising… all cunning drifts over-gilded with outward holiness." These journalists would even taunt their opponents with the threat of a stage-play containing "a merriment of the Usurer and the Devil" (in Nashe's *Pierce Penniless*). Meanwhile, the stage clown came to gain sophistication from the wily servants of Latin comedy. As Feste in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* says, "Better a witty fool than a foolish wit." Thus, much of the Elizabethan comedy of the 1590's, including that of Jonson, is a variation on this antithesis, alternately contrasting and identifying the wit and the fool.

Thomas Nashe's treatment of "humours" in *Pierce Penniless* is characteristic of his methods in transforming allegory into farce. "Humour", before Nashe, had signified irrational egotism ("a jealous humour, a covetous humour"). But fashionable usage at the time of Nashe, and of Jonson, had lent greater dignity to the term. As Ben Jonson scathingly explains in *Every Man in His Humour* (Act III, sc. i), "As 'tis generally received in these days, it is a monster bred in a man by self-love and affectation, and fed by folly." Jonson further defined it, later, as "a gentleman like monster, bred in the special gallantry of our time." Nashe attacks this gentlemanlike monster with caricature, with "unsavoury smiles," with vigorous and sophisticated mockery. In Pierce's Supplication against Pride, for example, there is the social upstart who "scorneth learning:"

> All malcontent sits the greasy son of a Clothier, and complains (like a decayed Earl) of the ruin of ancient houses…. He will be humorous, forsooth, and have a brood of fashions by himself. Sometimes (because Love commonly wears the livery of Wit) he will be an *Inamorato Poeta*, and sonnet a whole quire of paper in praise of Lady

> *Swine-snout*, his yellow fac'd mistress, and wear a feather of her rainbeaten fan for a favour, like a fore-horse…

To this sinking student of gentility, Nashe also attributes the features of the classical braggart and those of the pretended traveler, the "dapper Jack." This character type, who has not really traveled much, will "wring his face about, as a man would stir a mustard pot, and talk English through the teeth…." Nashe's mimicry is rather savage. His self-willed "humours" that appear simply follies on the surface reveal, beneath the surface, the Seven Deadly Sins. The Devil himself, Pierce is told, is held by the sceptics of the day to be only an allegory (like Dame Fortune), or else, "only a pestilent humour in a man, of pleasure, profit, or policy, that violently carries him away to vanity, villainy, or monstrous hypocrisy." We can see here Jonson's debt to Nashe.

Pierce himself is also not immune to this scepticism. His "humourists" become the grotesque figures, the caricatures, of the shifting and ambiguous values of his world. The vast variety of various types of characters, representing different "humours", which Nashe presents in his comedy, stand in close proximity of what a little later Jonson does in his comedy like *The Alchemist*. No wonder that Jonson launched his career as dramatist in collaboration with Nashe. Decidedly, Jonson shared, if not learnt, quite a few things with the elder dramatist. Nashe's world of stage includes the "counterfeit politician," the atheist scholar (of Raleigh's circle); the thriftless young heir at the Inns of Court, who "falls in quarrelling humour with his fortune, because she made him not King of the Indies"; Mistress Minx, the merchant's "simpering wife" (who "will eat no cherries forsooth but when they are at twenty shillings a pound"); and the curious Dames who plaster themselves with paint and ointment "to enlarge their withered beauties." All these types, presented in *Pierce Penniless*, are bogus as well as sinfully proud. Anticipating Jonson's *The Alchemist*, there is in Nashe's play the quack antiquarian and the equally "fantastical fool" who buys his rubbish: "this is the disease of our newfangled humourists, that they know not what to do with their wealth." Thus, in his social attitude, in his language and satiric methods, Nashe's writing reveals the close and complex relationship between the humanism of the 1590's and the popular traditions. A little later, the "humour comedies," or the "comedy of humours," written by Chapman, Jonson, and Marston at the end of the decade, show a further phase of the same relationship. They directly follow from Nashe.

When we move from Nashe to Jonson, we find that Jonson's scorn of false civility is much controlled than Nashe's. In the case of Jonson, satire becomes much more searching and inclusive, and much more scholarly, than the satire of Nashe. Clearly indicating his debt to Nashe, Jonson started his theatre career by collaborating with Nashe in a satire of 1597 (now lost). We know, as already mentioned, how both ran into trouble because of this hard-hitting satire. One thing

is, of course, clear that Jonson's writings also sprang from the same background as did those of Nashe. For example, in Jonson's first important play, *Every Man in His Humour*, the central comic trio recall Nashe's composite caricature of Pride that "scorneth learning." No doubt, Jonson refined his rhetorical technique, it remains still closely linked to the popular morality and farce. In *Every Man Out of His Humour*, which is virtually a manifesto of Jonson's critical theory, a distinction is made between the monomania of genuine "humour" and mere eccentricity. Jonson's characters, shaped as they are after their dominant passions (humours), become instruments of a dominant passion, avrice or vanity, envy or lust, or, above all, the passion for quick money. In *The Alchemist*, as well as in the other great comedies of Jonson, they are depicted with minute observation, with painstaking scholarship, with remarkable agility in the psychological development of the dramatic situation.

It must, however, be remembered that for Jonson humour character (as their names clearly show) are allegorical figures. He uses the character as vehicle for moral judgement. It is never a complex or round character. It is always flat and static. The humour character is not so much a man possessed by a quality as the quality itself embodied in the man. Commonly, a whole scene is constructed so as to exhibit a "humourist" who caricatures himself by his behaviour, dress, and language. Jonson excels in making such satire general. Jonson's concept of the poet makes clear the role he assigned himself as a dramatist. Time and again, it is evidenced that he held above all the moral purpose of his play, which required an exposure of folly through satire. It is this purpose which determines the theory of humours and of humour characters. It is this very purpose again which dictates the nature of incidents. All of these – character as well as incident, diction as well as style – are subjected to that one grand purpose, which is moral satire.

Jonson's portrait of the poet also clearly shows his deep concern as a satirist. He is much more deliberate than any other of his contemporaries in his portraits of the true poet, culminating in *The Poetaster*, which is set, significantly, in Augustan Rome. The poet is vindicated in his public role as a teacher of mankind, qualified by inspiration, by learning, and by judgement. In Jonson's view, he is "the interpreter and arbiter of nature, a teacher of things divine no less than human, a master of manners." And it is this magisterial office that makes of him a satirist. But Jonson is always at pains to separate the genuine poetic Crispinus and the libertine Ovid. There is thus a notable shift of attitude from Nashe's Villainy. The poet as hero is distinguished from the poet as Fool.

It is along this line, then, that the tendency of satire about 1600 was to move away from popular interests towards tragedy and the philosophical problems of humanism. For Jonson, stoicism marks, not merely the satirist, but the public in general. It is the stoical man who is the protagonist of many a play written in the

age of Jonson. But this type is absorbed by tragedy. Comedy of humour remained satiric rather than tragic. Jonson's *The Alchemist*, as well as the other great comedies, follow the Roman model of classical comedy, which focussed on the follies of contemporary society and corrected them through satire. Hence Jonsonian or classical comedy had to be realistic, moving on the social and moral planes, rather than the cosmic and the spiritual planes more akin to tragedy. While the Jonsonian comedy gains in the unity of purpose and clarity of goal, it loses in the depth of life and fullness of characters. Thin but sharp, shallow but centred, contrived but concentrated, dreadful but detached – these are some of the key characteristics of the comedy that Jonson chose to write.

Like any literary work, *The Alchemist* can be appreciated at more than one level. One of the most obvious aspects of the play is its focus on the Folly, which, common to all, is exploited by the rogues. The theme of Folly is treated in the form of a satirical comedy written in the classical manner borrowed from Plautus and Terence. The comedy of the play lies in the fact that those who cheat others finally find themselves cheated, and that those who get cheated are found to be no better than those who are in the business of cheating. Thus, the play offers an all-inclusive satire on the society of Jonson's time, sparing none. The greatness of the dramatist is that there is perfect impartiality and objectivity in the treatment of various characters. No single character can be said to occupy the centre of the plot. The whole bunch of characters is placed at the centre stage with no peripheral or marginal figures spread around the centre. If we think of a Shakespeare play, in comparison, we shall find that there is a clear hierarchy set up among the characters, and their placement on the canvas of the play is indicative of their structural significance as well as moral status. Of course, there always are in a Shakespeare play, comic, tragic, or historical, disturbing forces (call them evil) that upset the moral and social hierarchy, but when the play concludes its action, the order and hierarchy are invariably restored to reassure the reader that all is well in the world under the benign order of Nature. Here, in a Jonson play, no such hierarchies of ethics or morality are set up. For his characters are not moral or ethical characters; instead, they are only humour characters; instead, they are only humour characters representing one or another folly, which is meant to represent general human weaknesses and which are picked up for bringing them to book, for effecting reform and correction. Hence, morals are not, in fact, absent here also. But they are not represented by characters on the stage. They are only indirectly present, since they are implied as norm with which to whip the follies. The two methods make out the difference between the satirical comedy of Jonson and the romantic comedy of Shakespeare.

One of the prominent comic devices used by Jonson in *The Alchemist* is that of disguise. We find the rogues changing disguises with every new scene. Disguise was, in fact, both a necessary and useful stage device in the Elizabethan age as well as the Jacobean. It was necessary because there were no female actors at the time of Jonson. The boys had to disguise themselves as girls. At the same time, it was found to be the simplest device for creating humour for the commonest of audience. Every one in the theatre could see that a character is in disguise to play deception on certain other characters. The audience knew it, the characters did not. Such a situation is an instance of dramatic irony, which is also a powerful means for creating humour. Most dramatists of the time, including Shakespeare, made use of the device for comic purposes. But Jonson goes further to make the disguise allegorical at times, indicating the humour or the Folly one represents, or allegorising the pretention one stands for. *The Alchemist* has, however, rather unusual share of the device of disguise, perhaps for adding farce to comedy. We see characters dashing frantically about, changing both clothes and personalities. Subtle, for instance, uses three disguises, so does Face as many times. Dol, too, uses three disguises, while Surly and Lovewit change twice. With the allegorical names given to characters, very much like the Morality figures, Jonson converts his characters, in a way, into disguises representing the humour or folly the names indicate. The actor on the stage, thus, becomes an allegorical figure. Here, the costumes put on the character are a befitting expression of the humour or folly the character stands for. Thus, disguise gains here an additional dimension of dramatic technique.

In the world presented in *The Alchemist*, we see either scoundrels or fools. There are no normal persons, for in a normal person there is nothing that can be satirised. Also, whatever is to be satirised has to be exaggerated so that it can stand out for a clear view of the audience. Hence even the normal traits, if made out as weaknesses or follies, are to be exaggerated to the extent that they start looking abnormal. It is only in such an abnormal and exaggerated form that something can be made to look bad or absurd. In other words, what a satirist does is to put a magnifying glass of his satirical or comic apparatus to make the objects of his satire so large that even those with weak moral vision would not miss the vice or folly. It is very much like putting a thief under the searchlight so that he can be shown to the public for what he is. Since the searchlights cannot be installed everywhere, Jonson brings them all to the Lovewit mansion where the fittings have been made. There is the stage where each gets exposed to the public eye under the glaring light of Jonson's satirical camera. The variety of tainted characters that adorns the notorious stage put up by the rogues includes, besides the rogues, fools, parasites, and hypocrites. It is avarice which motivates these characters, rogues and dupes alike. We see, in fact, not individual characters and their faults. Instead, we

begin to use abstract nouns for them. The play becomes, therefore, about, avarice, lechery, self-delusion, over-ambition, and hypocrisy.

We now begin to see that in the satirical comedy of Jonson disguises assume a new and greater significance. They emerge more than a mere comic device, more than a mere stage convention. Modern psychology may offer an explanation that the disguises represent the images we assume, the roles we assume in our lives. The age of Jonson saw them otherwise. For his age, the disguises were taken to be hypocrisies deliberately assumed to hide one's real self. For instance, it becomes doubly meaningful that Face seems to have no character of his own; he is only the roles he assumes in his various costumes. The play's satire, working through the exposure of various rogues, fools and hypocrites, reaches its high water-mark in the last scene. Here, we see Mammon more than merely gulled. As Lovewit shrewdly surmises, "he did cozen himself." In a moment he has convinced himself that "the commonwealth" (the reference has a dig at the Commonwealth of England rising to replace the King soon after) has sustained a loss. And before he leaves, he comes out more honestly: "I will… preach/The end of the world within these two months." Self-delusion, we are shown, is a way of life for him. It would not be surprising if he is found doing business with Subtle once again. Thus, *The Alchemist* is a powerful satire in dramatic form. Here, unlike in a Shakespearean comedy, satire is not one of the strands of comedy; rather, it is comedy which serves as a means for achieving the goal of satire. In other words, in a Jonsonian comedy, the form is determined, not by the requirements of comedy, but by the demands of the satire.

***Characterisation and Characters*:**

In drama, generally there are two types of comedy. In one, like that of Shakespeare called romantic or festive, there is more action and less dialogue. In the other, like that of Jonson called satirical comedy or the comedy of wit, there is more dialogue and less action. In the second type, even though there is almost a gallery of characters, there is not much of characterisation in that the characters do not develop. The dramatist's purpose being moral satire, the characters are required to remain just the representatives of one or another character trait, call it humour. Since his purpose is only to expose a folly a character represents, he needs only an incident or two to expose that folly. He does not require life-situations where a character is called upon to respond, to absorb, and to grow into an experienced, a mature person. Here, in Jonsonian comedy, the operation of putting the characters to test, showing their respective lies or follies, is only a mechanical one. It is not different from a doctor's putting a patient to a test before a scanner, showing an instant reading of what ails the tested patient. Jonson's scanner is the intrigue that the rogue character designs to put his victims through, thereby exposing each to the

penetrating rays of the irony. In the end, the web the spider wove gets the spider itself, exposing finally the rogue himself.

Obviously, in this kind of comedy, the characters perforce have to be static and flat, not dynamic and round. They are generally allegorical figures, just like the dramatis personae in the Morality. They only indicate the fault or folly, the vice or vanity they represent. Hence, they are only slightly better than the signposts. Their better part is that they can speak and show their wit. In fact, wit is their chief trait. They compete with each other in intriguing against each other. To outwit the rival one has to come up with a smarter intrigue than that of the rival. This aspect does, of course, put life into these signpost-like figures. When in the game of intrigue, they come to life, and even show signs of growing for better or for worse. They also come to life whenever they get engaged in a battle of wits. Here again they have to show their inventiveness and resourcefulness. In the process of showing these qualities once again they begin to feel like human characters, like the real-life figure. As such, they are able to transgress their mechanical functioning of the allegorical figures. They move closer to reality, as if come out of the closet. In Jonson's *The Alchemist*, we have all the characters as allegorical figures. But this initial impression undergoes some change as we move along the play's action, seeing them in operation, using their wit and inventiveness in the game of intrigues. Some of these, such as Suble and Face even grew from scene, facing new challeges, using their resources for coping with the changing reality. Such characters show their potential for growth, if they do not actually demonstrate growth. Decidedly, all the characters in *The Alchemist* are not flat and unchanging.

To be convincing as character, the dramatist has to take into account the values acceptable to his audience. At least, that was the case in the age of Jonson. Dramatists catred to the popular taste. Their values are not necessarily, nor always, universal or timeless, for the values do change from time to time, from place to place. At the same time, these values cannot merely local for in that case the drama will become dated, only a piece of historical significance having nothing much of interest to succeeding generations. Jonson founded his characters on two considerations which formed part of the way of life that defined the Elizabethans. The first of these was the ethical expectation of Jonson's audience, the second as an Elizabethan system of human psychology. The ethical need involved what later came to be called "poetic justice." (It was Thomas Rymer who gave the name poetic justice to the practice of distributing reward and punishment to dramatic characters befitting to their virtue and vice as the case may be). Dramatists like Shakespeare adopted the doctrine of poetic justice to an extent, but not entirely, and not as a mechanical formula. But dramatists like Jonson observed it very faithfully and almost mechanically. Also, while the doctrine can easily work in a comedy, it cannot hold good in the case of tragedy.

By and large, a character's fate at the end of the play must invariably satisfy the viewer's sense of right and wrong. Thus, the relationship between character and plot can be viewed from either end. It can be said that if a character is created in a certain way or for a particular purpose, then the plot must end in a certain conclusion or carry out that purpose. Looking from the other end, it can be said that if the plot is constructed or designed to show a certain conclusion, then the character must be created accordingly. In other words, viewed from either side, it is not possible to separate, as Henry James says, one from the other. The two are so interrelated that we cannot think of the one without thinking of the other. The only possibility is that while some writers begin with the one, others begin with the other. But in the beginning is also the ending of the plot; the beginning determines the ending. Hence, in a successful literary work, drama in particular, character and incident, or the development of the two, must remain integrated. Wherever deviation occurs between the course of the movement of these two most important aspects of drama or novel, the work will become incoherent and inconsistent. Jonson's characters in *The Alchemist* are created in ethical terms, and they are rewarded and punished accordingly.

Closely related to Jonson's moral control of the play is the satirical spectrum of London represented by the same characters. In terms of the satire's requirement also these characters have to be punished. In the course of the play's action, they usually do not grow, because they have to remain what they are meant to represent. As satirical entities, they also do not learn from experience. They are so hardened in their respective humours that they cease to be anything more. Jonson's characters are based, actually, on the doctrine of humours, which was derived from the medieval ages. According to this doctrine, human body consisted of four homours (or moistures), namely blood, phlegm, yellow bile (choler), and black bile (melancholy). So long as these four humours remained in proportion, the human body and mind remained healthy. But if the proportion was disturbed by any one of these four becoming in excesses, then the body as well as mind would become unhealthy or ab-normal, inclined to the excess of one particular humour. Such characters become convenient tools of comedy and satire. Jonson enumerated his view of humours in the opening scene of *Every Man Out of His Humour* as under:

> …….. so in every human body
> The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,
> By reason that they flow continually
> In some one part, and are not continent,
> Receive the name of humours. Now thus far
> It may, by metaphor, apply itself
> Unto the general disposition;

As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluctions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.

Although Jonson made popular the theory of humours in the theatre and also used it in shaping his characters in his early comedies, his interest had shifted from humours to morals by the time he came to write *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*. In these later plays, satire gets the better of comedy, morals the better of humours. Thus, the characters in *The Alchemist* represent, not humours, but moral flaws, which Jonson must expose, ridicule, and punish. Thus, there is a qualitative or essential difference between *The Alchemist* and *Every Man in His Humour.*

As for the craftsmanship involved in Jonson's art of characterisation, he always made available complete introduction of each character on the character's very first appearance. We get to know all that we need to know about Face, Subtle, and Dol in the very first scene of the play where the trio of swindlers is introduced. Similarly, we get to know each of their victims on his or her first appearance. We even get to know Lovewit, even though he makes a grief appearance in the play. Still, through the subtle art of the dramatist we are provided the vital information about him at once. After their introduction, the characters remain almost the same throughout. The other device of craft Jonson uses in the service of characterisation. Each character uses his or her peculiar language. As an illustration, Subtle, the Alchemist, not only speaks alchemy, he also thinks alchemy, and describes people and things in the terminology of alchemy. For instance, he tells how he has "sublimed", "wrought" Face, "exalted" him, and "fixed" him in "the third region", "wrought" him "to spirit, to quintessence." All these metaphors, one can see, are derived directly from the discipline of alchemy. Similarly, each character sticks to his lexical register. It is a part of the doctrine of decorum that each character used language appropriate to his or her status and profession. Thus, in *The Alchemist* the characters act and speak like specialists, not like common people.

THE CONSPIRATORS OR SWINDLERS

i) SUBTLE:

Considering individually, the title character in *The Alchemist* is Subtle, who remains more important than others because he is the centre of attention in the entire business of swindling the gullible characters. Although called an alchemist, Subtle knows some other sister or pseudo arts as well. For instance, he knows astrology, divination, and the reading of horoscopes. He also wants to become rich, which normally his "arts" would not fetch him. Hence he plans to defraud people by making exaggerated claims for his "arts". He tempts

people by promising them conversion of their base metals into gold, by deliberately telling lies about the fortunes of gullible characters, by planned misreadings of people's horoscopes, etc. In other words, he wants to make money by hook or by crook. His greed for money has made him so selfish that he wants to cheat even his partners, Face and Dol. Besides, the same avarice has also made him suspicious of even his partners. Gulling people has become such a passion with him that he does not practise it only for making money; he wants to keep practising it for perfecting his art of gulling. Performance of gulling is like an activity of creative arts. The better he performs his art, the more elating it is to the performing artist. Note, for instance, how he reacts to Face's failure to find Surly in town, and Face's lack of interest in finding Surly because there is no money to be made out of him: "O, but to have gulled him/ Had been a mastery." Thus, Subtle alone is the artist of swindling, not Face, nor anyone else. He takes it as an art, and he tries to improve his art with every performance of swindling. He is indeed the master swindler.

Subtle, with all his craft of swindling and learning of different dubious trades like palm reading, face reading, horoscope reading, etc., is a cowardly person. Like a thief, he has no feet when he gets caught or is challenged. For example, when Surly reveals himself, he gets nonplussed. He only cries, "Help! Murder!" Later, after he is routed, Face tries to bolster his morale: "Come Subtle/ Thou art so down upon the least disaster." And at the end of the play, when Lovewit appears, Subtle can only turn to his partner: "What shall we do now, Face?" His greatest merit is that he can play various roles. No doubt hypocrisy leading to self-delusion is common to all characters in the play, in the case of Subtle it is the very foundation of his being. He becomes the very mask he assumes. He adapts himself to every role he plays. Every time he appears in a new disguise, he appears altogether a new person.

Just as the play opens, we see Subtle dressed in ordinary clothes. The only sign of his art of alchemy is the vial of acid that he carries with him. But as soon as Dapper arrives, he puts on his robes and gets busy practising magic. He even poses to maintain the professional dignity by showing reluctance in accepting money. He maintains the same dignity when he later reads Drugger's forehead and palm. When it comes to dealing with Mammon, he poses to be completely dedicated to the science of alchemy. He acts like a great scientist engaged in serious research. He succeeds in creating a great impression on people. His best as pretender comes out when he explains the *raison d'etre* of alchemy to Surly. When the Puritans arrive, he treats them altogether differently. He becomes irascible, stubborn, opinionated, and impatient. Like Chameleon, he automatically changes in accordance with the situation in which he is placed.

Thus, Jonson uses Subtle, as well as the other swindlers, to expose, not just one type which each represents, but also several other types which they expose by assuming different roles under different costumes and professions. Hence, the dramatist is able to achieve through microcosmic presentation an effect and a sweep of the macrocosmic scale. A novelist would take several more characters and invent as many more incidents to achieve the same effect. Taking advantage of stage Jonson devises a technique to represent several social types through every single type. Hence his characters are not, in a way, copies of actual persons in the realistic style; rather, they are devices with multiple functions. They are no better than stage actors who are habitual of playing many different roles.

***ii) FACE*:**

Face is another swindler of the trio. He is, in fact, the most active of the three. When Subtle and he collaborate to swindle a customer, he plays a more active role; he scans the city for probable catches, baits them, and brings them into the net. Subtle's role begins only after Face has brought the victim prepared for the slaughter (swindling). His performance on the stage of the Lovewit mansion is also more imaginative, which help him extract a continuous flow of money for the common pool. His pleasure in larceny is greater than that of Subtle. He is also more quick-witted than Subtle. In the game of the cheat cheating the cheat, as it comes at the climax of the play's action, he comes out victorious, remains unbeatable by his rivals. He is also quite good at role playing. Whatever type he is required to play by the exigencies of the situation, he plays that role in a smooth and natural fashion. The various roles he assumes include that of the "captain", of Face, of "Lungs," as sorcerer's apprentice, and finally of Jeremy the butler, his real self. Jonson's subtle irony shows the tragedy of role-playing, which is that you lose your own real identity and become an empty self, so empty that it can be made on to pun on or assume any identity. In other words, he becomes a tailor-made man, who is known by costumes and by mimicry. Of course, the profession of assuming role is as much an art as acting. Face competes well in this art with the master artist, Subtle.

Compared to others, Subtle included, Face is a complex character. As Captain Face, he is rather rude and overbearing. He behaves like a bully, fights even with Subtle, ending with an upper hand over him. As sorcerer's apprentice under the name "Lungs," he is quite cunning – polite, friendly, always ready to be of use. Then as Jeremy, he withdraws from the centre-satge as soon as Lovewit arrives. He becomes self-effacing, just as a servant is in the house. Although a rogue, almost a professional, one cannot help admiring the skill he exhibits in his playing different roles imposed on him by the exigencies of the situations arising in the course of intrigues. One does not develop contempt for him because the

persons he dupes are no better than him. They are equally, some even more, contemptible. Besides, it is not a comedy inviting emotions. On the contrary, the situations in which Face appears call for no emotion at all. It is a satire inviting ridicule and laughter at the way the rogues deceive each other, outsmarting one another in the game of wits.

***iii) DOL COMMON*:**

Among the three in the team of swindlers or cheats, Dol Common is the most passive partner. She does make contributions to the on-goings at the Lovewit mansion, but her roles to be played are decided by Face or Subtle. She only does what she is asked to do. Since she is made to appear as the Queen of Fairy, she does not get any opportunity to improvise. She is assigned, first of all, the job to entertain Surly. The scheme, however, gets changed by circumstances. She would have been, in that role, no better than a prostitute. In her next role with Mammon, she is on her own, required to act independently to bring about the desired result. The man is to be made to believe that he himself brought his ruin. Here, she plays her part very well. Her roles do not require her to be innovative or resourceful like Face or Subtle, but they do call for common sense on her part. She certainly shows on her part a strong common sense. Her male partners may lose temper and fight between themselves, they may call for the forces of law, inviting trouble for themselves. She remains free from such vagaries and whims. She always keeps her cool. Also, she never loses sight of the dangers likely to plague them all in the business of swindling. Passive as a female partner of the rogues, she is, as a matter of fact, as much of a victim as those supposed to be gulling or swindling.

THE FOOLS OR GULLIBLES:

As there are rogues in *The Alchemist*, so are the fools. Since one cannot survive without the other, both are complementary to each other. For there are rogues because there are fools and there are fools because there are rogues. If there were no fools, the rogues would have nothing to do their rogouery upon. Similarly, if there were no rogues, there would be no one to prove that the fools are fools. In Jonson's play, we have a trio of fools or gullibles, just as there is a trio of rogues. The fool characters in Jonson's play are Drugger, Dapper, and Kastrill. All the three are interesting characters, and each represents a contemporary social type. But none carries the mythic burden of Mammon or the satiric impact of the Puritans. They have their narrow selfish goals, but have no inordinate ambition with larger designs.

i) DRUGGER:

Jonson has shaped Drugger's character in accordance with the doctrine of decorum. He is a simple tradesman without any inordinate ambitions. Since he plans to open a new tobacco shop, his simple desire is to have a lucky sign. Hence he wants his horoscope read only to know whether he would be successful in his new venture. He also wants to know the right way of arranging his merchandise on shelves so that the occult forces work for him. Left to himself he would succeed in business on the strength of his hard work. But his simplicity makes him an easy victim of the swindlers, who bewilder him to glorious prospects. He is shown the temptation of a rich widow available for marriage. The prospect of marriage to a young, beautiful and wealthy woman is temptation enough to cause his fall. But his desire to marry a gentlewoman would amount to a violation of the doctrine of decorum. He belongs to a lower social status, and his desire to marry a gentlewoman is rather presumptuous. Hence, he must be humiliated for his vanity. In Jonson's play, Drugger is a comic and blundering character, foolish enough to fall a prey to the smart scoundrels. At one stage in the play he steps out of character and says (obviously the actor playing his role), "did you never see me play the Fool?" It seems the actor playing Drugger must have frequently played the Fool's role. Indirectly, it is also meant to tell the audience that Drugger is to be taken a Fool, no better. It is also a well-known fact that David Garrick, the famous stage actor of Dr. Johnson's time, frequently acted the Drugger's role. This association shows how popular this comic role must have been in the age of Jonson, as well as of Dr. Jonson, for otherwise a leading actor like Garrick would not take up the role. Garrick was, in fact, Dr. Samuel Johnson's pupil, who came to London with his master and rose to become a legendary actor. We need to remember that while Ben Jonson belonged to the early seventeenth century, the Jacobean age, Dr. Samuel Johnson and David Garrick belonged to the eighteenth century, the Age of Johnson or the Age of Sensibility.

ii) DAPPER:

Jonson's Dapper is quite different from his Drugger, in that while Drugger wants his business of tobacco to flourish, Dapper wants to flourish without having any business. But the common quality the two characters share is their essential simplicity. Like Drugger, Dapper is also easily played upon by Face, the master swindler. Face plays upon Dapper's greed. Dapper is a lawyer's clerk. Face disguised as captain met him the night before at a tavern. Dapper wants a familiar spirit to help him in his gambling. Initially, Subtle pretends to be reluctant in arranging for such a spirit, for it is against the law, but Face compels him to accept money from his friend and do the needful. As Dapper expresses desire for

greater favour, Face enhances payment proportionately. Subtle befools him by saying that he sees great future for Dapper. He is told that he would have greater luck after meeting the Queen of Fairy, to whom, he is told, he is related. The fool as he is, he believes it all and pays more price for the promised meeting. But meanwhile the proceedings are interrupted by the arrival of Drugger. To conceal his presence, the rogues blindfold and gag him. Thus, he is treated with utter contempt, corning as he does from a lower strata of society. He is put through all kinds of humiliation and indignity. He, too, shows complete lack of self-respect and takes all insults and humiliations without any protest. In the hierarchical Elizabethan society, the lower classes usually received such humiliations from their superiors.

iii) KASTRILL:

It looks preposterous to us today that a man should seek to learn the rules of gentlemanly quarreling. But it was not much of a surprise in the age of Jonson. One may recall here Touchstone's satire in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Touchstone explains how he carried the quarrel by the book following all the seven points. The idea is to ridicule the concept of "gentlemanliness." The idea is, as the implication suggests, where is gentlemanliness, or what kind it is, if quarreling is a part of its preoccupation? Another edge to the satire is the gentleman's commitment to living by the book. Both in Shakespeare and Jonson, living by the book means living an inauthentic life. Such characters are automatically the stuff of comic ridicule. In modern literature, Hemmingway satirises similar characters, such as Cohn in *The Sun Also Rises* or the tourists in *The Old Man and The Sea*. Kastrill is such a comic character who wants to know the rules of quarreling, making himself an easy victim or prey of Face and Subtle, the master swindlers. Kastrill is a young man, brash, purse-proud and ill-mannered. His desire to play the bully and live by wits are not supported by his unlearning mindset. His inexperience is another inadequacy in his character. Face, smart as the rascal is, reads him quickly and hooks him with a fitting bate. Subtle and Face may be pretending the profession of "reading" hands and foreheads, stars and horoscope, they are, as a matter of fact, the real "readers" of men. It is this sharpness, which they have and these fools like Kastrill do not, that they use as an advantage over others and use it to fleece them. He is not a coward as he seems in the last scene. He readily surrenders to Lovewit, perhaps not because the bully in him gets a match in Lovewit, but because he perhaps genuinely can admire the man who possesses all the qualities he would like to possess. Be it as it may, the fact remains that he is one of the three Fool characters in *The Alchemist*, and he is one because he is naïve in the business of living like the other two.

THE PROBLEM CHARACTERS

Where there are knaves and fools in Jonson's *The Alchemist*, there are also some characters who do not belong to either of the two categories. Also, these characters – Surly and Lovewit – receive rewards and punishments which do not seem justified in accordance with the principle of poetic justice followed justly in all the other cases. Hence, these two characters are called problem characters just as there are problem plays qualifying to be neither comedies nor tragedies among the plays of Shakespeare. But since he chose to create them, there must be some strong reason for doing so. Maybe the age demanded. Maybe the popular taste dictated. Let us look into the reason why there are these two problem characters in *The Alchemist*.

i)SURLY:

Surly is surely different from the victims of the swindlers in that he does not seek any help from them for acquiring anything. Hence no opportunity arises for his becoming a victim. His behaviour to Dame Pliant is in the tradition of the Boy Scout. Before Lovewit arrived on the scene, it looked probable that Surly will get Dame Pliant and her wealth. That would have seemed a befitting reward for his goodness. But, that was not to be. Lovewit appeared and got away with all that seemed his. To be able to accept Surly's fate we shall have to understand the Elizabethan stage type to which Surly belongs. One of the popular figures in Elizabethan and Jacobean comedy was the figure of the Malcontent. Jonson's choice of name is significant. Like other names in this play, his also is representative of the humour or character of the man. In Jonson, name explains it all. He is a typical disgruntled idealist, made bitter, cynical, and surly by disillusionment with the behaviour of people around him. In tragedy, such characters turn villainous, such as Iago in *Othello*. Such characters do more evil than they originally are capable of. In comedy, the same type turns comic, doing things that would look ludicrous. Surly is the malcontent type. He is not able to keep a balanced view of life, and runs into fits of cynicism.

We meet Surly the first time with Mammon. He becomes suspicious of Subtle's alchemical cant and the elaborate masquerade. The "accidental" appearance of Dol Common turns his suspicion into certainty. But his treatment of Dame Pliant is anything but an act of cynicism. His position is precarious in that he genuinely needs money, whereas others want it out of greediness. Although the fortune of Dame Pliant is within his grasp, he does not grab it. That speaks of his goodness, of his not being like others, a fallen lot. He only relies on virtue both on his side as well as her's: "You are/… a widow, rich; and I'm a bachelor,/Worth naught; your fortune may make me a man,/ As mine have preserved you a woman.

Think upon it, / And whether I have deserved or no." He could have grabbed the opportunity if only he had "been/So punctually forward, as place, time, / And other circumstances would have made a man." Lovewit summarizes it all:

> Good faith, now she does blame you extremely, and says
> You swore, and told her you had taken the pains
> To dye your beard, and amber o'er your face,
> Borrowed a suit, and ruff, all for her love:
> And then did nothing. What an oversight,
> And want of putting forward, sir, was this!
> Well fare an old harquebusier yet,
> Could prime his powder, and give fire, and hit,
> All in a twinkling!

Surly has nothing much to say, except: "Must I need cheat myself/With that same foolish vice of honesty?" He is not a fool, so he cannot be cheated the way the trio of fools are. But he can be cheated by his own flaw of character. He remains the same at the end that he was at the beginning. His type of characters, such as Jacques in *As You Like It*, are neither losers nor gainers. They only hold their slanted mirror of cynicism to the ongoings around them, remaining untouched by the events of the play. So, Surly leaves the play as he entered, with Mammon and with his debts.

ii)LOVEWIT:

Maybe it is meant to be a part of the farcical comedy that a man who comes at the end of the comic show gets all that the swindlers had gathered by cheating all of their clients. Normally, Lovewit's getting all that he did not earn in any manner, good or bad, makes him a problem character. Except that he belongs to the highest strata of society, whereas those who had arranged a swindling belong to the strata no better than that of his servants, there seems no reason why he should be so well rewarded. His mark of superiority, of course, is that, like Surly, he is not taken in by the rogues. On the contrary, his return makes them nonplussed. It is very much like the story of the Cat and the Rats – when the cat is away, the rats will play. And as the cat returns, the rats run to their hiding places. Of course, when you run for your life, you don't care about your belongings. Some such thing happens here. Face, who is Lovewit's own butler, and the two others he had collected for misusing the mansion for cheating people under the attractive names of alchemy, astrology, face reading, etc., take to their heels as soon as the master of the mansion shows up. He is a worldly man, neither a dreamer nor a cynic. He is not shocked by the discovery about his servant, Jeremy. Nor does he lose any opportunity when it comes his way. Earned or unearned, once something comes his

way he embraces it graciously and gratefully. He is a man who would “seize the day.”

Upholding whatever Lovewit stands for seems to explain Jonson's essential attitude to comedy. The comic norm is invariably the golden mean, for excessive inclination to any side would lead to either tragedy or farce. Jonson, by attributing the virtues of moderation and pragmatism to the upper class gentleman, only conforms to the accepted beliefs of his age. Even in Shakespeare, where there are no such simplistic distributions of good and bad values in terms of high and low classes, the model of the golden mean always comes from the upper class. The lower strata are damned with all the imperfections possible in human species. Of course, even villains also emerge from the upper strata quite often, although as a result of some distortion or deformity of “nature”, but the norm invariably comes out from the highest class. Shakespeare, of course, makes the picture more realistic and life-like by showing a variety of human nature, not merely types rooted in classes, thereby making plausible the norm as well as deviation from the norm. In Jonson, it is a straight conformation to the stereotype beliefs of the age, imposed obviously, by the ruling elite. Lovewit represents that elite, and hence represents the virtues of that class, and therefore becomes worthy of the reward.

THE PURITAN CHARACTERS

No satire in the early seventeenth century could be considered complete unless it included one or two Puritan characters. The rise of Reformation along with the Renaissance or Humanism brought to fore in the sixteenth century the puritan mind and concern. The movement reached its climax in the seventeenth century in the direct clash between the Puritan Parliament of Cromwell and the Catholic monarchy. In this climate of rising clash Jonson could not have remained unmindful of the movement. Nor would he leave out of his satiric canvas this important aspect of life in his times. Hence, he includes in *The Alchemist* two Puritan characters, namely Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome. Since the Puritans were for closing down the theatres, they were hated by all those whose living depended on the playhouses. When they captured power in 1642 by removing the king and beheaded him, they did close all the theatres in London, which remained closed until the Restoration in 1660. Playwrights of Jonson's time invariably accused the Puritans of hypocrisy. Jonson's most famous Puritan hypocrite is Zeal-of-the-land Busy in his *Bartholomew Fair*. Shakespeare, too, has Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. Here in *The Alchemist*, the two Puritan characters are complementary to each other, representing the two faces of Puritanism. The swindled victims in Jonson's play are invariably either fools or rogues lured by

easy money (generally dishonest). In the present case, while Anianas is a fool, Tribulation Wholesome is clearly a rogue.

i) ANANIAS:

Jonson makes Ananias a representative of the Puritan bigotry. He is narrow-minded and stubborn about what he takes to be right. He is dogmatic and self-righteous: "All's heathen but the Hebrew," he asserts. Like any bigot, he is all proof against reason. His narrowness borders fanaticism. He is shown holding firmly to many of the most insignificant external incidents. Whenever these or similar incidents are mentioned to him, he reacts like Pavlov's dogs, in what now would be termed a conditioned reflex. He is very fussy even about small things, such as common usage. For example, he objects to the term Christmas, and insists that it should be called Christ-tide. He also objects to church bells, although "tune may be religious." For him, starched ruffs are idolatrous, traditions "are popish all." Finally, Ananias ends up becoming Face's tool in the attack on Surly because Surly is seen going about in Spanish clothes. He is stupidly, obstinately, narrowly committed to his faith, but he is not a hypocrite like Tribulation Wholesome, in whose integrity he has unshakable faith. Such people are totally blind to reality as well as reason. Living with a closed mind, they are generally unjust to others not sharing his faith and his views. It is this type that Ananias represents in the satirical comedy of Jonson, showing through his character dangers of dogmatic faith, even though Puritanism was a movement against dogmatism.

ii) TRIBULATION WHOLESOME:

The second Puritan in Jonson's *The Alchemist* represents the hypocrisy of his clan, which Jonson's age generally attributed to it. Subtle is the first to see through his hypocrisy. So is the reader. Only Ananias would not see to it because of his blind faith in him. When we see Tribulation the first time, he is shown rationalising opportunism and compromise: "We must bend unto all means/That may give furtherance to the holy cause." And later, "the children of perdition are oft times/ Made instruments even of the greatest works." His hypocrisy is exposed by Subtle. When with Subtle, he gets mad with the presence in Subtle's room of heat and the metal fumes. But by now Subtle understands his victim. He appeases Tribulation Wholesome by promising money and support. Once satisfied with the offer, the Puritan starts listing the virtues of the philosopher's stone. He shifts from noble uses to those that satisfy personal vanity and greed. It would help the Puritan cause, since it is remedy for gout or palsy or dropsy, the diseases of the rich. Then he changes to a supposedly lewd use, that is to restore "A lady that is past the feat

of body, though not of mind." He further adds slyly, "you have made a friend/And all her friends."

Subtle then appeals to the desire for power. "To buy the King of France out of his realms, or Spain/Out of his Indies." Here, Tribulation says, "We may be temporal lords ourselves, I take it." Subtle, clever as he is, at once picks up the intent from the last line. With the Philosopher's stone, he suggests, the Puritans can give up their demonstrative religious practices. Mere trappings of religion would do, if one has nothing better, for a "time does much with women." But the Puritans will no longer need "to win widows to give you legacies," or influence wives to contribute their husbands' money, or foreclose mortgages at the least excuse, or engage in fasts or ridiculous disputes concerning the sinfulness of sports. They will also not require, after the philosopher's stone, silly sumptuary regulations to prove their piety or have to rail against authority or plays. "Nor lie/With zealous rage till you are hoarse."

Subtle ends his discourse by assuming that all Puritan practices are mere hypocrisies born out of envy of wealth and status, employed to gull the faithful out of their money. Subtle is able to convince Tribulation, as the like recognises like. Both have the same wavelength. The clinching evidence of hypocrisy comes in the quibble on changing pewter to "Dutch dollars". Tribulation feels that "coining" is not lawful – but "casting" is fine. And he knows his brethren. Ananias's comment makes clear that they, the gull and the hypocrite, are accurate symbols for all Puritans: "The brethren shall approve it lawful, doubt not." Thus, we find that Jonson's most devastating satire in *The Alchemist* is directed against the Puritans, and for obvious reasons, for they were the ones who, in Jonson's age, were considered the enemies of all mirth, especially the one theatre offered to the public. Hence these two representative figures of the clan are made the most ridiculous of the entire pack of comic characters. Shakespeare's satire is usually more penetrating, of Jonson more biting and stinging.

SIR EPICURE MAMMON, THE DREAMER

Although not a member of any one of the various groups and categories offered in *The Alchemist*, Sir Epicure Mammon is an important character in his own right in Jonson's scheme of his satirical comedy. In some ways, he is perhaps the most interesting as also the most complex of mostly the static characters. His poetry of the disgusting has been most fascinating all these years. His speeches show it all – how he is a mercurial personality, hard to define in neat definitions. He may be called a crazy, but not a fool. Unlike the trio of Fools – Drugger,

Dapper, Kastrill – he does not rush to the swindlers' net, even though his action may seem much more foolish than theirs. Surly has a clear view of his character:

> Heart! Can it be.
> That a grave sir, a rich, that has no need.
> A wise, sir, too, at other times, should thus,
> With his own oaths, and arguments, make hard means
> To gull himself?

Thus, Mammon is his own enemy. Face and Subtle cannot dupe him on their own. He has to help them against himself. He must deceive himself, so is he made. His self-deception is not one-time gamble; he plays it over and over again. He works hard for it, repeats it, and renews it with each episode.

When we see him the first time in the play, we learn that he has been the swindlers' customer for some time already. We find him weaving dreams, floating fantasies, much more elaborate than the tempters could have conceived. The language of his dreams and fantasies is highly poetic, full of colour and imagery. His fascination for alchemy has become so intense that he sings in praise of its virtues and procedures with learning and delight. He speaks of books by Adam written in "High Dutch." He reinterprets mythology (Jason's fleece) to suit his purposes. His building of fantasies is so fast that any small hint sends him into clouds. For instance, when Face (as servant) tells him of Dol as mad "lord's sister," he pretends to know the lord only to convince Surly:

> I know the lady, and her friends, and means,
> The original of this disaster. Her brother
> Has told me all.

Even his having been cheated once does not make him any wiser; he is ready to be cheated again. He is so given to fantasies and dreams, that even to recompense cheating he begins weaving fresh dreams.

Although there is much in *The Alchemist* that resembles a medieval morality play, the most resembling aspect is the subject-matter of Mammon's dreams and fantasies. He speaks of, if not all the seven Deadly Sins, at least of six of them. Time and again in his wonderful speeches he voices variations of Lust and Covetousness. Gluttony is there in his name itself (Mammon). Sloth and Envy, too, are a part of his personality. Pride is very much ubiquitous. The only one of the Seven missing is Wrath. His repeated advice to Surly is, "Be rich." He does not get tired of describing harems. His description of food is famous. He sees himself as omnipotent, made so by his (supposed) possession of the philosopher's stone. He poetically refines upon the ordinary pictures of lust, food, and power. Harems are viewed in a haze of wealth and jewels and costumes, while he fancies himself of virility imparted by his "stone". Jonson uses poetry here not merely to characterise the kind of person Mammon is, to depict his dreams and fantasies, but also to

heighten the dramatic effect – the general Elizabethan use of poetry for drama. The luxuries that flow from his rich imagination are made richer by the poetic medium, so natural a speech of his:

I'll have no bawds
But fathers and mothers: They will do it best,
Best of all others. And my flatterers
Shall be the pure and gravest of divines,
That I can get for money. My mere fools,
Eloquent burgesses….
The few that would give out themselves to be
Court and town-stallions ….
Those will I beg, to make me eunuchs of:

Here is a sample of the fantasies that flow from the most poetic imagination that Mammon has. His still more poetic passage, the best known of his rich descriptions, is the following on food:

My meat shall all come in, in Indian shells,
Dishes of agat set in gold, and studded
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies,
The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels' heels,
Boiled in the spirit of sol, and dissolved pearl,
Apicus' diet, 'gainst the epilepsy:
And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,
Headed with diamond and carbuncle.
… I myself will have
The beards of barbel served, instead of salads;
Oiled mushrooms; and the swelling unctuous paps
Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,
Drest with an exquisite and poignant sauce.

Here is poetry typical of Mammon, reflective richly of his own character.
Full of images, evocative of lust, gloating with gluttony, spiced with sauces of dreams of luxury, displaying the assumed omnipotence of the speaker. Mammon is nothing without his poetry. He is all there in his poetry.

POETIC STYLE

Use of blank verse in drama was the gift of the Elizabethan age. The dramatists of the day devised a language and adopted a metre (iambic pentametre) which could place the dramatic composition between the high poetry of the epic and the low prose of the fable. The problem before the dramatist was to cater to the mixed audience, the popular taste, and yet in a medium (of poetry) which allows

him flights of imagination for heightening the dramatic effect. The iambic pentameter blank verse in English emerged as the fittest medium, replacing the ancient epic-narrative verse as well as the medieval prose romance. Beginning with the University Wits – Marlow, Greene, Peele, Nashe, Kyd – the blank verse matured into a perfect dramatic medium in the plays of Shakespeare and Jonson. Over a period of time the Elizabethans had developed a dramatic verse which reached its fulfillment by the time Jonson wrote *The Alchemist.* The plays of Shakespeare can be used to draw the entire graph of development of this magical verse medium, showing its beginning as well as its dimactic fulfillment. The development is from the formal to the natural flow of the blank verse, not from irregular to regular.

The Elizabethan blank verse is unlike the modern free verse. While blank verse is measured or metred verse without rhyming lines, free verse is both without metre as well as without rhyme. The Elizabethan blank verse, used in drama of the time, is ten syllabic (iambic pentametre). As such, the line has five feet each consisting of unstressed and stressed syllables (called iambic). When Jonson came to write *The Alchemist,* the lines were irregular in stress, which frequently consisted of more or less than ten syllables. The lines were generally in a run-on order, without any natural pause in meaning at the end of each line. These irregularities were needed, as a matter of fact, to keep the blank verse flexible, to keep it closer to spoken rhythm, rather than make it artifical by imposing regularity and order, as Dryden and Pope did later. The irregularity in the blank verse lines also added variety. In contrast to the Elizabethans, the neo-classicals made it regular, but also made it monotonous. The Elizabethans, so much in love with variety, even added songs and prose passages to create greater variety. The audience loved it too, and the whole thing looked very much close to real life, with all kinds of poetic and prosaic figures moving together. The Elizabethan stage replicated the Elizabethan England.

Jonson, like his contemporaries, used the same blank verse in his plays, comedies as well as tragedies. He did not, of course, exploit its full potential the way, for example, Shakespeare did in his plays. Although he wrote beautiful songs as well as dramatic verse, one does not feel, while reading his plays, as one does while reading Shakespeare's, that he thought in verse. It is well known that quite often he thought in prose and then converted his passages from prose into poetry. Jonson's tendency is to move towards regularity. His commitment to classical principles of order and regularity drew him away from the more vital potential of the English blank verse, which Shakespeare exploited to the full. Shakespeare could do so because he had not made any such commitment to the classical norms. No wonder that Jonson emerged as the father of English neoclassical poetry (including drama), and was faithfully followed as a model by his followers,

including Dryden and Pope. The most poetic speeches of Mammon in *The Alchemist* show how close the blank verse comes to the regularity of the neoclassical insistence.

The lexical or dictional preference of the Elizabethan poets and dramatists is also an important element of their poetic style. Much of the dramatic verse, by necessity, has to be straightforward, because the dramatist has to go on with the dramatic narrative without digressions into undramatic embellishments. Here, the language requires more conscious attention because the dramatist wants to use it for dramatic effects also, besides its normal use of moving on as a narrative. Under such circumstances, then, words (or diction) are likely to be charged in terms of pictures or emotions they evoke. We have seen how Mammon's verse in *The Alchemist* tends to hinder the forward movement of drama, involving us in images that apply a backward pull to the dramatic medium. But that very backward pull makes the Elizabethan verse so very versatile, so very agile, that it can accommodate, even while taking the forward leap, also the backward pull of digressive fantasy and imagination. If it retards the dramatic movement, it also enriches the imaginative texture.

While discussing style in a literary work, one has to keep in mind the determinants that dictate it. More important of these determinants are, the genre, the age, the movement, the mode, etc. For instance, whether the work is epic or drama, tragedy or comedy, would determine the kind of style that would suit the particular genre or form or mode. Similarly, whether the work belongs to the Elizabethan or the Neoclassical age, and whether it relates to the movement of romanticism or realism, will again determine the kind of style each adopts for effecting its purposes. Also act as a determinant in a style the purpose of the writer. Whether he intends to satirize or to celebrate, undercut or inflate, will decide the kind of language, the rhetorical devices he is going to use. Finally, it is the writer's own genius, his own learning, his own experience of life, his own associations, likings and dislikings in life and literature, which will add up to the factors that condition the forging of a writer's style. Above all, the audience for whom a work is intended would act as a determinant in the shaping of one's style.

Here, in *The Alchemist,* while the work is in dramatic mode, the form is comedy, the purpose is satire, the writer's own genius and learning allign him with classicism. Thus, we have conversational language, but slanted by the sting of irony for the satirical punch. The style in a dramatic work, even in the novel, or in any work having more than one speaker or narrator, cannot remain the same through the work. We cannot talk of just one and only one style, or in abstract or absolute terms. For style, in that case, would vary from speaker to speaker, narrator to narrator. The dramatist or novelist gives appropriate style to each character or narrator appropriate to his character and function allotted in the design or scheme

of the work. No wonder, then, that in *The Alchemist,* Mammon and Subtle do not speak in the same style, nor do Face and Lovewit, nor Dapper and Drugger. Each can be easily identified by the speech he uses, by the style he adopts for expression. Here, one can see the force in the dictum, "style is the man", for to a large extent style expresses the speaker. Even a single character, in fact, uses various styles in Jonson's play. Since some of the characters play several roles, they have to adopt different manners of speech for different roles they play. In this respect, Face and Subtle cannot be said to have each any single style. They not only change the style with the role they play, but also with the character they are dealing. They change styles just as they change their costumes. It is the situation that finally decides the kind of speech they must use to suit their ends, which are different in different situations. For instance, Subtle is harsh with one character, soft with another. He is scholarly at one time, and a salesman another. Accordingly, he uses jargon and mannerism of the profession he is posing to practise. Hence, while writing on style of a literary work, we must keep in mind all these aspects, and write on the subject taking into consideration, without exception, all of the many factors which influence the writing of a play or novel from scene to scene, character to character. No generalities or abstractions about the style of a writer or of a work would do. We need to be very specific in every case. To give appropriate speech to every characters in every situation – that is what drama is all about.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

1. U.S. Ellis-Fermor. *The Jacobean Drama.* London: Methuen & company, 1936.
2. L.C. Knights. *Drama and Society in the Age Of Jonson.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1937.
3. H.W. Baum. *The Satiric and the Didactic in Ben Jonson's Comedies.* University of North Corolina Press, 1947.
4. J.J. Enck. *Jonson and the Comic Truth.* Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 1957.
5. E.B. Partridge. *The Broken Compass.* London, 1958.
6. Robert E. Knoll. *Ben Jonson's Plays.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Ben Jonson as a comic dramatist with special reference to *The Alchemist.*
2. Discuss *The Alchemist* as a dramatic satire.
3. Examine *The Alchemist* as an allegorical satire.

4. Write a long note (500 words) on the themes of (a) avarice (b) hypocrisy, and (c) self-delusion in Jonson's *The Alchemist.*
5. Discuss the propriety of rewards and punishments in *The Alchemist*.
6. Examine the significance of costumes and names in *The Alchemist*.
7. Compare and contrast the characters of (a) Subtle and Face, (b) Surly and Lovewit.
8. Write a note on Jonson's treatment of the Puritans in *The Alchemist*.

MA ENGLISH

PART-I

UNIT-D

THOMAS MORE

UTOPIA

THOMAS MORE'S *UTOPIA*

Introduction to the Author

Sir Thomas More was born in London on February 7, 1477. His father, Sir John More, was a barrister (lawyer) and later became a judge. As a young child, More went to St. Anthony's school, and at the age of 13, Thomas More became a page for John Morton, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor of England. This was certainly a fortuitous event in the young man's career. Morton was impressed with More's intelligence and he arranged for the young man to study at Oxford. More attended Oxford University from 1492-1494, studying Latin, Greek, French, history, and mathematics.

More returned to London in 1494 and studied law at New Inn, continuing his legal studies two years later at Lincoln's Inn. More was quickly gaining the attention of his instructors and he spent three years as an appointed lecturer. Thomas More was introduced to the great Humanist thinker, Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1497 and More continued giving lectures on legal and philosophical topics.

During early adulthood, More seriously considered entering the priesthood. For about four years, More actually resided in a monastery. He lived in the Carthusian monastery, located not far from the law school (Lincoln's Inn). Anecdotes from More's friends and acquaintances suggest that More regarded religious service with a great deal of respect (Indeed, the lives of the Utopians are largely modeled on the lives of monastic communities). Some sources suggest that Thomas More wore a "sharp shirt of hair next to his skin" and devoted his mind to "exercises of piety."

In the end, More did not become a priest and he returned to law. In 1501, More was elected to Parliament, serving in the House of Commons. More married Jane Colte of Newhall, Essex in 1505. According to legend, More was interested in marrying Mr. Colte's second daughter, but when More considered the sadness to Jane, the oldest daughter, he "framed his fancy towards" her. Jane died in 1511, but not before giving birth to four children: Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecilia, and John. After Jane's death, Thomas More married Alice Middleton, a woman who was seven years older than he was.

By 1510, More was a famous lawyer and he became Under-Sheriff of London. In the next ten years, More entered the King's service and received a pension of 100 pounds for life. More traveled to Flanders and Calais, France to protect British commercial interests and served in an ambassadorial role. In 1516, Utopia is published in Louvain and this is More's most successful work.

In 1520, More accompanied King Henry VIII to a meeting with Francis I of France, at the Field of Cloth of Gold (near Calais). More did such a good job of representing King Henry VIII that More was made sub-treasurer to the king and knighted in 1521. In 1523, More was elected Speaker of the House of Commons and in 1525, More was given two additional offices: High Steward of Cambridge University and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

In the years following Martin Luther's posting of the 95 Theses (1517), European intellectuals became drawn into the discussion of Lutheranism. More wrote a number of works defending Catholicism against Luther's criticism. In 1523, More wrote Responsio ad Lutherum, responding to Luther's attack on Henry VIII.

In October 1529 More succeeded Cardinal Wolsey as Chancellor of England - a post that had never been occupied by a layman. More was not at all sympathetic towards the heretics he prosecuted them as part of his duties. In the end, More suffered from religious persecution himself. In 1532, More resigned from his position because he disagreed with Henry VIII's elevation to a position as head of the church in England. More was imprisoned in the infamous Tower of London and accused of treason. More was executed in 1535.

THE AGE

In order to understand the age first let us look at the major events that were taking place around the times of the writing of the book.

Events

Golden Age - The Golden Age refers to the period from 1503, when Pope Julius II ascended to the papal throne, to the sack of Rome in 1527, during which both the Papacy and the city of Rome prospered greatly. Pope Julius II and his successor, Pope Leo X, renewed faith in the morality of the Papacy and oversaw the most successful period of the rebuilding of Rome, during which artists flocked to the city in hope of a papal commission.

Sack of Rome - Because of Pope Clement VII's inept negotiating, the angry imperial army surrounded Rome on May 5, 1527 demanding that the Pope pay a ransom. When he refused, and called the citizens of Rome to arms, the army besieged the city. By one o'clock p.m. on May 6, the mercenary soldiers had taken the city. The sack of Rome led to the subjugation of all of Italy to Imperial-Spanish control and the end of the Renaissance.

Renaissance The 14th, 15th and part of 16th century was a glorious time for Europe, it was the reformation of many old ideas and the formation of many new, this was called the Renaissance. The Renaissance brought many changes to Europe, the economy was greatly boosted by of all the new explorations. The flourishing economy helped to

inspire new developments in art andgh literature. And from that many new beliefs were formed. The European economy flourished during the Renaissance due to many factors. There was a large income coming in from over sea exploration. Spain alone-received added income from Christopher Columbus and when he stumbled across North America on his way to find a shorter rout to the Indies. The exploration down the coast of Africa also brought in a lot of extra income. This income came from the exploitation of the Africans by kidnapping them and selling them as slaves. Income also came from establishing colonies in Africa and setting up gold mines and mines for other needed metals. With all of this extra income coming into the European countries they had more money to help fund the arts. During the Renaissance there were many drastic changes in the style of art. Giotto was a very influential painter, during the start of the Renaissance. In Giotto's work he used three-dimensional images, this was a drastic change from the classic art where depth was not used. His painting were very realistic and life like, unlike the previous centuries art. Giotto's work inspired artists by the likes of Leonardo de Vinci, Raphael and Michaelango. Michaelango painted the Sistine Chapel, which is located in the Vatican in Rome. The Sistine Chapel depicted the book of Genesis. The manner in which it was painted was unlike another at the time, all the characters in the Sistine chapel are very life like and realistic. Also it was one of the first times that religion was painted by the painters opinion of the events. The arts led to new ways of thinking. With the arts the artists began to think on their own and those movements began to spread. It was not just what the church said anymore that was right. Humanism, one of the new beliefs which was formed during the Renaissance, said that people should read the works of the greats and focus on writing, and the arts. Humanists believed that they were equal with the ancient Greek and Roman writers and philosophers. Petrarch was the original humanist, and a writer who wrote many letters to the people of ancient Rome. In those letters he spoke as if he was an equal with them. Another of the new beliefs was scholasticism, which was the opposite of humanism. Scholastic thought that people should spend more time the sciences, they also wanted the church and science to be brought together as one. As new scientific discoveries were made many of the churches theories were beginning to be questioned. Some of the new scientific discoveries consisted of theories that went against the church beliefs. One theory which was proven true about the Earth revolving around the sun. This was contrary to the church’s view that everything revolved around the Earth. Copernicus who is considered the father of modern astronomy proved this theory true. Kelper an astronomer and astrologer also discovered about the rotation of the planets. As the church began to be questioned more and more. And soon there were new religions forming. The major religion that was formed during the Renaissance was the Protestant religion. The Protestant religion began to spread throughout

Europe, at one point of time the official Church of England was a Protestant Church. This new and improved Europe was mainly came to be from the blustering economy, the explorations, art, literature, and new discoveries, but this new growth of a western power was not just a natural development, in fact it was inspired by a superior civilization, the Chinese. If it were not for the Chinese version of the Renaissance which occurred about a thousand years earlier there would be no European Renaissance. The Chinese had many useful inventions that the Europeans exploited unlike the Chinese. One crucial Chinese invention was the compass, the Chinese had no need to exploit the invention because they had everything they needed right in China. The Europeans on the other hand would be nowhere without the compass, because it was an essential tool for their over seas exploration. Another key invention that the Europeans used to fuel their Renaissance was the printing press, this was also another Chinese invention that they had used a thousand years earlier. Many views about being civilized and a gentleman was a crucial part of the Renaissance. Baldassare Castiglione wrote an influential book called The Courtier which was all about how to be a gentleman. Confucius a Chinese philosopher wrote about that same idea during the Chinese Renaissance. So in fact the European Renaissance was inspired by a superior civilization, the Chinese. Compared to the Middle Ages the Renaissance was a major step up in all aspects of life from the economy, which benefited from the explorations, the arts and literature and the new scientific discoveries and theories. So the Renaissance was a very beneficial period of time in European history

The Reformation

Religious ideas have developed from every known society since the and changed. Throughout recorded history there have been dissenters and revolt to every religious institution. However, the Reformation of the sixteenth century religious institutions led to changes in social, political and cultural life that has profoundly effected Western Civilization. By the early sixteenth century, church and state had become inextricably intertwined. Both factions were removed from the greatest percentage of the population by wide margins in education, nutrition, mobility, and income. Europeans of all social classes were devoted to the Catholic Church and bequeathed enormous amounts of time, energy and money to the church. The spiritual yearnings of the people, combined with a worsening economic situation, and an increasingly popular resentment of church officials as immoral and corrupt, paved the way for sweeping changes. A theocracy requires a strong hierarchy of political power to succeed. Political fragmentation within the church destroyed the unity of Europe as an organic Christian society. Martin Luther himself was a member of the Catholic Church, a trained priest. Luther was literate,

educated, trained by the Church, but also, the son of a lower-class miner who empathized with and was respected by peasants. The theological issues questioned by the Protestants were primary to the faith and power held by the Church. First, is salvation attained by faith and good works, as the Catholic Church maintained (and profited from by selling indulgences as good works), or by faith alone as Luther asserted. Second, does authority over the people rest with the Church or on the Word of God (the Bible) alone, as interpreted by the individual. This idea directly questioned the authority of the Church. Third, does the Church consist of the hierarchical clergy of the Church or the community of Christian believers. Fourth, is the monastic life superior to secular life, or do all vocations have equal merit, as Luther argued. Theology was adapting from one dictatorial faith ruling the masses to different sects empowered by their individual faith and better suited to their society. As a leader of peoples yearning for salvation, Luther's revolt, which led to the secularization of Christianity, is more of a progression of Christianity, than protest. By 1521 Luther had a vast number of followers. His appeal to the masses is easily understood, even from a twentieth-century perspective; he offered an understandable theology espousing independence from the Church. Invention of the printing press, made Luther's German interpretation of the Bible widely available, and his prompting of individuals to read and interpret the Bible for themselves is an appeal to their intelligence. His doctrine of salvation by faith protected their pocketbooks. Moreover, Luther's enlightened view on marriage and sexuality elevated women to a more equal status, allowing for the exaltation of the family home, strengthening communities. Both Catholicism and Lutheran faiths were shaped and altered by the Reformation. Factions of Christianity spawned by the Reformation opened the door of literacy to women and peasants, beginning with the Anabaptists, who allowed women to enter their church as priests. Separation of church and state allowed Absolutism to flourish. Under Louie XIV's reign, France found economic stability and an effective government free from Church interference. Absolutism evolved into constitutionals, a few steps closer to democracy. Following this was the significant break from the Church of England made by the Puritans, who pioneered the brutal landscape of the North American continent, founding our current home, where freedom of religion, expression and lifestyle are legally protected.

Now let us get acquainted to the **people** who were influential in shaping the age

Boccaccio - One of the first writers of the early Renaissance, Giovanni Boccaccio, a Florentine, is most noted for writing the *Decameron,* a series of 100 stories set in Florence during the Black Death that struck the city in 1348. Boccaccio explores, in these stories, the traditions and

viewpoints of various social classes, greatly based on actual observation and study.

Lucrezia Borgia - One of the Few notable women of the Renaissance, Lucrezia Borgia was the daughter of Pope Alexander, who used her as a pawn in his attempts to gain political power. He married her first to the duke of Milan, then to the illegitimate son of the King of Naples, and finally to the duke of Ferarra, where she became an influential member of the court.

Botticelli - A well-known painter of the Renaissance, Botticelli was one of a circle of artists and scholars sponsored by the Medici in Florence. Neoplatonism fascinated him and many of his works are seen as great examples of applied Neoplatonism.

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Leonardo da Vinci - Perhaps the greatest single figure of the Renaissance, Leonardo excelled in painting, sculpting, engineering, biology, and many other fields. He traveled around Italy, and eventually France as well, making observations on nature and seeking commissions. Many of his contributions were ideas for inventions which were not built until long after his death. His most famous completed work, the *Mona Lisa,* is the most famous portrait ever painted.

Lorenzo de Medici - Lorenzo de Medici, known as 'Il Magnifico,' was Cosimo's grandson. Lorenzo lived more elegantly than had Cosimo, and enjoyed the spotlight of power immensely. Under his control, the Florentine economy expanded significantly and the lower class enjoyed a greater level of comfort and protection than it had before. During the period of Lorenzo's rule, from 1469 to 1492, Florence became undeniably the most important city-state in Italy and the most beautiful city in all of Europe.

Michaelangelo - Michaelangelo was one of the greatest artists of the High Renaissance. At a young age Lorenzo de Medici spotted his talent and he was brought up in the Medici palace. He went on to create some of the most famous works of the Renaissance, carving the *Pieta* and painting the walls and ceilings of the Sistine Chapel.

Francesco Petrarch - Francesco Petrarch is often referred to as the founder of humanism. As one of the first humanist writers he explored modern life through the lens of the ancient Romans and Greeks, influencing with his works the later renaissance writers and the spirit of the times.

Pico - Pico was a philosopher and writer of the Renaissance. His most famous work is a collection of 900 philosophical treatises in which he expresses his belief in the free will of man and the ability of individuals to commune with God without the medium of a priest. Pico was declared a heretic, and only saved from demise by the intervention of Lorenzo de Medici.

Pope Alexander VI - Rodrigo Borgia, who took the name Alexander VI upon rising to the papacy in 1492 and ruled until 1503, was a corrupt

pope bent on the advancement of his family through the political ranks of Italy. While pope he turned many away from the church with his actions, and his reign is considered by some to be the darkest era of the Papacy.
Pope Clement VII - Pope Clement VII (1523-1534) ascended to the papal throne in 1523, following Pope Leo the 10th. He arose during troubled times and proved a moral man but a poor administrator, and his lack of political skill eventually led to the sack of Rome.
Pope Julius II - Pope Julius II (1503-1513) ascended to the papal throne in 1503, and presided over the beginning of Rome's Golden age. He ended the long string of highly corrupt pontiffs and began the massive project of rebuilding St. Peter's basilica.
Pope Leo X - Pope Leo X (1513-1521) was the son of Lorenzo de Medici. A truly enlightened leader and patron of the arts, he followed the reign of Julius II, ascending to the throne in 1513. Pope Leo X continued the work begun during Julius II's pontificate, rebuilding all of Rome, and most specifically, St. Peter's basilica. His one grave error was to authorize the sale of indulgences to finance this project, an action which prompted the beginning of the Reformation movement.

Now let us try to evaluate the **overall impact of various movements** on life in general and how they got reflected in the literature and other arts of the age

The Middle Ages, which lasted from the fall of Rome in the late fifth century until the fourteenth century, are (somewhat exaggeratedly and incorrectly) often referred to as the "Dark Ages," due to the relative lack of intellectual and economic progress made during this long period. The Middle Ages were presided over by the Catholic Church, which preached the denial of worldly pleasures and the subjugation of self-expression. During the Middle Ages, European society was defined by the system of Feudalism, under which societal classes were hierarchically divided based on their position in the prevailing agrarian economy. This system produced a large number of scattered, self-sufficient feudal units throughout Europe, made up of a lord and his subservient vassals. These feudal lords were constantly in battle during the early Middle Ages, their armies of peasants facing off to win land for their lords.

However, during the later Middle Ages, this situation changed greatly. The power of the Church declined as monarchies rose up to consolidate feudal manors into powerful city-states and nation-states that often opposed the Church in matters of tax collection and legal jurisdiction. Along with the rise of monarchies came the rise of the money economy. As monarchs brought peace to feudal society, feudal lords concentrated less upon defending their lands and more upon accruing large quantities of cash, with which they improved their style of living and dabbled in the growing market economy. The practice of serfdom declined and former serfs soon became tenant farmers and even

landowners rather than subservient slave-like laborers. As the trade of agricultural and manufactured goods grew in importance, cities also became more important. Strategically located and wealthy cities became populous and modern, and some cities even boasted factories.

Largely because of the simultaneous and related decline of the singular importance of traditional values and the rise of the market economy, the cities of Italy gave birth to the Renaissance. The famous Renaissance historian Jacob Burkhardt argues in his essay, *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy,* that the Renaissance was, as an historical event, the transition from medieval times, during which the focus of all life had been religion, to modern times, in which that focus expanded to include learning, rationality, and realism. Whereas in the Middle Ages, religious salvation had occupied the position of utmost importance, during the Renaissance, stressing the need for individuals to reach their potential in this world, rose up to accompany and rival the goal of salvation. During the Renaissance, changes also occurred in the political and economic structure of Italy that foreshadowed larger transformations for all of Europe. The Renaissance saw the rise of strong central governments and an increasingly urban economy, based on commerce rather than agriculture.

The results of the Italian Renaissance were far reaching both in temporal and geographical terms. Though the spirit of the Renaissance in Italy was crushed in the mid-sixteenth century, the ideas and ideals of Renaissance thinkers maintained their vibrancy, traveling over the Alps to northern Europe where, following Italy's lead, learning, writing, and the arts experienced a great revival in support and importance. The works of art and literature produced in Italy between 1350 and 1550 had a profound impact on the development of Europe during the next centuries, and continue to be considered some of the greatest contributions to society ever produced. The sheer volume of work produced ensures the period a prominent place in history books and museums, but the volume is far surpassed by the talent and splendor with which the artists and writers, funded by generous leaders, created their masterpieces.

Perhaps the greatest immediate impact of the Renaissance was the Reformation, which began in 1517. Although the arguments of the Protestant reformers had been elucidated centuries before, the Reformation could not have happened had the Italian Renaissance not created the climate of passion and intellectualism throughout Europe necessary to allow the challenging of age old values. The Renaissance had seen the behavior of popes come to increasingly parallel the behavior of princes, as they attempted to compete with the gilded city-states around them. The papacy had fallen into corruption on more than one occasion, and the sale of indulgences, essentially pardons for sins, in order to finance the construction of a new St. Peter's basilica, pushed the reformers over the edge and into protest. The Church suffered similarly

at the hands of the humanist attack, which through the study of ancient history and documents had proven many claims made by the Church to be false. The result was a movement that shook the foundations of all of Europe and created a split in Christianity that remains a potent source of conflict even today.

The spirit of the Renaissance was expressed in literature as well as art. The poetry of Franseco Petrarch (1304-1374) powerfully expressed the principles of humanism extremely early in the budding Renaissance. Many scholars, in fact, date the beginning of the Renaissance to Petrarch's appointment as Poet Laureate. Giovanni Boccacio stood at an almost similar stature as Petrarch. A Florentine, Boccacio is most noted for writing the *Decameron*, a series of 100 stories set in Florence during the Black Death that struck the city in 1348. Boccaccio explores, in these stories, the traditions and viewpoints of various social classes, greatly based on actual observation and study.

Just as art and architecture flourished in the Renaissance, so too did literature. Ands similarly, just as art and architecture benefited from new techniques, literature experienced a massive boon from technology. In 1454, Johann Gutenberg published the *Gutenberg Bible,* the first book printed by a machine using moveable type. The moveable-type printing press vastly changed the nature of book publishing, simultaneously increasing printing volume and decreasing prices. The process of printing spread throughout Europe, and was used extensively in Italy, where the humanist writers of the Renaissance had long sought a way to more easily express their ideas to the public. During the Renaissance, writers produced a greater volume of work than ever before, and with the lower prices and increased numbers of texts, these works reached an audience of unprecedented size. Literature became a part of the lives of the larger public, not just the few elite able to afford books, as had been the case before the advent of the printing press.

Many Renaissance writers studied the works of the ancient Romans and Greeks, coming to new, modern conclusions based upon their studies. One such writer was Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. In 1484, Pico, as he was known, became a member of Florence's Platonic Academy. There he studied and tried to reconcile the teachings of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In 1486, he published a collection of 900 philosophical treatises, in which his conclusions often differed from those of the Roman Catholic Church. Pico's best known work, the "Oration on the Dignity of Man," describes his belief, contrary to church dogma, that people have free will and are able to make decisions affecting their destinies. Not surprisingly, the Church declared Pico a heretic; he was only saved from demise by the intervention of Lorenzo de Medici.

Niccolo Machiaveli rose to even greater literary prominence, and a prominence with a legacy more durable than Pico's. A Florentine statesmen, Machiaveli rose to prominence during the Florentine Republic

under Savonarola in 1498. After the Medici regained power in 1512, Machiaveli retired from government (involuntarily), moved to his estate outside Florence, and began to write. Convinced from his experiences in government that Italy could survive only if unified under a strong leader, in 1513, Machiaveli published *The Prince*, the best known piece of writing of the renaissance period. Perhaps also intended as a means to curry favor with the Medici leader of the moment, *The Prince* was intended as a guidebook for the eventual leader of all of Italy and as a reference for rulers everywhere. In its pages, Machiaveli argued that it was better for a leader to be feared than loved, and advocated that a "prince" should do anything necessary to maintain his power and achieve his goals.

The Renaissance focus on learning and the invention of printing in Europe fed each other. The search for more accessible, cheaper books led to the invention and proliferation of the printing press, which, in turn, led to the wide institutionalization of literature as an essential aspect of Renaissance life. In the eleventh century, the Chinese had developed a system of movable type that a printer could use and reuse. It is uncertain whether Gutenberg and his colleagues knew of this process or not. In any case, the final result was the same--books no longer had to be produced by the long and arduous process of transcription. With the printing press, books could be produced quickly and in mass quantity. Before long, printing presses had been constructed and were widely in use throughout Europe, bringing the price of books down and allowing more and more authors to be published and read. The invention of the printing press was a major step toward bringing the Renaissance, long the province of the wealthy alone, to the middle classes. In turn, as literacy rose, the middle class became involved in the intellectual discourse of the times, and opportunities for middle class contributions to the canon of literature, while still fairly slim, grew. The power of literature to encompass many classes was demonstrated by the *Decameron,* in which Boccaccio explores the habits and morality of the various classes of Florence.

As in the realm of art, writers felt a great tension between progressive humanism and Church doctrine, a tension that sometimes grew to the point of conflict. Pico was not the only writer of the times to be declared a heretic, as many wrestled with the fact that the factual findings of science and the philosophical conclusions of humanism did not correspond with the teachings of the Church. This undercurrent of dissent can be seen in many works throughout the Renaissance but is perhaps demonstrated in its clearest and most blatant form in Pico's "Oration on the Dignity of Man." Pico believed that man had free will and could make decisions, and that the study of philosophy prepared man to recognize the truth and make better decisions. He also believed that each individual could communicate directly with God, and that the priesthood had falsely claimed this singular power. Pico's ideas, along with the

arguments of others, became central to Protestant thought during the Reformation.

Pico's experience demonstrates the continuing power of the Church over expression during the Renaissance. However, it also demonstrates the current of power that rose to rival this continuing power, in the form of Lorenzo de Medici, whose intervention saved Pico from exile and perhaps even death. Lorenzo was the consummate politician and patron of the arts, a wealthy power player considered to be one of the most influential men in the world. His intervention on behalf of Pico shows that due to his place in the Renaissance world, which centered on the rise of commerce and the simultaneous rise in arts and literature, he was capable of influencing the most powerful and rigid institution in the world, the Catholic Church. This says much about the changing balance of power in the Renaissance.

Niccolo Machiavelli's writing, while it did not earn him condemnation as a heretic, was nonetheless novel and controversial. *The Prince* clearly hammers home the concept that a ruler must be strong and awe-inspiring in order to be successful. It argued for the consolidation of power by any means possible. European rulers have, for centuries, consulted *The Prince* as a handbook, and it is often said to have had more influence on modern politics than any other work. With the publication of his book Machiavelli's fame and infamy grew to such extents that his own name became a term: ruthless, calculating antagonists of literature and drama quickly became known as Machiavellian villains

Perhaps the most prominent feature of the Renaissance was the furthering of the arts, and the advancement of new techniques and styles. During the early Renaissance, painters such as Giotto, and sculptors such as Ghiberti experimented with techniques to better portray perspective. Their methods were rapidly perfected and built upon by other artists of the early Renaissance such as Botticello and Donatello. However, the apex of artistic talent and production came later, during what is known as the High Renaissance, in the form of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo, who remain the best known artists of the Renaissance. The Renaissance also saw the invention of printing in Europe and the rise of literature as an important aspect in everyday life. The Italian writers Boccacio, Pico and Niccolo Machiaveli were able to distribute their works much more easily and cheaply because of the rise of the printed book.

Introduction to Utopia

Sir Thomas More wrote Utopia in 1516. The work was written in Latin and it was published in Louvain (present-day Belgium). Utopia is a work of satire, indirectly criticizing Europe's political corruption and religious hypocrisy. More was a Catholic Humanist. Alongside his close friend, the philosopher and writer Erasmus, More saw Humanism as a way to combine faith and reason. In depicting Utopia, More steps outside the bounds of orthodox Catholicism, but More's ultimate goal is to indicate areas of improvement for Christian society. Is an ideal state possible? Utopia means "no place" but sounds like "good place." At the very least, Utopia exposes the absurdities and evils of More's society by depicting an alternative.

As a satirist, More continues the tradition of Ancient Roman writers like Juvenal and Horace. As a philosopher brave enough to tackle the idea of the "ideal state," More leans away from Aristotle and towards Plato, author of The Republic. Sustaining the arguments of The Republic, Utopia fashions a society whose rulers are scholars (not unlike Plato's philosopher-king). Though Aristotle was opposed to the idea of common property and the abolition of private property, Aristotle's ideas of aesthetics, justice and harmony are present in the Utopian's philosophy.

A devout Catholic, More was beheaded as a martyr in 1535, standing opposed to the principle of the Anglican Church and the King of England's role as the head of the Church (replacing the Pope in Rome). In the 1530s, More wrote polemical tracts and essays attacking Lutheranism as heresy. All the same, More's Utopia implies that Utopians are better than some Christians. St. Augustine's *City of God* established the theme of the earthly city of God, reiterating the image of New Jerusalem presented in the Biblical Book of Revelations. Utopia is a type of New Jerusalem, a perfect place on earth. The Puritan experiments of the 1600s (in Britain and in North America) exemplify the programming of Utopian New Jerusalem.

Certainly, we must remember the context of New World exploration. Raphael Hythloday gives us the story of Utopia because he once sailed with Amerigo Vespucci. The First Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci was published in Latin in 1507. Columbus, Vespucci, and others returned with stories of the New World but earlier works of Marco Polo and John Mandeville already developed a genre of travel writing‹stories of far-off lands that combined fact with a great deal of fiction. More uses the New World theme to get his philosophical points across. He is less interested in New World politics and more interested in offering Utopia as an indirect critique of the Catholic European societies (England mainly, but also France, the Italian city-states, and other areas to a lesser extent). More opposed the vast land enclosures of the wealthy English aristocracy, the monopolistic maneuvers of London's guilds and

merchants, and the burdensome oppression of the work through the imposition of unjust laws.

More's work has left a lasting impact on subsequent political thought and literature. The Greek word Utopia translates as "no place" or "nowhere," but in modern parlance, a Utopia is a good place, an ideal place (eu-topia). The term "utopia" has gained more significance than More's original work. Utopia has inspired a diverse group of political thinkers. The utilitarian philosophy expounded in the late 1700s and early 1800s developed the idea of the ideal and perfect balance of happiness. Jeremy Bentham, a leading Utilitarian thinker, developed ideas of surveillance and the panopticon by which all can be seen. These reformatory practices, designed to quantify happiness, calculate moral goodness and produce the optimal balance, echo the anti-privacy measures inflicted upon the citizens of More's Utopia.

In the 1800s, the rise of urban industrialization triggered the proliferation of Utopian projects (agricultural communes), all of which failed. Utopia became the project of creating an ideal society apart from the demoralizing city. These Utopian projects were especially popular in Britain, France, and New England. The Utopian celebration of common property and dependence upon extensive state planning are the groundwork for communism and socialism as presented in Marx and Engels' written works. 1848, the year of Marx's Communist Manifesto is a year of urban revolutions. Utopia's criticisms of the nobility's perversion of law to subjugate the poor were applied to the suffering of industrial and factory workers. The abolition of money, private property, and class structure would undermine the power of the bourgeoisie. Socialists believed that agricultural economies with property held in common would cure the ills of industrial capitalization.

With the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the twentieth-century rise of communism, the ills of Utopia were made evident. The overbearing regulation and stifling of individualism were apparent in the communist Eastern Bloc and Soviet states. To be sure, More was neither a Communist nor a Socialist and it wouldn't necessarily be accurate to call More a Utopian either. All the same, More's work certainly propelled the philosophical development of these themes.

As a literary work, Utopia has retained its power to impact British and American writers. From the Greek prefix dys- (i.e. bad, ill) comes the word "Dystopia," reflecting Utopia's negative qualities. Dickens' novels of industrialized Britain depict planned factory cities gone wrong like the city of Coketown in *Hard Times*. Utopia remains in the backdrop: a desirable alternative but an equally failing effort. Works like George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* are dystopic novels that warn of the false hope of heavily programmed utopias. In 1887, a New England socialist named Edward Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward*, a novel that glanced into the future, presenting a celebratory image of a Utopian America.

The word Utopia has a double meaning then. In the academic disciplines of architecture and urban planning, leading figures like Lewis Mumford, Le Corbusier, and Frederic Law Olmsted (creator of Central Park) all developed the idea of Utopia in a positive sense. In political theory, however, Utopia has often been interpreted as a most dangerous form of form of naiveté. The impulse to plan perfection leads to the tyranny of Orwell's "Big Brother.

Summary with Analysis

Introduction

The book begins with a short six-line poem, followed by a four-line poem and a letter of greetings from Thomas More, the author, to his friend Peter Giles. The two poems, written by Utopians, describe Utopia as an ideal state.

Thomas More was the Under-sheriff of the City of London, in the service of King Henry VIII. More's friend, Peter Giles, was a corrector at a printing press and a clerk of the city of Antwerp. The prefatory letter concerns the printing and editing of the manuscript and also tells a story of how More first learned of the Utopians.

More recalls his meeting with Raphael Hythloday, for it is Raphael who relayed the story of Utopia to More. More has simply recorded what he has heard, striving to be as accurate as possible. In this regard, Peter Giles can be of use for he was the one who first introduced More to Hythloday. In his letter, More apologizes for taking such a long time to send the manuscript to Giles‹nearly a year, when it was expected to take only six weeks. More explains that his work has kept him very busy and when he comes home very later he must devote time to his family. As a result, More has hardly any time left for himself. More is uncertain about a few small details, for example, the span of a bridge that crosses the Utopian river of Anyder. More hopes that Giles might remember the actual dimensions or perhaps for this and a few other questions, Giles might even make contact with Raphael Hythloday. Laughably, there is one major question that does need to be addressed rather urgently: More does not remember "in what part of that New World Utopia is located." The author confides that he is rather embarrassed "not to know in which ocean the island lies," especially since he has devoted so much time and energy to recounting less significant details.

There are a few individuals already prepared to go to Utopia including a theologian who would like to see the island and meet its inhabitants. He intends to ask the Pope to be made the Bishop of the Utopians. More concludes his letter expressing his hesitation to publish the work. Despite the good qualities of the work, Utopia will still be

exposed to the unnecessarily fierce commentary of critics. More wonders whether it will be worthwhile in the end.

Analysis:

Throughout Utopia, More alludes to the scholarly and traditional literature of his period, also referencing earlier Greek and Latin works. Almost immediately, Utopia presents itself as a book whose form is different form other works. The full title of the work attests to this: "On the best form of a Commonwealth and on the New Island of Utopia: a Truly Precious Book No Less Profitable than Delightful by the most Distinguished and Learned Gentleman Thomas More, Citizen and Undersheriff of the Illustrious City of London." This book includes several things: it presents philosophy as well as a travel narrative about a foreign place. It poses as history but it is also a fictional adventure-story. Finally, parts of Utopia read much like a parable, aiming to improve the reader with a moral education by giving examples illustrated in stories.

Just as Utopia is a complex of genres, the Introduction is a "pastiche" (collage) of different literary forms including the poem, the pictogram and the epistle. Each of these serves a distinct narrative purpose.

The first poem is a six line stanza by Utopia's poet laureate. This poem creates a pun on the word Utopia as opposed to eutopia. Utopia actually means no-place, a fantasy. Eutopia means good place. The poem describes Utopia as a eutopia and compares it to "Plato's state." In one sense, Utopia is also a response to Plato's work, The Republic. More presents his political philosophy, albeit in a very abstracted way.

A quatrain written about Utopus (the general who founded the eponymous state) follows the sextet. Neither poem bears any significant resemblance to the established lyrical forms of More's society. Indeed, the poem is translated into prose. The poem tells us that utopia was made into an island by the general, Utopus. It has subsequently become a "philosophical state." Certainly, the image of the island parallels More's Britain. Unlike its neighbors on the continental mainland, the island is militarily secure enough to forge its own identity and isolated enough to become a unique philosophical state. Moreover, the security of the island makes it safe for the citizens to traffic in commerce as participate in the trade and exchange of ideas. According to the poem, Utopia eagerly shares its ideas and adopts the best practices of other societies.

More's letter to Peter Giles combines actual people with fictional characters. This is what we would expect, considering the mix of fictional and non-fictional genres incorporated within the work. More has made himself into a character. Peter Giles is an actual friend of More's and Giles assists in the publication of Utopia. Neither More nor Giles had a friend named Raphael Hythloday. The New World remains, in 1516,

largely unexplored by Europeans, but there was no "Utopia" nor had More traveled to any distant lands.

In the letter (the "epistle") to Giles, More is actually writing to the reader indirectly. Details that Giles would already know are supplied to give the reader context. This is a form of apostrophe because the speaker is addressing his intended audience indirectly. The themes of truth and virtue are very important in Utopia. Narrative accuracy certainly involves issues of truth, but the definition of truth depends upon what sort of narrative is being written: in the same way that we can judge the philosophy of the Utopians as true or false, we can judge the philosophy of Utopia as true or false. If Utopia as a travelogue, we would look to see whether its descriptions were true (i.e., accurate). On the other hand, as a work of history, Utopia would be true if it were "objective." And if we are reading Utopia as a fictional work, an adventure story or fantasy, "truth" is more a matter of consistency and believability: Do the characters sound like themselves? Is that how Utopians would really act?

The idea of public service is another major theme of this work. More is the under-sheriff of London and he serves in several other roles before he dies. Giles is a clerk for the city of Antwerp. Raphael Hythloday presents ideas regarding the individual's obligations to society. To the extent that Utopia was written to enhance the public debate on the "ideal" state, the book is an act of public service.

Finally, the idea of travel to the "New World" is an obvious theme of Utopia. We cannot travel to Utopia because furthermore, it is far away and the passage is dangerous. The next best thing is to receive an account of the New World from Hythloday and this is what More faithfully presents to us. There were plenty of travelogues and "accounts of the Indies"‹mostly spurious›on the market during More's era. Utopia borrows the idea of the New World, but More does not argue that Utopia is actually a location somewhere in the actual New World.

Book One Summary:

In Book One, Thomas More describes the circumstances surrounding his trip to Flanders where he has the privilege of meeting Raphael Hythloday. This first part of Utopia chronicles the early conversations between More, Peter Giles, and Hythloday. The three men discuss a wide range of civil, religious and philosophical issues. Hythloday is renegade and iconoclastic on certain issues but he is a skilled orator. Both More and Giles think there is considerable merit in much of what Hythloday has to say. Book Two is the continuation of the conversation during which Hythloday explains the details of Utopia in full.

More visited Flanders as an ambassador of Henry VIII. Alongside a man named Cuthbert Tunstall, More toured the cities of Bruges, Brussels, and Antwerp (all in present-day Belgium). Once in Antwerp,

More finds his friend Giles. After attending a Mass at the Church of St. Mary, Giles introduces Thomas More to Raphael Hythloday. Raphael is not a native Utopian; he is Portuguese. Peter explains that Raphael accompanied Amerigo Vespucci on a voyage to the New World but Raphael remained oversees when Vespucci returned to Europe. Hythloday and his companions enjoyed their continued travels and afterwards, they were reconnected with a fleet of Portuguese ships near the island of Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka, due south of India). Hythloday made his way home with these sailors. Apparently, Hythloday's visit to Utopia occurred in between his voluntary separation from Vespucci and his arrival at Ceylon.

After this rather lengthy introduction, Hythloday and More exchange greetings and the three men continue their discussion in the garden attached to More's lodging place. When he visited various regions, Raphael befriended the native inhabitants and gained their sincere friendship and trust. According to Raphael, the equatorial regions are excessively hot and there are monsters in the New World. When one continues further south, however, the climate becomes temperate again; populous cities and commercial areas emerge. Because Raphael's comparative analysis of the regions is so precise and intelligent, Peter suggests that Raphael become an advisor or counselor for a king. Raphael rejects the idea and celebrates the degree of freedom that he currently enjoys‹freedom Raphael would forfeit should he enter politics. He argues further that the other royal counselors would become jealous and would create unbearable complications. More agrees with Giles, but Raphael is resolute in his belief that he could ultimately do little in a political position.

Hythloday mentions that he has extensively traveled through Europe, encountering "arrogant, absurd, and captious judgments once even in England." More is eager to hear Hythloday's impressions of England because the traveler spent several months there. Hythloday spent some time with the Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev. Father John Morton‹an acquaintance of More's. The traveler recounts a dinner conversation with Morton and several of Morton's assistants: Hythloday focuses more on political issues and less on the usual traveler's cultural interests. It is not long before Hythloday is engaged in a spirited albeit respectful debate on British legal practices. Hythloday learns of "the rigorous justice applied to thieves in England"‹hanging. He argues that the crime is too harsh and unjustly severe for such a small crime. He also says that the punishment will not deter thieves is they are poor and have no way to make a living. The Cardinal argues that the thieves could have become tradesmen or farmers but Raphael disputes this: there are many wounded veterans of the King's wars who can no longer become farmers or learn a new trade. The government provides no avenue of opportunity for these veterans. Raphael also argues that the British noble class enforces a system of economic efficiency. Nobles keep

their tenants in poverty and reserve much of the land for non-agrarian purposes (private gardens, hunting grounds). Raphael also mentions that once a noble lord has died, the lord's retainers often become armed beggars and thieves. Raphael continues his argument with a lawyer and their debate touches upon the military valor of retainers, England's "sheep" problem, and the moral hazard of merchants who seek to develop monopolies.

The Cardinal finally interrupts Raphael and stops him from rambling. The Cardinal returns to the original topic (capital punishment) and asks what punishment Raphael would propose in place of hanging thieves. Raphael argues that Christianity has evolved from "the law of Moses" to the "new law of mercy" and that killing one another is forbidden. Raphael argues that murder and theft should not be punished in the same way; otherwise, a thief may be more inclined to kill, there being no additional penalty. Raphael suggests hard labor restoring the public works (roads, bridges) and that the thieves pay restitution to the owner of the stolen property. The lawyer disagrees with this idea and says it would endanger the commonwealth, but the Cardinal says that it would make sense to try the idea as the present system has failed. The Cardinal's associates then applaud the idea, as the Cardinal's own.

Raphael apologizes to More and Giles for his lengthy discourse only to draw attention to the fickle and jealous character of the Cardinal's crowd. Raphael takes this as evidence that he would not fare well with the King's courtiers. More is pleased with Raphael's story and reminded of his own education in the Cardinal's household.

Resuming his attempts to persuade Raphael to consider public service, More mentions Plato's Republic and the idea of a "philosopher-king." Since Raphael cannot be king, he should bring his philosophy to the court. Raphael cites the fact of common property in Utopia, as opposed to private property. This difference makes it difficult to enact Utopian policies in Britain. Raphael's final argument is that wise men, perceiving the folly of those in government, do well to stay clear of politics and "remain in safety themselves." Raphael does not convince More of the superiority of common property nor does the abolition of private property strike More as a good idea. Raphael reminds More that the Utopians adopted the best practices of every culture with which they came in contact. Within a short period of time, Utopians interview their guest travelers like Hythloday and learn of advances in science, nautical engineering, law and culture. At this point, More is eager to hear of the Utopians and after lunch, Raphael begins his discourse-describing Utopia. This is found in Book Two.

Analysis:

Raphael's discourse with More and Giles is philosophical and abstract. It is also very idealized. The conversation begins in a church, continues in a garden, and pauses for lunch. This philosophizing is a leisure activity enjoyed by three well-educated men of means. How do we reconcile this with More's confession to Giles that he has been so busy working that he has not had time to write Utopia? Indeed, More has had time to write and to invent "Utopia." The theme of public service appears in More and Hythloday's debate on the utility of philosophy. Is Raphael morally obligated to put his philosophy and knowledge to good use in the service of the King? Does royal service or political work even count as a worthy application of philosophy and knowledge?

This thematic question applies to More's career in the broadest sense. More was a lawyer who served in a variety of roles: undersheriff, ambassador, member of the King's Council, Master of Requests, Speaker of the House of Commons, High Steward of Oxford and Cambridge, and, eventually, Lord Chancellor of England. Concurrently, More wrote a number a number of philosophical works besides Utopia, contributing to the discourse of his era.

Thomas More wrote Utopia early in his career and this underscores the importance of More's argument with the fictional Raphael. After a life of public service, More was convicted of treason (on perjured evidence) and beheaded by the very king whom he defended fourteen years earlier in a work called Responsio ad Lutherum (1523). There is a strange unintended irony in Book One. At least on one point, More's fictional character proves wiser than More himself.

Raphael Hythloday is half-sage, half-fool and Book One develops both literary traditions. Raphael is clearly a man of intellect with more than a few good ideas. Nonetheless, Raphael's stories of far-off Utopia are laughably naïve and innocent. His ideas for policy are unrealistic. The account of the Cardinal's dinner parallels the courts scenes later made famous in Elizabethan drama. Hythloday has some interesting ideas but he is so wordy, so verbose that the Cardinal must interrupt him. Raphael is unable to answer a raised question without first answering other unanswered peripheral questions.

"Raphael" is the name of a guardian angel. "Hythloday" is a compound of Greek words translating to "peddler of nonsense." Thomas More does not intend for us to take Raphael or Utopia at face value. Book One is written in a style resembling the ancient Dialogues." In these Dialogues, intermingled real and fictional characters discussed philosophical ideas. The written work is essentially a transcript of the discussion. Raphael is so wordy that Book One hardly seems like a discussion or dialogue. It is not hard to argue that More concentrates on presenting ideas and constructing complex sentences (the original Latin

work was praised as much for its syntax as for its narrative). More is less interested in telling a very good story.

Modern readers accustomed to reading novels might interpret Book One as a narrative device to build suspense. We must read through nearly half of Utopia before we reach the full description of the island. More is interested in the philosophical contemplation of European and Christian legal customs. Book One provides the context wherein More can critique the Utopian society. The abolition of private property has already become a point of contention between more and Hythloday. Conveniently, Hythloday's visit to England justifies and enables More's desire to discuss England's problems (and also pay tribute to his dearly beloved, dearly influential friend, the Cardinal Archbishop). Raphael is a fictional character and a mask. More shields himself behind Raphael and gains the safety to discuss a number of controversial ideas. Raphael presents land reform, capital punishment, and the distribution of property. On these issues, either More is silent or he takes the traditional position. More does not create Raphael as a mouthpiece for his own secret and unpopular beliefs; rather, More uses Raphael to create a discussion on issues that clearly need resolution. More may not accept Raphael's extreme and divergent opinions, but More does imply that some reform is needed.

Much like the island of Utopia, Raphael is a piece of fiction inserted in the real world. Amerigo Vespucci did travel to the New World, but it remains unclear how Raphael would have found his way from "the New World" to Ceylon, off the coast of India. The Spanish explorer Vasco Nuñez de Balboa did not reach the Pacific Ocean until 1513. In 1516, More and his contemporaries had not yet grasped the enormity of the "American continent" and so, Hythloday's story seemed geographically plausible. This same lack of precise information bespeaks the Europeans' fascination with "Utopia" and the New World. Somewhere in between India and Portugal's Atlantic coast there is more than enough room for More to invent a Utopia. This expanse of the land is an answer to the problems of property and land discussed in Book One.

Book Two (First Half) Summary:

In the first half of Book Two, Raphael describes the natural geography of Utopia and then addresses the major cities, the system of government, the social distribution of labor and responsibility, and "how the Utopians travel." Throughout Book Two, Hythloday praises the Utopian customs and fails to offer any negative criticism.

In Utopia's Introduction, the quatrain mentions that Utopia was made into an island. In book Two, Hythloday explains that the general Utopus dug through the narrow isthmus that connected Utopia to the mainland. The neighboring villagers mocked Utopus because his

ambitious project seemed doomed to fail. What Utopus and his men achieved in a relatively short period of time astonished these naysayers.

The island is roughly circular in shape and its natural harbors are navigable. The straits of Utopia are dangerous with shallows and rocks. The Utopians have mapped and mastered these waters but the shallows and rocks successfully deter foreign invaders. The island has fifty-four cities sharing "exactly the same language, customs, institutions, and laws." The cities also have the same planned layout. Much of this is due to the civilizing influence of Utopus who transformed a "crude and rustic mob" into a culture of note. Amaurot, the capital city, is located at the center of the island and every year, each city sends three delegates to Amaurot to discuss common problems.

The Utopians regulate the size of each household, organizing the households into governable units. In addition to its cities, Utopia has a wealth of rural farming land. Each citizen serves a two-year stint in the country and then returns homes. As a result, the hard labor of farming is distributed across the population and everyone learns the necessary agricultural skills. Utopia enjoys a surplus of goods and the country villages and cities freely give to each other without receiving anything in exchange.

Amaurot sits on the banks of the Anyder River, the largest river in Utopia. The Anyder is pure-water near Amaurot. Upstream, the Anyder becomes salty and flows into the ocean. The Utopians built a stonework bridge and fortified the area. The houses and streets are planned in design, aesthetics, and dimensions and the model is duplicated across the island. Each house has a garden and Utopians take great pride in their gardens. There are no locks on the front doors and these doors "open easily with a push of the hand." As a result, "there is nothing private anywhere." Utopians exchange houses every ten years.

Stretching back 1760 years, the history of Utopia is well preserved. Magistrates are elected from groups of families and the highest of these magistrates serve in the Senate and elect the ruler of the people. Unless he is "suspected of trying to become a tyrant," the ruler serves for life. Most other positions are yearlong. All public business must be conducted within the public assemblies and it is a capital crime to hold such discussions elsewhere. Furthermore, in the Senate, no point is discussed on the same day during which it is introduced. These measures aim to prevent conspiracy and prevent shortsighted decision-making.

In terms of occupation, all of the Utopians (both males and females) are trained in farming, though everyone learns another trade. Children generally learn their father's trade. If a child wishes to learn another trade, the child is adopted into a different household. Individuals are also permitted to learn two trades in this manner and they can then practice whichever trade they prefer unless the city has a greater need for the other skill.

The Utopians believe in working smart, rather than simply working hard. They work only six hours each day, sleeping for eight hours, and devoting the remainder to meals and leisure. Most of the Utopian leisure activities are edifying or intellectual. They have morning lectures‹mandatory for those selected to pursue intellectual activities as a trade, but regularly attended by a good number of "ordinary" people. The equitable distribution of labor enables Utopia to produce a surplus of goods. There is no leisure class; there are no beggars, swashbucklers, religious orders, or malingerers, nor is one sex exempted from (or forbidden to) work. There are no guilds to deliberately keep the supply of goods fixed and scarce. Raphael suggests that Britain would do well by eliminating idleness. The Utopians are vigilant against the spread of vice and in their leisure time, they play a game resembling chess in which the "virtues" are lined up in battle against the "vices." The game shows how vices and virtues interact and attack one another, and how one side ultimately overpowers the other. From this game, Utopians learn how to use their virtues to overcome their vices. The Utopians select their ambassadors, priests, tranibors (highest magistrates) and the ruler himself from the order of scholars. Scholars are selected based upon their intellectual promise at an early age. Sometimes an artisan makes great progress in his own leisurely intellectual pursuits and he is promoted to join the scholars.

Raphael devotes a good amount of time to explaining the social relations of Utopians in greater detail. Utopians create large households that are extended families. Sons and grandsons often start their families within the household of their youth. The oldest parent rules each household. The family structure is not inviolable, however; when cities are over- or under-populated or when a household has fewer than 10 or more than 16 adults, persons are moved from one household to another. If the city is overpopulated, the excess population moves to under-populated cities. Each city has six thousand households. When the island is over-populated as a whole, the government recruits citizens to colonize nearby areas of the continent where the natives have plenty of uncultivated land. Either the natives adopt the Utopians' laws and customs, or they are driven off the land, by force if necessary. If any city is under-populated, colonists return to replenish the island.

Each city is divided into four equal districts and the marketplace occupies the center of the city. The head of each household offers his goods and obtains whatever his household needs. There is no exchange of money and no direct exchange of goods for "there is plenty of everything" and no reason to hoard goods or deny them to others. In the city, each block of houses has a dining hall in which the households eat together. Stewards from each hall go to the market to get food for the meals. Hence, in the cities, the Utopians eat their meals in large communal groups and not as isolated families as is the case in the countryside. As always, the Utopians seek to advance the moral

education of their people especially the youth. The common dining halls feature brief lectures or readings followed by discussion. Young people are seated with their elders to prevent the youth from misbehaving.

In Utopia, there is no problem of traveling bands of rogues, nor is it possible for an individual to escape his civic obligations by traveling to another city. When Utopians travel, they must join in the labor of the resident citizens, otherwise they are not fed. Citizens must first get the permission of the magistrate to travel and husbands must have their wives' consent. Hythloday concludes that these traveling individuals remain just as profitable and useful to the state as if they never left. And "with the eyes of everyone upon them," the Utopians have "no wine taverns, no alehouses, no brothels, no occasion to be corrupted, no hideouts, no hangouts."

Utopia believes in storing a full year's worth of provisions as reserves. The excess supply of goods is exported to foreign lands at a reasonable price and one-seventh is donated to the poor in foreign lands. Utopians import iron, which they lack at home, and they also bring back vast quantities of silver and gold. The balance of trade is well in Utopia's favor, as they import far less than they export. Gold and silver are held in low regard upon the island. Utopians use these "precious metals" to decorate criminals, slaves, and children‹and as a result of the stigma, god and silver are never stolen or hoarded. Hence, these metals are always in great supply and are available in case of war.

The Utopians follows a keen sense of virtue and rationalism. They seek to avoid the social complications of private wealth and class structure and they rely upon an education in reason, morality, and religion to keep Utopians well behaved. Utopians believe the greatest pleasures to be those of the mind and not the body, and they devote much of their free time to these pleasures.

Analysis:

In Book Two, Raphael Hythloday develops the motif of perfection. A series of images and symbols support the notion of Utopia as a good place (and Utopians as the ideal people). Garden imagery is prevalent in Book Two, presenting an allusion to the Biblical Garden of Eden. Utopians enjoy many gardens and love to garden. In symbolic terms, the Utopians enjoy a pure Eden-like life, free of many real world concerns. On a practical level, the garden imagery also reflects the agricultural skill and abundant harvests of the Utopians. The strength of the civilizations is seen in the life and vitality of its crops and vegetation.

Thomas More's combination of urban and agricultural features makes Utopia a unique and modern work. The Utopian ideal fills the cities the cities with gardens and surrounds each city with agricultural land. The land symbolizes Eden but there is certainly social commentary reflecting More's Britain. The Utopians have not constructed congested

and dirty cities like London, nor have they devoted land to the wasteful pleasures of the nobility. More than Eden-like gardeners, the Utopians are "stewards" of the land and they carefully husband their resources. This connects the imagery of perfection and gardens to the themes of virtue and public services.

Besides the gardens, there are other images of perfection. Utopus constructed a "whole plan of the city" Amaurot and the Utopians sustain this zeal for urban planning and design 1760 years later. The island is circular in shape, its cities are perfectly arranged, and the cities are divided into four equal districts. For the Utopians, equality is the visual image of perfection. Cities are the same size. Houses look the same. Each city has the same number of adults.

In considering Utopia as a philosophical treatise and Utopia as a model civilization, we find that the theme of truth becomes very complicated. There is the question of feasibility. Assuming that the Utopians' beliefs are true and morally correct, how useful is the information to More's audience? Hythloday asserts that Utopian policies could improve Britain's condition, but Utopia's condition seems unrealistically advantaged. Indeed, Utopia is described as the opposite of the real world. More than a mere "ideal," Utopia is a fictional society that has‹with the stroke of More's pen‹easily solved the actual problems of real societies.

Utopus easily cuts through the isthmus that connects Utopia to the mainland. Here, More alludes to the Greeks' failed attempts to dig a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth. This historical episode was so well known in More's time that it became a proverbial figure of speech for failure. Utopia's capital city, Amaurot, strongly resembles London. London has the Thames River and a smaller stream called the Fleet Ditch, but these are far dirtier than Utopia's Anyder River and freshwater spring. Even more significant, both the Anyder and the Thames flow in from the sea, with the city built on the riverbanks. London's bridge was built in between the city and the coast, restricting ships from traveling through the city. Amaurot's bridge is built further inland so that ships can sail the river into the city and through much of it, facilitating trade. Utopia is More's reflection on his own society. It is not entirely fictional and imagined.

The Utopians' lifestyle also presents the theme of innovation. The Utopians discover the best practices and seek to implement them whenever possible. Like More's contemporaries, the Utopians discover new lands and come into contact with new foreign ideas as a result of international commerce and trade. The Utopians have rearranged their natural landscape, creating an island. This creates a tension between God's role as creator and man's roles as innovator.

By the standards of democratic capitalism, the Utopian idea of the common life is rather objectionable. Utopia looks a lot like communism. In the struggle to attain perfection, Utopians depend heavily upon

formulas of equality. Household size is regulated and individuals can be sent to other families to keep the numbers balanced. The Utopians fear the vices of sloth, greed, and pride and they take proactive measures to eliminate the possibility of vice. But a good deal of freedom is sacrificed. We are told explicitly that front doors open at the touch of a hand and there is no privacy. Sons and grandsons start their families as part of their father's household. It is impossible to take a leisurely vacation‹one must work even when traveling, and work hours are assigned by the state.

Utopia resembles 1984 and Fahrenheit 451, novels of "dystopia", that responded to big government, totalitarianism and tyranny. Utopia resembles the Puritan commonwealth that Oliver Cromwell established in Britain in the 1650s. It is hard to credit the Utopians with virtue when their choices have been made for them. Tragically, the Utopians (once an uncivilized "mob") are civilized to the point that they remain indistinguishable from one another. They live in the same houses and wear the same clothes according to the guidelines of their planned communities.

Book Two (Second Half) Summary:

The Utopians have slaves, including prisoners of war captured in battle. The children of slaves are not held in slavery. Utopians also travel to foreign countries to purchase and enslave criminals condemned to die. Utopians who commit serious crimes are also held as slaves and they are treated most harshly. These slaves are a disgrace to the Utopians because these slaves had been given an excellent moral education but they became criminals nonetheless.

Raphael discusses a few other customs of the Utopians. They are skilled in medicine and they devote considerable time to attending to the sick. The Utopian priests also encourage euthanasia when a patient is terminally ill and suffering pain (but this can only be done of the patient consents).

Raphael discusses the marriage customs of the utopians. Women marry at the age of 20 and men marry at the age of 24. Because Utopians believe that sexual promiscuity makes it difficult for an individual to live a happily married life, premarital sex is illegal and severely punished. Before the marriage, the intended bride and groom are presented to one another naked, so that any "sores" or defects will be exposed and "no one is duped or deceived." The Utopian marriages last until death and divorces are rare, requiring the permission of the ruler. Adultery is grounds for divorce and is punished with harsh servitude. If an adulterer repeats the offense, the punishment is death.

The senate has no penal code and punishments are determined on a case-by-case basis. The most serious crimes are usually punished with servitude, rather than death because the society can benefit from the prisoners' labor. If these slaves are patient and if, after a long period of labor, they show that "they regret the sin more than the punishment,"

they are sometimes released. In adjudicating a case, the attempt to commit a crime is not distinguished from the criminal act itself a criminal is not redeemed by his inability to successfully complete the attempted act.

At this point, Raphael's narrative becomes somewhat rambling and he discusses a number of issues in rapid succession. The Utopians have fools and jesters to keep them entertained, but they abhor the practice of mocking people who are crippled or disfigured. It is important to be well groomed, but the Utopians consider cosmetics to be disgraceful. In the marketplaces Utopians erect statues of virtuous men who have done good things for the commonwealth. This serve as an inspiration for the citizens to live up to the standards established by their ancestors. Anyone who campaigns for public office disqualifies himself from holding any office at all, and lawyers are banned from Utopia. In court, each citizen represents himself and tells his story without legal counsel. The Utopians believe it is easier this way for the judge to determine the truth in a given case. The Utopians do not make treaties with other nations because treaties are regularly broken. Utopians consider themselves friends with a foreign people unless some harm has been done.

Regarding war, the Utopians are peaceful but they are not pacifists. When necessary, Utopians will fight to defend their interests as well as the interests of their allies. Both women and men are trained in regular military exercises so that the island is well protected. Utopians also go to war if one of their citizens is unjustly disabled or killed in a foreign nation and the guilty persons are not turned over to the Utopian authorities. Rather than fight in wars, Utopians rely upon strategy whenever possible. They often offer large rewards for the death of the enemy rulers, intending to head off a conflict before it begins‹or at the very least, sow the seeds of distrust within the enemy camp.

The Utopians often hire a nearby tribe, the Zapoletes, as mercenaries to fight in place of Utopian citizens. The Zapoletes are perversely bloodthirsty and they are eager to fight for the Utopians because the Utopians pay high wages. Often times, the Zapoletes die in war and so the Utopians do not have to pay the high rewards promised. At the same time, the Utopians regard the Zapoletes as a moral scourge and they are only too happy to "enlist these wicked men in order to use them up." Utopians will only use their own citizens as a last resort and even then, only as volunteers if it is a foreign war. But if the island should be invaded, men and women in good physical health fight to protect the commonwealth. Often times, families go to the battle lines together (only the adults, of course) for the Utopians reason that he soldiers fight harder to protect one another especially in hand-to-hand combat‹when family members become especially protective of one another.

The last major topic discussed concerns the religions of the Utopians. Throughout the various regions, there are a few sects devoted

to ancestor worship or the worship of some celestial body. The "vast majority" of Utopians are monotheists who believe exclusively in one god as creator. The smaller sects also agree that there is one Supreme Being and they all call him Mythras, though the Utopians do not all worship Mythras in the same way.

The Utopians were very interested in what they learned of Christianity. Hythloday explains that the Utopian concept of Mythras and many of the beliefs of the Utopian religion were similar to tenets of Christianity. Hythloday also adds that the Utopians eagerly awaited the arrival of a Christian Bishop and they were debating whether they might simply appoint a bishop on their own. The Christians among the Utopians mostly remained very tolerant of the other religions and religious tolerance had long been enjoyed by the Utopians. Hythloday recounts that an overzealous Christian minister was arrested because his incendiary speech excited "riots among the people." Utopus, the conquering general, began the legacy of religious toleration. The overzealous minister was not arrested for advocating for his own religion‹he had free speech‹but when the minister began endangering the safety of others, he was arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to exile. Utopus established the policy "that no one should come to any harm because of his religion" and the Utopians work hard to allow for debate and discussion. The caveat to the Utopian policy of religious toleration is that it is forbidden that anyone disbelieve in the immortality of the soul or deny that the world is ruled by providence, arguing instead that the "world is ruled by mere chance."

Analysis:

The second half of Book Two covers a range of topics including slavery, military practices, and religion. More's work gives us the opportunity to analyze the Utopian society on multiple levels.

Some would argue that the Utopian institutions reveal a lack of trust in human nature. The Utopians have multiple safeguards to protect the society against the threats of tyranny, fraud and deception. Regarding treaties, the Utopians‹unlike their Old World counterparts‹no longer trust in them or sign them. Either a treaty is broken or it is written with so many loopholes that it becomes ineffective. The Utopians argue that legal and political language is consistently used to misrepresent the truth. By eliminating many of the contexts wherein truth is profitably abused, the Utopians safeguard their values. One example is the fact that Utopians ban all lawyers as "clever practitioners and sly interpreters of the law." It well worth noting the irony here, that Thomas More, a lawyer, is in fact the patron saint of lawyers. Towards the very end of Book Two, Hythloday argues that Utopia is morally superior to European societies in which the poor citizens are defrauded and disenfranchised both through "private chicanery" and "public laws." Hythloday is convinced by the Utopians' argument that a large body of

law often serves to protect the interests of the powerful sometimes running roughshod over justice.

Utopia's narrative structure relies upon multiple narrators. The reader receives commentary from Hythloday and More; various political ideas are presented from a variety of sources‹classical, biblical, religious, and Utopian. This narrative strategy highlights the tension between enjoying a free philosophical exchange (in pursuit of truth) and enforcing and defending the truth once it is known. When in court, a Utopian tells his side of the story without legal defense or expert witnesses; the Utopians believe that truth is most easily ascertained when each individual gives his own argument. Nonetheless, the Utopian elders believe that the "ordinary people" are unable to understand a full body of written law. As a consequence, there remains a wide range of decision-making wherein most Utopians have a very limited role if any. Utopians withhold legal participation from the masses even as they fear the rise of tyranny. If a Utopian makes the effort of campaigning for public office, he is immediately disqualified. Granted, Utopia's society is one in which the public good dominates the private interest, but these regulatory measures also reflect a fear that legal structures might be perverted and that truth might be distorted. Despite the rigorous moral education of Utopian citizens, these safeguards and checks remain.

The Utopian philosophy is not without counterparts in classical and early modern thought. Early political thinkers agreed with the Utopian regard for justice and happiness, but there is considerable divergence within these viewpoints. The Utopians generally believe that the ends justify the means.' From the Greek word telos ("end"), the Utopian philosophy could be described as teleological. The consequences of the Utopians' logical assumption are far-reaching and many of the Utopians' most objectionable customs can be traced back to this original belief.

The Utopians purchase slaves and also use slavery as a punishment for serious crime. One justification for slavery is that the potential labor of criminals should not be wasted (in execution). The Utopians believe that war is a moral tragedy that should be avoided and they loathe a neighboring tribe of treacherous backstabbing warmongers known as the Zapoletes. The Utopians employ the Zapoletes as mercenaries and have these wild warriors do their fighting for them whenever possible. The Utopian argument is that, in the end, the Zapoletes will be "used up" and this will be to the moral improvement of the region. When the Utopians are pressed to fight, however, we see that they use deceitful strategies with the precise intention of encouraging violence and distrust within the enemy camp. Zapoletes are contemptible for some of the very same traits that the Utopians seek to inspire in their enemies.

Utopian policies often disregard ideas of family and privacy. In a defensive war, it is not uncommon to find an entire Utopian family of

adults fighting together. Despite the psychological trauma or absurdity of wiping out an entire family, the Utopians reason that the end product is better fighting. Troops will fight harder if they are literally defending their own kin. The family unit can become a means of defending the state. Similarly, euthanasia is encouraged but not mandated in a case where an individual is terminally ill. Likewise, there is no horror in regards to the practice of assassinating enemy leaders as a means of preventing the greater loss of life in war. Should war begin, a troupe of Utopian sharpshooters stalks the head generals as a means of quickly routing the opposition.

The Utopians have a chimera philosophy that seems composed of diverse and awkward fitting parts: their philosophy runs the gamut from the worst human violations (slavery) to policies of compassion that are well beyond the norms of modern democratic societies. Utopians are not allowed to work as animal slaughterers or butchers‹the slaves do this work›because it is feared that such bloody labor will harden the Utopians and cause them to lose their compassion. Oddly, slavery becomes a means of achieving an end that it compromises.

More does not present Utopia as a logically cohering state, and he admits as much in the concluding letter to Peter Giles. Utopia is a hodgepodge of legal policies, economic practices, and cultural institutions that exist so that More might present a set of issues for our contemplation. The remarks on the Utopians' religious practices reveal More's narrative strategy.

The Utopians are not described as Christians, but their religion is described as a monotheistic practice very similar to Christianity. Very early in the work, we learned that the Utopians had already begun to embrace Christianity. If the Utopians were presented as irrational or unconverted pagans, it would have been difficult for More to present Utopia as a society worthy of comparative analysis. The Utopians are fairly tolerant of diverse religious practices, but they are intolerant of atheists or those who believe that there is no eternal soul or that there is no afterlife. More was no sympathizer of heretics, and he makes a distinction between the level of toleration necessary for truth to emerge and the mandates of uniformity required once the truth has been revealed. Utopus, the old Utopian general, argued that religious war would likely disadvantage the truth, as the true believers were likely to be poor fighters. But once truth is established, uniformity in compliance is expected. The Utopians hold the existence of one God as truth, and they bar any atheist from public office. The Utopians also hold a number of truths regarding how many hours one ought to work in a day, where one ought to live, and what one's house should look like. Uniformity precludes dissent and denies the possibility of amendment.

Because the Utopians have not yet settled on the precise details of God, all of their religious services use common prayers: "no prayers are devised which everyone cannot say without offending his own

denomination." In 1549, (fourteen years after More's death) the Anglican Church installs its own Book of Common Prayer in accordance with the 1st Act of Uniformity. The common-ness implies inclusiveness, but Utopian practices, like those of More's society, do not tolerate the possibility of multiple or relative truths. Moreover, truth is described as something that can be pragmatically approached and conclusively determined.

Conclusion Summary:

In a final letter to his friend, Peter Giles, More discusses the initial reception of Utopia. In particular, the writer describes a certain unnamed critic who generally approved of the work yet found some of the Utopian practices absurd. More appreciates the critic who makes an effort to read carefully and pay attention to details. The form of the work Utopia should be judged separate from the content of the work and the policies of the Utopian society. More states that he does not agree with all of the Utopian practices; he has simply presented them to the reader. Finally, More argues that if his work were fictional, he would supply ample details to make this clear. More cannot attest to the truth of the work, and the reader must seek out Raphael Hythloday if more information about Utopia is desired.

Analysis:

More takes a reflective tone in his final letter but the reader should be well aware that More is not telling the literal truth. He describes his work as not necessarily "a fictional presentation that would make the truth slip more pleasantly into the mind like medicine smeared with honey." At the same time, More gives the clues conforming that his work is fictional. The name Utopia means that the island is nowhere; the name of the city Amaurot means phantom; the name of the river Anyder means that there is no water; and the name of the ruler, Ademus, means that he has no people.

The simile of “medicine smeared with honey” describes Utopia as a corrective‹a book for the moral education of the reader. The fictional and invented aspects are like honey, intended to sweeten the actual object. More's responses to the critic suggest that the author does indeed have a defined sense of how his work is to be read and interpreted. Though he worries that the "honey" aspects of Utopia may discredit the work as a philosophical treatise, More remains confident that the careful reader will be able to extract the medicine and recognize the honey for what it is.

Major Themes in UTOPIA

Common welfare vs. private interest: The abolition of private property is one of More's chief criticisms of the Utopian state. On this point, the author allows his fictional equivalent (the character More) to disagree with Utopian policy and with Raphael Hythloday's interpretation of English society. Hythloday defends communism as practiced by the Utopians, noting that a similar sort of communal life was lived by the early Church and is still lived by the holiest monastic orders.

The Utopian argument is that pride is the great source of many crimes and injuries. By eliminating private property, class-based social stratification, and wealth, the Utopians remove the mechanisms with which many harms are done. In Utopia, there is no poverty and everyone works, quite unlike the feudal societies wherein there was much poverty and an inequitable distribution of labor. As modern history has revealed, communism is not the only alternative to feudalism and without a doubt, communism has not proved to be the most viable alternative to feudalism.

The Utopian position is founded upon an inherent distrust of mankind. At one point, we learn of the Utopians' claim that the afterlife of punishment or reward is the one thing that inspires man to obey law and respect others. This extreme position is reflected in the Utopian fear that private property will produce more harm than good and will cause the community to unravel. The Utopians are not opposed to the rational and intelligent improvement of one's interests. Rather, the Utopians seek the prioritization of the common welfare and the fulfillment of private interests through the common welfare whenever possible. Even private activities like eating, reading philosophy, and taking a vacation are inextricable parts of the communal life. Individual and private activities are discouraged. Privacy is a frightening notion for the Utopians: doors are constructed to give easy and immediate access to any passerby; it is a serious crime to discuss any political business anywhere other than the public assembly; families can be reconstituted by the state if the population distribution becomes lopsided.

Uniformity and dissent:

Raphael Hythloday describes Utopia as a perfect society, but this perfection is not a natural occurrence. The New World is often depicted as a natural paradise resembling the natural beauty of the Biblical Garden of Eden. As the map of Utopia tells us visually, Utopia is not a natural paradise: it was painstakingly planned and crafted by a great commander named Utopus. Hythloday's commentary comes about 1700 years after Utopus transformed a peninsula of savages into an island paragon of civilization.

In Utopia, perfection is expressed in uniformity. This is not the New World aesthetic in which the diversity of flora and fauna is the indicative symptom of fullness and greatness. Utopia is agricultural, not jungle. The land is heavily urbanized with a system of cities interspersed with the agricultural hinterland. The cities are planned exactly the same way, just as the houses are built of identical architecture, bland utilitarian clothing is distinguished only by the intended wearer's gender. All citizens work the same number of hours daily, each city relies upon the same legal and political practices, and all adherents' worship according to the same common prayers despite their various denominations. Indeed, all of the 54 cities have "exactly the same language, customs, institutions, and laws." Hythloday almost seems to flaunt Utopia's perfect uniformity in his opening aside: "If you know one of their cities, you know them all, so similar are they in all respects (so far as the terrain allows). And so I will describe one of them (it doesn't much matter which one)."

Utopia's degree of uniformity outstrips the European counterparts. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we find the formation of the nation-state in Britain, in France and in Spain. The modern reader may take the idea of the capital city for granted, but nation-building monarchs faced difficulties in harnessing the energies of commerce and urbanization in support of their power struggles against the well-placed regional nobles and lords. Today, many modern democracies see pluralism of language, customs, institutions, and‹to a lesser extent‹laws as strength ("E pluribus unum"). In More's time, the Spanish crown was desperate to establish one uniform language among dialects. In France, this same era initiated the Crown's spotty history of successes and failures in regional administration, the levying of taxes, and the mobilization of labor for public works and for war. And as for England, the reader need only note that Sir Thomas More wrote a Catholic defense of King Henry VIII against Martin Luther in 1523, but Henry took More's head 12 years later, More's "treason" reflecting a refusal to honor Henry as head of the new Anglican Church.

Perceiving the Utopians as prone to fighting, Utopus established the possibility of peace by blanching out diversity of thought. The society follows a master plan handed down from generation to generation. And regarding religion, those truths which were held to be self-evident (the existence of a Divine power, the immortality of the soul, the fact of an afterlife), these became the basis for persecution in Utopia, albeit comparatively mild persecution. Heretics were not burned, but they were restricted in speech and effectively barred from public office. The Utopian nation-state seems more like an old world fantasy quite unlike the New World.

Civic virtue and the moral education of citizens:

The Utopian population is well educated and the office of citizen corresponds to aspects of Roman practice and Greek philosophy. The Utopians may not regard Aristotle's defense of private property, but their celebration of virtue is much like the Greek philosopher's. Utopians devote a considerable amount of time and energy towards the moral education of the young, and they also integrate the ideas of justice, beauty, and happiness. Like Plato's "Republic," Utopia is ruled by philosophical minded individuals and there are striations of citizenship designed to funnel great minds of character towards positions of leadership and public trust. Like the Romans, the Utopians celebrate great ancestors and memorialize them in statue form as a means of presenting an example of virtue.

While the Athenian ideal is more sympathetic to ideas of individualism and privacy, the Roman idea of the individual as public citizen is closer to the Utopian paradigm. The citizen is charged with obligations of vigilance against tyranny and the family unit is sometimes sent into war as a small division or phalanx within an army. In Utopia, Virtue is defined in a circular manner: it is the moral character of an individual who supports society, and individuals who serve as the pillars of society are considered virtuous. The Utopians lack an objective standard of virtue separate from the prevailing standards of their society. Family and state work together to carefully transfer the values of the older generation to the members of the younger generation.

Truth: parody vs. factual representation:

Utopia is both a work of fiction and a philosophical treatise. The author, Sir Thomas More, appears as a character alongside his real-life friend, Peter Giles. Raphael Hythloday joins Giles and More: a man who describes the island of Utopia. Both Hythloday and Utopia are products of More's imagination. This has ramifications for the literary structure of the work because More wants to forward philosophical truth at the same time that he is presenting fiction. Hythloday's commentary is transcribed in Book Two. The introductory letter, Book One, and the concluding letter sandwich Book Two and provide the context within which Hythloday's arguments may be properly read.

More offers clues to help the reader understand that Utopia is not actually a real place. The very word Utopia means "no place." The major city of Utopia, Amaurot, means "phantom." The Anyder is named as a river with no water, and the ruler Ademus is a man with no people. Of course, if More were arguing that Utopia was actually an island in the New World, he would be neither the first nor the last writer of fraudulent New World adventure tales. Utopia is a parody of that genre, even as it is a work of philosophy.

The tension in More's games is that More knows that language games are often used to deliberate blur the truth. More served as an

accomplished lawyer and judge yet the Utopians ban all lawyers as "clever practitioners and sly interpreters of the law." Certainly, this was intended to be humorous and serious. Hythloday becomes a mouthpiece for criticisms of church practices, political corruption, and social ills. Parody and humor allow More to expose areas of legitimate concern, albeit indirectly.

Exploration through philosophy and travel:

More's work presents two forms of exploration. In one sense, More's fictional story simulates the New World adventures of travelers who searched the unknown regions of globe. Largely myths and stories of the New World motivated these earliest travelers and one of the most popular storyline was the idea of the perfect Paradise. Utopia puts forward the idea of a place that is not merely a naturally perfect paradise; rather, it is a society of human perfection. Utopia means "no place" however, and we see that Utopian society is quite imperfect. Though More celebrates the pursuit of perfection, he accepts the rational observation that the reality of the New World (or the Old World, for that matter) is sure to fall below the standards of the ideal.

Though perfection is elusive, conditions can always be improved. Utopia may be read as "no place" but it is more often interpreted as "good place" (eu-topia). More's philosophical exploration is founded upon the belief that the contemplation and discussion of philosophy can initiate the processes through which society is improved. More describes his fictionalized treatise as "medicine smeared with honey." The exploration of a fictitious New World island is the honey that makes the medicine of serious philosophical contemplation easier to stomach.

Utopia's narrative structure testifies to More's use of the fictional island as "honey," as stylistic form as opposed to content. Thomas More was aware of the accounts of the New World, but the images of cannibals, monsters and treacherous reefs are extremely rare in the work. Utopia's climate seems to resemble Europe more than the tropics, and Utopia is described as a response to Old World politics: More does not create an elaborate history of the New World. Utopia stands as an example, an exercise for thought. Just as Utopia has fifty-four cities, England had fifty-three counties plus London. At some points, Utopia is the mirror opposite of More's England (private property). At other points, Utopia seems to be a desirable alternative to More's England (the intelligent construction of bridges). Utopia is not valued as an inhabitable paradise; Utopia is a moral exploration not unlike John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, through which the reader may see himself in others and make amends.

Major Characters

More - In service to King Henry VIII of England, he travels to Antwerp where he meets Peter Giles and Raphael Hythloday. More is a fictional character sharing the same name as Utopia's author, Sir Thomas More. However, More the fictional character should not be assumed to be a transparent mouthpiece of the opinions of the author. For the purpose of this review, in the Summary and specific sections' analyses, the name More will be used only in reference to the fictional character, while Thomas More will identify Utopia's author.

Peter Giles - Friend of More and acquaintance of Raphael Hythloday. Once again, Peter Giles is an actual historical figure, a friend and intellectual companion of Sir Thomas More. Peter Giles, in fact, helped More to get Utopia published. The fictional Giles shares nearly all of his biographical history with the real Peter Giles, but like the fictional More, should be understood to be a fictional character.

Raphael Nonsenso Hythloday - A philosopher and world traveler, he lived for five years on the island of Utopia before returning to Europe to spread the word about the Utopian's ideal society. Hythloday's last name, in Greek, means "talker of nonsense," a clue from Sir Thomas More to his reader that the island of Utopia is a fiction.

Cardinal John Morton - Actual Chancellor to Henry VIII. Raphael Hythloday once spent a fictional evening discussing the societal problems of England with Morton and an unnamed lawyer. The real Morton was instrumental in furthering Sir Thomas More's education at Oxford.

Lawyer - An unnamed man who once spent an evening with Raphael Hythloday and Cardinal Morton. He is defensive of England and unwilling to find fault with anything in English society.

General Utopus - Ancient warrior and founder of Utopia. He conquered the savages who once lived on the isthmus Utopia now occupies, and then set his army and new subjects to work cutting the land away to make Utopia an island. In his wisdom, Utopus set up the Utopian society that Hythloday finds so immensely attractive.

Chapter-wise Summary

BOOK 1
Chapter 1. Hythloday and His Travels

Summary

King Henry VIII becomes embroiled in a diplomatic dispute over territory with Prince Charles of Castille, and sends a delegation of diplomats, including More, to negotiate. The negotiations are even-tempered but not immediately successful, and both sides break off for a few days to await further instructions from their rulers. In this time, More travels to Antwerp, where he spends time with his friend, Peter Giles. One day, More spots Giles speaking with a bearded man whom More takes to be a ship's captain. Giles introduces More to Hythloday, and while it turns out that Hythloday is a world traveler, he is a philosopher rather than a captain. The three get along well and decide to return to Giles's garden to converse.

There, Hythloday relates the history of his travels. He accompanied the famed explorer Amerigo Vespucci on three of his four voyages. On the last of these ventures, he decided to remain behind at a garrisoned fort with a few of Vespucci's men rather than return to Portugal. From the garrison, he traveled with five other men through various countries, eventually crossing the equator. By luck, he was on a ship that was blown off course to Ceylon (Sri Lanka). From there, it was easy to find a ship headed to Calcutta and then another back to Portugal. During this time, Hythloday proved a keen observer of social practices, and he relates both the absurd and the practical to More and Giles. More explains to the reader that while all of Hythloday's tales are interesting, the most intriguing is his description of the time he spent among the Utopians, the inhabitants of the island of Utopia. It is this description that More will paraphrase for the reader. Before beginning though, More explains that he thinks it is important to describe the conversation that led up to Hythloday's description of Utopian society.

Analysis

Sir Thomas More did, indeed, travel to Flanders on behalf of King Henry VIII for the purpose of negotiating with the Spanish. An actual man named Peter Giles did live in Flanders, and the two being friends, it is likely they spent time together. The events described by the character More, however, are fictional. Though occasional readers mistook Hythloday for a real man, Sir Thomas More had no intention of hiding

the fictiveness of his story. His methods of illumination, though, were perhaps too esoteric; Hythloday is described as a man who knew some Latin and a great deal of Greek, supposedly clueing the reader in to the Greek origin of Hythloday's name, which means "speaker of nonsense." All the names of the peoples and cities Hythloday mentions in his travels are similar clues. Utopia, for example is a pun on two Greek words, Eutopia (good place) and Outopia (no place). Sadly, very few people knew Greek at the time Sir Thomas More wrote.

The fictional frame of Utopia allows Sir Thomas More to dramatize the discussion of issues and thereby explore those issues from multiple sides. It is worth noting, as does the critic David Wootton, that while More has the same name as Sir Thomas More, the pronoun for "I" in the language of Utopia is "he". Here, Sir Thomas More gives a subtle clue that while More bears his name and perhaps some of his views, Hythloday (the "he" who is also an "I") also embodies aspects of Sir Thomas More's beliefs and ideas. The fictional frame further allows Sir Thomas More to explore issues that, in a non-fiction work, might get him into trouble. It is no accident that Sir Thomas More gave his name to one of the conservative characters in the book that basically defends the status quo. The fictional More vociferously disagrees with Hythloday's more radical propositions such as the eradication of private property, and in doing so provides a sort of cover for Sir Thomas More. The disagreement by his namesake seems to imply, at least on the surface, that Sir Thomas More also disagrees with Hythloday. Of course, this is not true, but the simple fact of More's disagreement with Hythloday would make it hard to attack Sir Thomas More for Hythloday's views.

Sir Thomas More wrote Book 1 of Utopia in two parts. The first version served only as an introduction to Book 2, while the second version is far more subtle and explores many issues of More's day. The first version of Book 1 ended just before More's final sentence explaining that before going into a description of Utopia, he thought it would be worthwhile to describe the conversation leading up to that discussion.

Chapter 2: On Philosophy and Counseling a King

Summary

More and Giles are so impressed with the political and social insight Hythloday displays during his description of the countries through which he traveled that they suggest he attach himself to some king in order to put his great knowledge and understanding to public use. The beauty of such a course, according to More and Giles, will be that Hythloday would put himself in position to help the common people, his family and friends, and himself. Hythloday disagrees, first saying that

he has no desire for personal wealth or power and feels no further debt to his friends or family since he already dispersed his wealth among them when he left on his travels. As for being a benefactor of the public, Hythloday rejects the notion that a royal counselor can have any such effect. He argues that princes are interested in war rather than peace, in conquering new territory rather than finding better ways to govern their own. He further argues that men trying to curry favor, whether wise or foolish, will always meet the advice of the prince's favorites, with approval. In such an atmosphere, the advice of an outsider, no matter how wise, would meet with disdain.

Analysis

The exchange between More and Hythloday can be seen as a conflict between two separate ways of thought. Hythloday adheres to a belief in the purity of the philosophical ideal of truth; More has a more pragmatic belief that such purity has no value and that it must be tempered and put to public use, even if that means compromising the original ideal. This is a classic political and philosophical conflict, with roots spread at least as far back as Plato's ideal Republic and Aristotle's scathing response that the Republic simply could never function as a state.

It is worthwhile also to remember, though, that More and Hythloday can both be interpreted as aspects of Sir Thomas More. The issue of whether to join the service of the King or remain a philosopher was one that Sir Thomas More constantly struggled with in his life. At the time he wrote Utopia, this question was of particular interest to him, as he was on the cusp of joining the King's service. The argument between More and Hythloday can therefore be seen as an internal argument Sir Thomas More was having with himself. The struggle between remaining free to pursue the ideal and pragmatically compromising that purity for the sake of social utility is an important theme in Sir Thomas More's life, right down to his final decision to abandon pragmatism for the ultimate ideal of martyrdom.

Chapter 3. Conditions in England

Summary

As an example to his point about not wanting to be counselor to a king, Hythloday describes a dinner he once attended in England with Cardinal Morton, who was then Chancellor to Henry VII. At this dinner was a lawyer who begins, in intelligent discourse to support the policy of capital punishment for the crime of theft, and yet expresses amazement that so many continued to steal. Hythloday speaks up, exclaiming that

the lawyer should not be surprised, since capital punishment of thieves "is contrary to justice and of no benefit to the public." He claims that capital punishment is at once too harsh a penalty and not a good deterrent. Theft does not deserve death, and death will not stop a person from stealing in order to put food on his table. A far better policy, Hythloday advocates, would simply be to make sure that everyone has enough to eat. The lawyer responds that such is already the case--men can choose to work or they can choose to steal. Hythloday disagrees, outlining a number of social, political, and economic realities that in fact produce a never-ending stream of thieves. First, maintaining a standing army creates a population of soldiers who in bad times make very good and cold-blooded thieves. Second, exploitative nobles barely allow peasants to survive without resorting to banditry. Finally, the "enclosure movement," which transforms arable land into private pastures, steals peasants' livelihoods while simultaneously creating an oligopoly (ownership by the wealthy few) that raises the price of bread and wool. In short, Hythloday claims that English society is implicitly engaged in "manufacturing thieves and then blaming them for being thieves."

The lawyer begins a response that is obviously hollow and dull, but is soon cut off by Cardinal Morton. The Cardinal asks Hythloday what would be a better punishment for theft, in terms of both amplitude and deterrence. Hythloday begins by noting that God commanded man not to kill fellow man; the existence of capital punishment, therefore, puts man-made laws above God's law, an obvious blasphemy. Hythloday also notes the practical idiocy of having the same punishment for theft and homicide, meaning that there is nothing deterring a thief from also being a murderer. To describe a better means of punishment, Hythloday invokes the example of the Polylerites, who force thieves to return stolen goods to their victims. These thieves are not treated badly, they are well fed and treated with respect, but they are forced to perform hard labor for the rest of their lives. If these thieves commit any further crime, then they are put to death. This system of punishment, Hythloday observes, "is directed at eliminating crime, not criminals."

The lawyer claims that the policies of the Polylerites could not be instituted in England without tearing English society apart. The other members of the dinner party rush to agree. The Cardinal musingly responds that it would not be clear how the Polylerite policies would affect England unless they were tested. With this endorsement of Hythloday's ideas, the members of the dinner party begin to praise what they had just been ridiculing

Analysis

Hythloday's description of his dinner with Cardinal Morton has a number of textual layers. First, it proves his point that at court

counselors who are more interested in wealth and power than truth or rationality will judge his ideas.

Second, it is a sardonic attack on lawyers (one of Sir Thomas More's many occupations and one which does not exist in his Utopia). More broadly, it is an attack on those who speak to hear themselves talk without giving any rational thought to the subject of their discourse. The lawyer, with his haughty hollowness, is a caricature of such a man, and is held up to ridicule by Hythloday, Morton, and by Sir Thomas More.

Third, the dinner scene provides Sir Thomas More with the opportunity to discuss current social issues in England, such as the use of capital punishment in crimes of theft and the exploitative nature of the enclosure movement. Hythloday's argument finds fault with the practice on both religious and secular grounds and is so convincing in its portrayal of capital punishment as both immoral and ineffective that it serves as a condemnation of the practice throughout England.

Finally, through Hythloday's articulation of society as a series of interwoven threads of structures of society as both causes and effects, Sir Thomas More demonstrates a dramatic originality and importance as a social theorist. The understanding that the actions of individuals are caused by the structures of wealth and power in society was a remarkable insight for the time. Many of Sir Thomas More's contemporaries, for example, still believed in the Great Chain of Being, a conception of society that held each individual's social and political status as directed by God

Chapter 4. The Fool and the Friar

Summary

Hythloday now comes to a point in his description of his dinner with Cardinal Morton that he terms "ridiculous." He says he is unsure whether this story is worth the telling, but decides to tell it anyway.

After Hythloday finishes speaking, someone comments that Hythloday has managed to create a policy dealing with criminals and vagabonds, and asks how to deal with the old and the sick, who are often reduced to begging. A man Hythloday describes as a fool who was always trying to draw laughter takes a stab at the problem. This man decrees that all male beggars would be made "lay brothers" of Benedictine monasteries, and all women be made nuns. According to Hythloday, Cardinal Morton takes this as a good joke, though others take the idea seriously. A friar responds that begging will remain as long as there are friars, referring to the fact that friars collect money for their religious order through begging. The fool wittily responds that the friars would already have been arrested as vagabonds. At this, the friar becomes incensed. He curses the fool with biblical references, and threatens him

with excommunication. Cardinal Morton defuses the situation by dismissing the fool, and, soon after, the Cardinal himself goes off to bed, dismissing everyone.

Hythloday now apologizes to More and Giles for telling such a long story, but insists it was necessary to make his point. He wanted to show how the Cardinal's associates had only disdain for his views until the Cardinal himself showed interest, at which point they all became uncritical. They, in fact, became so uncritical, that they then almost accepted the advice of the fool as a serious proposal. This example, Hythloday claims, will demonstrate the lack of acceptance he will receive at the hands of courtiers

Analysis

The meaning of the story about the fool and the friar is not obvious. Hythloday himself claims not to know why he tells the story. Eventually, he claims the story shows how men form judgments not on the merit of the proposal put before them but wholly in response to the judgments formed by the men in power. Judgments, then, are not a process of rational thought, but rather a means of currying favor. The story can be seen as an example of such judgment making, but Hythloday's previous description of the reaction to his proposals before and after Cardinal Morton displayed his approval of them was a far superior example and needed little further support.

A second interpretation, offered by David Wootton, argues that the fool provides a third alternative between the worldly More and the philosophical Hythloday. The fool, Wootton claims, represents Christian Folly, a distinct notion of Humanist thought first conceived by Erasmus in Praise of Folly. Christian Folly is the understanding that a man who acts according to the laws of Christianity, independent of his wisdom or intelligence, will be seen as acting in folly. Christian Folly claimed that Christianity did not mesh with European culture at large, no matter what those in power claimed. The fool, in this conception, is a jester, a man who pokes fun at the inconsistencies of society and yet is treated with condescension. This evocation of Christian Folly in the form of the fool is meant, according to Wootton, to remind the reader of Utopia that while the real world can never be perfect and Utopia is a figment of the imagination, the Kingdom of Heaven is real and imminent. Utopia is a book advocating social reform, but its deepest hope remains religious. Wootton's argument, though convincing in its textual analysis, can prove difficult to grasp for the simple reason that it hinges on an understanding of a Humanist body of knowledge to which most modern readers have had no exposure. To better understand the idea of Christian Folly, the best work is probably the source, Erasmus's Praise of Folly.

Chapter 5 Further Disagreement

Summary

More states that the insight Hythloday has displayed in his story only emphasizes what a superior job Hythloday would do as a King's counselor. Hythloday disagrees once more, stating that until Plato's prediction that Kings will be philosophers becomes true, no king will be impressed with the advice given by philosophers.

Hythloday gives another example, imagining himself a counselor in the French court. The French King wants to maintain his control of Milan and recover the area around Naples, and the courtiers are coming up with plans. He describes a number of possible plans involving playing different states against each other and numerous secret treaties, and then describes the reaction of the other courtiers when he, Hythloday, proposes that they should forget about expanding French territory and concentrate instead on governing well the territory France already holds. More concedes that Hythloday would be laughed at. Hythloday, in a groove, gives another example, describing a King and his counselors coming up with the best means for the king to raise money. Hythloday wonders what would be the response to his proposal that all of the proposed policies, no matter how intricate, are faulty because the assumptions behind them are faulty; the king's safety depends not on his own riches, but on the wealth of his subjects. What if, Hythloday asks, he explained that a ruler should rule according to the interests of the people, not his own?

More again concedes that Hythloday's advice would not be accepted. But More replies that Hythloday is taking a wrong-headed view. Instead of engaging in "ivory-tower theorizing, which makes no allowance for time and place," he should employ a form of philosophy that is better suited to politics, that adapts itself to the circumstances of a situation and tries to do what it can.

Hythloday responds to More by saying that to adopt such a malleable philosophy would be tantamount to lying, since he knows the speeches that he just delivered to be true. Hythloday comments that if it is necessary to suppress all policies or ideas that do not fit with the evil habits of human beings, then the teachings of Christ will also have to be suppressed. He is of the view that even more than Hythloday's speeches, Christ's teachings are at odds with the customs of humankind. He notes that some cunning preachers have in fact molded the teachings of Christ, but that such an action only allows people to be bad without troubling their consciences. Hythloday insists he could accomplish nothing as a counselor: he would either disagree with the policies of other advisors

and be ignored, or agree with them and support the ludicrous status quo.

Analysis

The extended discussion between More and Hythloday has a double purpose. The examples provided by Hythloday are social commentary and criticism of European political practices. The examples--which are supported as being valid representations of European politics by the fact that More does not disagree--demonstrate the extent to which personal greed and pride warps politics. In showing how advice designed to create a well-governed and wealthy state for all inhabitants would not be accepted, Hythloday demonstrates the extreme corruption and irrationality of European politics. He further shows that in its emphasis on greed and money, these Christian societies in fact show very little resemblance to Christian doctrine. Hythloday will soon develop the theme of the corruption of European society from Christian values by illustrating exactly how Utopians avoided such a thing from happening.

The argument also elaborates the relation between the worldly pragmatic More and the idealist philosopher Hythloday. Hythloday claims that his proposals, though rational and beneficial, will not be accepted and so there is no use in joining a King's counsel. More argues that though the ideal will never be accepted, the only way to make any sort of beneficial social change is through interaction with the apparatus of power and piecemeal compromise. Each has a valid point, but what is most evident is that neither can convince the other of his position. More and Hythloday truly offer two separate alternatives, with very little room for compromise between them. The choice for one seems a choice against the other.

Chapter 6 Common Property

Summary

Having made his point, Hythloday presents his view that his proposals, which are just and will create prosperity, will never be accepted until the idea of private property is abolished and communal property is established. Private property, Hythloday argues, makes the many far more wretched than the few, and even puts the few ill at ease for fear of the dissatisfied masses. He invokes the name of Plato, who in The Republic calls for communal property as the basis for the ideal city.

More disagrees, claiming a country with communal property will have no prosperity. The people will have no incentive to work, since they will be fed by the labor of others. In More's eyes, the lack of private property will also eliminate all respect for authority, and with this loss

the chance at bloodshed and conflict will increase.

Hythloday retorts that More thinks this way because he has no living model on which to base his understanding. Hythloday, however, has been to Utopia and seen a society of communal property in operation. Hythloday describes the effort this country has put into curing social ills. He also describes their technical capabilities, explaining how a ship carrying Egyptian and Roman sailors once shipwrecked on the island; from these men, the Utopians gleaned virtually all of the technical skills of those two great empires. Hythloday notes that he believes it will likely be a great time before Europe adopts any Utopian practices, even though they are superior to Europe's own.

More and Giles ask Hythloday to tell them as much as he can about the island of Utopia, and he agrees. Before they begin, though, the three agree to take a rest and have some lunch.

Analysis

Being one of the central arguments of Utopia, it is unsurprising that the dispute over communal versus private property should provide a segue way between the two books of Utopia. More's negative response to Hythloday's call for communal property, with its emphasis on the irreconcilability of human nature with such a social arrangement, is classically Aristotelian, and is still used today to criticize socialist and communist social models. Utopia quite clearly agrees with Hythloday, however, and for this reason Utopia has long been a favorite text of Marxist critics. However, Hythloday's (and Thomas More's) reasons for advocating communal property are religious at heart, and therefore quite different from the atheist, economic foundations of Marxist beliefs. This is not to say that the two conceptions of common property do not in any way overlap; both are looking to annihilate exploitation, but the basis behind them spring from very different sources. Holding property communally is the way of life Jesus instructed his apostles to follow, and Hythloday sees flowing from that commandment a number of corresponding virtues, such as the reduction of pride, greed, poverty, irrationality, and exploitation of the poor by the wealthy. The ways in which communal property is the basis for such a social transformation is developed later in the book.

In the Utopians' mastery of the technology brought to them by the fortuitous shipwreck of ancient Egyptians and Romans rests a secondary

of Utopia: the belief in technology and technological innovation as a means toward progress. Such a concept is part of the bedrock of modernity, but it was quite foreign in a world that was just beginning to produce technological innovations beyond those of the Romans. The society of More's time was unsure of technology, and did not quite believe that the progress it brought would be permanent. Utopians have no such

doubts. Whenever they come across new technology, they do not simply use it, they master the techniques behind it. Technology, for them, is a means to a better life.

BOOK 2

Chapter 7 Geography and History of Utopia

Summary

Utopia occupies a crescent-shaped island that curves in on itself, enclosing a large bay and protecting it from the ocean and wind. The bay functions as a huge harbor. Submerged rocks, the locations of which are known only to Utopians, impede access to the bay. The bay allows for easy internal shipping and travel, but makes any sort of external attack or unwanted contact unlikely. This allows the Utopians to remain as isolated as they want to be.

At one time in its history Utopia was called Abraxa. Filled with uncouth and fractious inhabitants, the land that is now an island was then connected to the mainland by an isthmus. The great General Utopus conquered the land, and then set his army and the conquered inhabitants to destroying the isthmus. Utopus inspired great loyalty and effort, and the work was finished remarkably fast.

The present-day island has fifty-four cities, all with the same basic structure, architecture, language, customs, and laws. All citizens are within once day's walk of their nearest neighbor. The city of Amaurot is the political center of the island, simply because it is the city most accessible to all the other cities. Each year, three representatives from each city meet in Amaurot to make island-wide policy.

Analysis

Book Two of Utopia is presented to the reader as a direct discourse on various aspects of Utopian society. It is, however, important to remember the fictional frame in which this discourse exists. Book Two is in fact More's paraphrase of Hythloday's description of Utopia. Between Thomas More the author and Hythloday the teller of the story is a remove of two fictional levels mediated by More the character, who does not agree with the more radical proposals Hythloday makes.

Hythloday begins by discussing the geography and history of Utopia, each of which proves perfect for nurturing an ideal society. Utopia occupies an island that is as isolated as it wants to be; the Utopians interact with the rest of the world on their terms. Utopia needs

no real external resources, is well defended against any sort of attack, is fruitful enough to carry on a surplus in trade, and allows for easy transport of goods and people within its own territory. With the story of General Utopus the ideal geography is given a source: the island was built, cut off from the mainland thousands of years ago. General Utopus conquered the territory and installed in a single historical moment the roots of the present-day Utopian society. Utopia, then, did not develop in a way comparable to any other state in the history of mankind. Its geography and history can only be described as ideal. Implicit in the recognition that an ideal society can only emerge out of ideal circumstances is More's criticism that Hythloday's "ivory-tower theorizing" cannot have any effect in a world that, by its very nature, is not ideal. The ideal society of Utopia is not presented by Thomas More as a real possibility for other nations to mimic. Thomas More admits as much by describing Utopia only within a fictional frame. Utopia may be ideal, but in the very structure of Utopia is the understanding that the ideal can never be attained and instead can only be used as a measuring stick.

The description of the cities introduces a general fact of Utopian life: homogeneity. Everything in Utopia is as similar as it possibly can be. According to Hythloday the cities are almost indistinguishable from each other. They have virtually the same populations, architecture, layouts, and customs. It is interesting to note how this theme of sameness is seized upon by both Utopian and Dystopian works of literature (e.g., 1984 or Brave New World). The former sees in homogeneity an end to injustice while the latter sees an end to creativity, self-expression, and the autonomy of the individual. It is interesting, also, though as a tangent to Utopia rather than a theme dealt with by the book, that More imagines a rational community as being a homogenous community. Such a conception necessarily posits that all rational thought leads in the same direction, toward the same eternal truths. Further, it posits that in matters of social theory there are single, definite truths to be found

Chapter 8 Agriculture, Cities, and Government

Summary

Each city is surrounded by farmland, and every member of each city spends occasional two-year stints in the country doing agricultural work. Cities do not attempt to expand their frontiers; they think of the surrounding areas as land to be worked rather than as estates to be owned. When one city has an agricultural surplus, it exports with no charge to its neighbors. Those neighbors do the same in return. When it is time to harvest, extra men are sent from the city to help out. Harvesting usually takes little more than a day.

Cities are distinguishable from each other only by those differences imposed by geographical location and topography. Hythloday describes them all by describing one, choosing the capital city, Amaurot, as his subject. Amaurot is spread along a tidal river that is bridged only at its farthest point from the sea, so that ships can access all of the city quays. A second fresh water stream runs through the city. The source of this stream is enclosed within the city walls, so that the city will never be without a source of drinking water.

A thick wall surrounds the city. Its streets are rationally planned to allow for easy movement of traffic. Buildings are well maintained. Every house has a front door that opens on a street and a back door that opens onto a garden. No doors can be locked; there is no private space. Houses are all well built and three stories high, with brick or flint facades.

Households are split into groups of thirty, and every year each of these groups chooses an administrator, called a phylarch. Every ten phylarches operate under a higher official, called a senior phylarch. Senior phylarches meet in a committee chaired by the chief executive. Under pain of death, no person may discuss issues of state outside of the committee, so as to insure no one can conspire against the government and install tyrannical rule. They operate under the rule that no issue brought to committee can be decided upon until the next day, so as to remove any chance of over-hasty action.

Analysis

The communal method of agricultural work was a revolutionary idea for its time for a variety of reasons. In England and Europe agricultural work was an occupation of the poor, disdained by those with any wealth or station. In Utopia, those class distinctions are broken down; working on the land is made a necessary part of life, and the stigma of that work is removed. The sentence stating that Utopians think of the land as something to be worked rather than to be owned is an obvious reference to the enclosure movement that Hythloday attacked in Book 1. The enclosure movement in Britain transformed the wool and agricultural market into an oligopoly that simultaneously drove up prices and deprived small landholders of their livelihood. Utopian agriculture, for that matter, does not operate on any market system whatsoever. Instead of selling off its surplus, a city freely gives it away. As can be seen in its agricultural policy, the economic structures of markets and money simply do not exist in Utopia. More earlier claimed that without the competition inspired by the market Utopian productivity can't possibly match that of a market-based economy. Hythloday's response will be seen later in his description of Utopia.

Amaurot is laid out much as London is. Amaurot's tidal river finds a corollary in the Thames, and bridges at the farthest possible point from

the sea span both rivers in order to provide the greatest number of accessible quays. Thomas More was certainly aware of the resemblance of Amaurot to London, and no doubt created this similarity on purpose. In creating Amaurot as a likeness to London, it is almost as if he wishes the two to be compared in the reader's mind. It should be noted that Hythloday's description of the buildings of Utopian cities were not far off from the cities of Flanders, where Thomas More wrote and set part of the book. Travelers to these cities were often amazed to see their cleanliness and the quality of buildings. This is an interesting fact in that it suggests the possibility that some aspects of the ideal can be achieved in the flawed world, that perhaps More is correct in his argument with Hythloday after all.

Utopian politics seems a strange mixture of freedom and repression. Utopia employs a democratic government, its people represented by two layers of elected public officials, the higher level selected by the lower level. However, the rule abolishing on pain of death any discussion of politics outside of the political arena seems incredibly repressive. This repression, though, is a fair repression in the sense that all citizens of Utopia are equally bound by it. This is a very different repression than those in place in Europe, where the poor and weak were repressed by the rich and powerful. Utopia is operating under a rule of law, with all citizens subject to that law, even if the law itself strikes modern readers as excessive.

Hythloday trumpets the lack of private space as a wonderful idea promoting friendship and stifling pettiness and gossip. Again, though, in the loss of private space is a correspondent loss of privacy and autonomy. Utopia is a society in which everyone watches everyone else, much as everyone does in George Orwell's nightmare world of 1984. There is often little differentiating one man's Utopia from another's dystopia.

Chapter 9 Occupations, Workload, and Productivity

Summary

As mentioned earlier, all people are engaged in farm work. They are taught theories of farming in school, and practical skills in the field.

Other than farm work, every person, woman and man, has a specific occupation. The most common trades are spinning and weaving, masonry, blacksmithing, and carpentry. Women, because they are less strong, are employed in trades that do not demand heavy work. Young boys usually learn their trade through apprenticeship to their fathers, but if a boy shows a particular desire or aptitude for a different career, arrangements are made. People are allowed to apprentice and learn more than one trade, and then practice whichever they prefer, unless the city

has a particular need for one rather than the other. Nobody is allowed to lounge while on the job. Those few who do are punished.

However, unlike European societies, working people in Utopia are not forced to toil for unconscionable hours each day. The Utopian day is broken into twenty-four hours; Utopians only work for six hours per day, three before lunch and three after. Utopians also sleep on average about eight hours a day. This leaves them with a great deal of free time, which they are free to do with as they will, as long as they do not spend it in debauchery or idleness. Most people use their free time to engage in intellectual pursuits. They also involve themselves in music, gardening, and physical activity. Those people who demonstrate a keen love and aptitude for intellectual pursuits are identified early and, as long as they are diligent in their studies, they are exempt from physical labor. If a laborer should demonstrate some great skill in his recreational intellectual efforts, he too can become exempt from is work if he desires.

Though the Utopians work such short hours they do not suffer from any lack of productivity. Though Europeans work far longer hours, European populations are also filled with a far larger percentage of people who do no productive work at all, including most women, much of the clergy, the rich gentlemen and nobles and all of their retainers, and all of the beggars. Also, because the Utopians diligently maintain everything they build, they have to expend far less energy undertaking rebuilding projects than Europeans, who instead follow a cycle of build, watch degenerate, rebuild. Because of the general lack of Utopian vanity and an understanding of the value of utility over style, the goods Utopians use are also far less difficult to produce. All of these factors combine so that though the Utopian workday is relatively short, Utopian society is far more productive than European states, in terms of both necessities and modest luxuries

Analysis

The degree of choice Utopians can exercise in choosing their vocation likely strikes modern readers as incredibly small. Compared to Europeans of the sixteenth century, however, the range is not small at all. True, a European noble was freer to do what he would--from composing poetry to lying around eating figs--than any Utopian. But the European lower classes had absolutely no mobility in terms of job. If a peasant was born to agricultural parents, he had little choice but to work the land as well. The fact that Utopia allowed all of its citizens to pursue careers purely on the basis of interest was a novel idea.

Hythloday also explains why More's market-based economies are not vastly more productive than Utopia's non-market, communal economy. Whereas one particular individual in a market- based economy who works incredibly long hours in order to beat out his competition is

quite certainly more productive than the average Utopian worker, for every one of the productive people in a market-based economy. Hythloday explains that there are innumerable people from nobles to beggars who make no productive contribution. In contrast, no one in Utopia is phenomenally productive, but everyone is fairly productive. More's comment that in a communal society no one would feel the compunction to work for the simple reason that they would be fed by the work of others is answered in the Utopian law punishing all laziness and lounging on the job. However, again, such a law seems to imply a repression that most modern readers might find unpleasant. In acknowledging the need for such a law Utopian society admits to the flawed nature of man. It is not, then, that More's criticism of communal property is wrong, but rather that it can be overcome through the proper structuring of society. Utopia is not ideal because its people are perfect, but rather because its laws make it so that Utopian citizens must act perfectly despite their inherent failings as humans.

Because Utopian society is so productive its citizens have a lot of free time. Again, a generally cynical understanding of human nature is betrayed in the laws outlawing idleness or debauchery, but this cynicism has the positive effect of pushing Utopians into intellectual or athletic pursuits. The process through which intellectuals are uncovered depends only on individual merit, a remarkable idea in an age dominated by privilege and birthright

Chapter 10 Education, Science and Philosophy

Summary

Though, as has been mentioned earlier, only certain accomplished people are allowed to give up manual labor for intellectual studies, every Utopian child receives a thorough education. The Utopians believe that it is through education that the values and dispositions of citizens are molded. The success of the Utopian educational system is evident in the fact that while most Utopians are engaged in manual labor as a career, in their free time Utopians choose to follow intellectual pursuits. Utopians conduct all of their studies in their native language.

In science the Utopians are rational and accomplished. They have the same general level of understanding as Europeans in the fields of music, logic, arithmetic, and geometry. They are adept at astronomy and no one believes in astrology. They are able to predict changes in weather, though, like the Europeans, the underlying causes of these changes remain at the moment beyond their grasp.

In philosophy, the Utopians are uninterested in the abstract suppositions that are the rage in Europe and which Hythloday finds empty. The foremost topic of Utopian philosophy is the nature of happiness, and the relation of happiness to pleasure. In such matters they ground their reason in religion, believing reason alone is ill equipped

to handle such an investigation.

Utopians believe the soul is immortal and that there exists an afterlife in which the deeds of life are rewarded or punished. They further believe that if people were skeptical of an afterlife, all intelligent people would pursue physical pleasure and ignore all higher moral laws. Belief in an afterlife means that pleasure exists only in acts of virtue, because it is these acts that will ultimately be rewarded.

Utopians make a distinction between true and counterfeit pleasure. True pleasure involves any movement of body or mind in which a person takes a natural delight, such as reflecting on true knowledge, eating well, or exercising. Counterfeit pleasures are those sensations that are not naturally delightful, but that distorted desires have tricked people into believing they pleasurable. Examples of such counterfeit pleasures are pride in appearance, wealth, or honorific titles. Pursuit of these counterfeit pleasures often interfere with pursuit of true pleasures, and so Utopians do everything in their power to root counterfeit pleasures out of their society.

Utopians believe that their understanding of the relationship between pain and pleasure is the height of reason. The only possible way to gain a deeper understanding, they hold, would be if God were to send some religion down from heaven to "inspire more sacred convictions."

Analysis

The Utopian belief in education as a right and a necessity is surprisingly familiar to modern readers but a far cry from the policies of Europe in which only the rich and powerful could hope to be educated. Utopian education, moreover, is systematized and uniform, unlike the European system that often involved independent private tutors and certainly differed from school to school. Through this rational educational system, Utopians felt they could shape the morality and values of their children, to instill in their children the ability to be good Utopians. Education, then, in Utopia is not just a means of intellectual enlightenment; it is a program of moral and cultural development designed to make sure that Utopia will always replenish itself through its children.

The reference to science is once again an effort to show the irrationality of Europe. Thomas More's Europe was a society rapidly expanding its scientific knowledge. Yet despite its scientific achievements Europe was filled with believers in astrology, which had no rational or scientific basis whatsoever. This contrast displays that while Europe has the means to think and act rationally, it often does not seem to have the commitment. Utopia, on the other hand, exists at almost exactly the same level of scientific understanding as Europe, but is committed to rational thought, and so astrology and other similar superstitions do not

exist. Similarly, the discussion of Utopian philosophy, which pays no heed to the suppositions of the new European philosophers, is meant to be a biting criticism of the state of European thought. Thomas More's displeasure with the state of European philosophy was not unique to Utopia. During the period in which he wrote Book 2 of Utopia, Thomas More wrote a long letter disparaging the new European philosophers and logicians.

In the matter of the Utopian investigation into the nature of happiness, Utopian reason comes to the conclusion that it is ill-equipped to handle such an inquiry on its own. This seems a strange outcome for reason to come to, and this strangeness underlines a tension between reason and religion that became more evident as the Renaissance led eventually into the Enlightenment and beyond. However, for Thomas More and the Humanists, reason and religion went hand in hand. There simply was no question of the eternal truth of Christ and Christianity. The Utopian investigation of happiness, which begins by categorizing types of happiness and ends with the conclusion that happiness lies in acting virtuously because virtue will be rewarded in the afterlife, comes to much the same conclusion as Christianity. Also, Utopians believe that the only thing better than their philosophical investigation into the nature of things would be a divine revelation, which is exactly what Christianity conceives itself to be. By setting up this situation in which his ideal society, Utopia, venerates the religion of the European society he is trying to criticize. Thomas More manages to endorse the tenets of Christianity itself as the only outcome of rational thought while at the same time forcefully using the model of Utopia to criticize Europe. If the Utopians, with their inferior understanding of the nature of things, can act rationally and justly, then why can't the Europeans, who have the divine revelations of Christ, act similarly? The question is a damning one for Europe as a whole.

Chapter 11 Slaves, Euthanasia, Marriage, Treaties

Summary

Slaves, in Utopia, are never bought. Utopian slaves are either people captured by the Utopians in battle, people who have committed a horrible crime within Utopia, or people who have committed crimes in other countries and been condemned to death, and saved from their fates by the Utopians. The children of slaves are not born into slavery. Slaves work constantly, and are always chained.

Sick Utopians receive tremendous care, but there are still people who become terminally ill and suffer greatly. In such instances, the doctors, priests, and government leaders urge the patient to recognize that they are no longer able to fulfill the duties of life. That they are a

burden to both others and themselves, and that they should put their hope in the afterlife and choose to let themselves die. Those who agree are let from life during sleep, without pain. Those who do not agree are treated as kindly and tenderly as before.

Women cannot marry until they reach the age of 18; men must be 22. No premarital sex is allowed; if anyone is caught they are forbidden to marry for life. This policy exists because Utopians think that if promiscuity were allowed, no one would choose to marry. Before any marriage takes place, the bride and groom are, in the presence of a chaperone, shown to each other naked, so that neither is surprised by what they find come wedding day. It is a policy that seemed ridiculous to Hythloday, but he soon saw that their was some wisdom in it, as it allowed the man and woman to know exactly what they were committing to. Divorce is allowed only in cases of adultery or extraordinary abuse. Adulterers are condemned to become slaves.

Utopians believe that people should make the most of their physical attributes, but the use of cosmetics or tools of enhancement are disdained.

No one is allowed to campaign for public office. Public officials are not meant to be overbearing or awe-inspiring; rather they should be seen as fathers who the people voluntarily treat with respect. There are very few laws, all clearly written. Utopia has no lawyers. Utopian leaders and judges are immune to bribery because money does not exist.

Utopia never signs treaties with other countries because they believe a country's word should be good enough. They believe the very idea of a treaty implies that countries are naturally enemies rather than friends, and Utopians do not accept that interpretation of the world. Also, few countries in their immediate vicinity ever actually adhere to the treaties that they sign. Hythloday compares this lack of forthrightness with Europeans, sarcastically claiming that of course all Europeans abide by the treaties they sign.

Analysis

Slavery in Utopia is not a question of race, ethnicity, or belief. It is a question of moral behavior. Only criminals can become slaves, and the children of slaves are born free. The slavery that exists in Utopia does not, then, contain all of the moral repugnance we rightfully associate with slavery. The fact that slavery could be conceived of as existing even within a fictional, ideal society is a sign that ideal societies are products of their times, subject to the beliefs and prejudices of the world from which they spring.

Similarly, the description of hospital care is revealing of the state of medicine in the early sixteenth century. The idea that a very sick person would not want to go to a hospital seems unusual to a modern reader,

but during a time when it might be said that the only thing more dangerous then being sick was getting treated by a doctor, it is understandable. The Utopian practice of not only allowing but even encouraging euthanasia seems at odds with religious doctrine of the time, which believed suicide was a sin that would send its perpetrator to hell. However, euthanasia was a topic touched upon and supported by Erasmus, and Thomas More was certainly aware of that fact.

The marriage practices of the Utopians are called absurd by Hythloday and More, and seem absurd to the reader. It is not entirely clear what should be made of these practices, as they exist in what is supposedly an ideal society. A number of possibilities seem viable. Perhaps the marriage rites are another indication of the fact that while Utopia is near perfect, it is not actually an ideal society. Perhaps the marriage rites are supposed to be taken seriously, as an actual rational proposal. Perhaps they are simply a joke, since Thomas More was known to be fond of jokes. The text gives very little clue. The issue of divorce is a more concrete matter, and similar to that of euthanasia. The Catholic Church frowned on divorce even in the case of adultery, but Erasmus believed divorce was acceptable and necessary in certain situations. That divorce is allowed in Utopia is another indication that Utopian society was a realization of Erasmus's Humanist beliefs and arguments.

Visible in the rules guarding against adultery, pre-marital sex, and those abolishing campaigning for office is the Utopian understanding that mankind's baser instincts of lust and greed will never disappear. Utopian laws, for this reason, are formulated so as to powerfully discourage the vices inherent in human nature. These laws demonstrate that Utopia is not a society full of ideal people. Rather, it is a society that is formulated so that the inherent faults of man are contained as stringently as humanly possible.

Chapter 12 War

Summary

Utopians hate war and try to avoid it at all costs. They find no glory in the practice of killing, though they do constantly train and if pressed prove a mighty enemy. They engage in warfare only to protect themselves, their friends, or to free oppressed peoples.

Utopians would rather use cunning to win wars than brute strength. They consider strength to be a trait belonging to all animals, while only humans are intelligent. Thus, manly victories come through intelligent maneuverings rather than direct attacks. When a declaration of war is made, the Utopians first rely on propaganda; they secretly put up posters in enemy territory offering huge rewards for the assassination of the enemy leaders. They offer similar rewards to any of those leaders

who betray their fellows. Other nations condemn this behavior as dishonorable; the Utopians defend it with the argument that they are in fact humane, ending massive wars with very little bloodshed. Other tactics include causing dissension by, for example, promising the throne to an enemy ruler's brother if that brother will support the Utopian cause. In helping their friends, Utopians do not like to risk their own citizens, but they are unstinting in providing money and material.

When it is necessary for the Utopians to fight, they hire mercenaries, the Zapoletes, at unbeatable prices, and send their own generals to lead them. As a last resort, the Utopians themselves will fight. No Utopian is ever forcefully conscripted except in the case that Utopia itself should be invaded. Wives are allowed to accompany their husbands to war, fighting side by side. In battle, Utopians are dogged and tireless, buoyed as they are by the Utopian values instilled in them from childhood. In the event of victory, the Utopians never let things degenerate into a massacre. While fighting, they act to the best of their ability not to destroy the enemy's land or soil.

Analysis

The Utopian methods of war seem insane and dishonorable to More, Giles, and virtually everyone who comes in contact with them. Yet the Utopian hatred of war and unorthodox tactics have an origin in Erasmus's treatise condemning the legitimacy of warfare, Sweet is War. In the Utopian view, only reason separates man from animals, so cunning tricks that save lives are in fact more "manly" than a love of the glory of battle. It is interesting to note, however, that the Utopian means of winning war is entirely dependent on their ideal situation, situation meaning their isolation and ability to generate a great surplus in trade. The Utopians can thus follow their inclinations in warfare to perfection, using their money to hire mercenaries, distribute propaganda, and sow dissension in the enemy. But without this trade imbalance, which was created by Thomas More with a stroke of his pen, it is hard to see how the Utopians' war making methods could be successful. Still, perhaps it is not the success of the Utopian methods that is ultimately important. It is, rather, that in Utopia an alternative to standard European war practices is offered. These practices seem like folly, but it is the argument of Erasmus and Thomas More that the more closely something accords with Christianity, the more like folly it will seem, even though it is in fact quite wise

Chapter 13 Religion

Summary

A number of religions exist in Utopia. They all are similar in that they believe in a single god, but the nature of that god is very different, ranging from a sort of animism, to worship of an ancient hero, to worship of the sun or moon, to belief in a single omnipotent, ineffable god. This last religion, according to Hythloday, is in the process of becoming dominant, though all the religions practice complete tolerance of all the other religions. After Hythloday and his fellows spoke to the Utopians about Christ, a good number converted and began to learn as much as they could. These converts also were treated with the utmost respect by the faithful of other Utopian religions. In fact, the only belief that is not tolerated is atheism, as it is seen as immoral. If someone believes there is no afterlife, according to the Utopians, then that person will act selfishly in search of immediate physical and mental pleasure and not act virtuously in hope of future reward.

The different religions meet in the same churches run by the same priests, and services emphasize the similarities between the religions. If some religion demands a rite or prayer that might be offensive to another, then that rite must be performed in a home in private, not in the church.

Utopian priests are men of the highest moral and religious caliber, and, accordingly, there are very few of them. Almost no women are priests, but it is allowed that a woman could become a priest. Priests maintain the religious centers, educate the children, and praise good behavior while criticizing bad. The priests hold the highest power in the land; even the chief executive must listen to them. Before major religious holidays, women prostrate themselves before there husbands, and children before their parents, and all admit their wrongdoings. It is only with a clear conscience that people may attend services. At services all are attentive and incredibly respectful of the priests, and all acknowledge God to be their maker and ruler.

Analysis

It is hard to reconcile the almost absolute toleration advocated by Utopia with the fact that as Chancellor, Sir Thomas More played a central role in intensifying the persecution of Protestants. Perhaps all that can be done is to quote Hythloday's comment on the likelihood that a Utopian priest might become unjust or act irreligiously, "for human nature is subject to change." It is interesting to note, that Utopia preached toleration in a time just before the Reformation, while Thomas More began to persecute Protestants after the Reformation had attained

full flower. Biographical information aside, the toleration described in Utopia has a corollary in the writings of Erasmus, who went so far as to claim a sort of brotherhood with Muslims, claiming them as half-Christians and seeing in them less corruption than he often saw in Christians.

The Utopian priests are quite obviously meant to criticize European priests. Utopia gives two related reasons why there are so few Utopian priests. First, as a means of keeping up respect for the office, the number of priests is limited. Second, Utopians did not believe many people were moral or just enough to fulfill the priestly role, and so not many were made priests. In Europe, the venality, corruption, and often poor education of priests was a matter of public knowledge, humor, and criticism. The friar in Hythloday's story of dinner with Cardinal Morton is a perfect example, a man who barely knew Latin and who was subject to intense and uncontrollable personal rages. The face of the church was its priests, and Utopia implicitly claims that the face of the Catholic Church was covered in numerous warts.

The religious treatment of women is also rather interesting. The practice in which women must prostrate themselves to their husbands and admit their failings while the husbands must do nothing in return but forgive seems highly unfair, and demonstrates an assumption of superiority in the men. This is not all that surprising given the gender situation in the sixteenth century under which women were subservient to first their father, then their husband. However, women in Utopia can become priests, and this would have been shocking to Sir Thomas More's contemporaries. Even today, the Catholic Church does not allow female priests. At once, Utopia holds an implicit disregard for women, and offers them the chance at equality.

Chapter 14 Conclusion

Summary

Hythloday believes Utopia to be the greatest social order in the world. As he says, "Everywhere else people talk about the public good but pay attention to their own private interests. In Utopia, where there is no private property, everyone is seriously concerned with pursuing the public welfare." In Utopia, no man worries about food or impoverishment for themselves or any of their descendants. Unlike the rest of the world, where men who do nothing productive live in luxury, in Utopia, all people work and all live well. Only this, in Hythloday's mind, is truly just. Hythloday believes societies other than Utopia are merely conspiracies of

the rich, "whose objective is to increase their own wealth while the government they control claims to be a commonwealth concerned with the common welfare." These societies are realms of greed and pride. And pride causes men to measure their welfare not by their well being, but by having things that others lack, which is irrational and un-Christian. Only in Utopia has pride and all its attendant vices been eviscerated from society.

Hythloday finishes his narration and More comments that all three of them were too tired to discuss the portrait of Utopia that Hythloday had painted. They agree to get together soon in order to more fully analyze and argue over the merits of what was said. More does comment to the reader, however, that he thinks many of the Utopian ways of life are absurd, from their methods of warfare to religion, but most especially in the doctrine of communal property. It is from private property that all nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty spring, and it is these things, in More's view, that are the crowning glory of European society. Nevertheless, More also claims there are many Utopian policies (though which he leaves unidentified) that he would like to see employed in Europe, though he does not believe that wish will be soon fulfilled.

Analysis

Utopia ends, first with a rousing flourish by Hythloday in which he claims Utopia to be the most perfect of societies, followed by More's assessment that many Utopian policies are absurd, though some might be worthwhile to employ in Europe. The book gives very little indication of which of these two sides it most supports; More and Hythloday are interested by each other, but though More has learned much from Hythloday he has not been convinced that his initial position against communal property was wrong. In this ambiguous ending the book's overarching theme of worldly pragmatism versus philosophical idealism is crystallized: between the two a choice must be made. A choice for either comes with inherent limitations. Entering politics demands a sacrifice of idealism. Eschewing politics for the pure world of philosophy entails an inability to even try to push one's pure vision into reality. Utopia sits in the span between these two positions. It is a working society in which there is no evil, but the book can offer no means by which an existing society might be transformed into a Utopian model. But in the figure of the fool, of the patient figure of Christian Folly secure in the knowledge of the coming of the Kingdom of Christ, Utopia does offer a means out of the impasse it sees between More and Hythloday. Utopia offers a criticism of European society, offers a model against which that society can be measured and perhaps repaired, but the book ultimately concludes that the only way to perfection is through Christianity and the coming of Christ. One might argue that this is a

journey Thomas More himself took, constantly mediating between the ideals of Humanist philosophy and service to his king and country. Ultimately, he became a martyr for religious convictions that few others shared, and for that he was beatified.

Points to be noted while Understanding *Utopia*

More's Utopia has more than one meaning. Like any good piece of art Utopia is a complex work. There are many compelling contemporary forces working in the background and in the foreground there are elements ranging from sarcasm to pure imaginative alternatives to the evils prevalent in contemporary life. Let us try to understand the various elements separately to evolve an overall understanding

1,Fictional Framework:

There are always two important aspects in a piece of literature: technical aspects and the contentual aspects. They can be understood as first denotes to how the story is told and the second is what is the story. Impact of the story, strangely enough, lies on the synchronization of these two elements. The telling technique must match the nature of story and the creation of atmosphere must be well attended to for the make-believe of the story. All stories carry a unique atmosphere and they have their true meaning in that atmosphere only as we can very easily distinguish between a horror story and a romantic story for example. But this simple looking element of atmosphere or creating a background of story is not as simple as it has various elements to influence it. For example the framework of a narrative piece of work is dependent on elements like nature of reality in the story and the existence of fact, imagination or the judicious mix of the two- fiction.

Fiction as such came to be recognized in literature as late as eighteenth century. More had no examples of fiction in front of him as the closest to fiction in contemporary literature, English as well as Continental, were *Romances, which* did not suit to the story that he had in mind. So he created a situation that would suit his story. The story of Utopia have in it elements from many kinds beautifully interwoven into each other to get the desired impact. Let us see the elements and the impact they get.

Facts: Like other writers of pre eighteenth century, when novel emerged as a genre, More had no confidence of writing something that was not factual. So Utopia was written in a mode as if it was totally factual. And to achieve this More had placed certain historical facts in the story and incorporated them in the framework of the book that they camouflage the whole book as factual. The place called Flanders is the real place and More did go to flanders under the orders of the contemporary king of England. Same way Hythloday's world travels with Amerigo Vespucci is used to set as their discovery of Utopia. In those high days of renaissance voyage and discoveries of new lands and newer cultures and society was a common known fact. So the idea of discovery of Utopia and it unique way of life is used by More to provide a ground of

reality to otherwise imaginative land of Utopia. The whole book is presented in a form of either description or dialogue between Hythloday. All the issues that the book puts forth, moral or philosophic, are presented in "point of view" form, as opinion of certain individuals. Thus More manages to put forward his critique of contemporary evils and the possibility of alternative system. So by incorporating factual information into his book More not only gets help in make believe his story but also give a close to authentic description of his story.

IMAGINATION: Imagination is central to any piece of creativity and Utopia is no exception though the framework takes extra steps so that the imaginative looks real in this book. The life style of people of Utopia their social, political, moral, financial and cultural beliefs are all result of More's imagination as much as the very country is fruit of More's imagination. More was not a novice is clear from the meaning of the word "utopia", in Latin it means nowhere. So in the very title More has told us that the very auspices of utopia that he advocates in his book is purely imaginative, as it exists nowhere. Ranging from the idea of commonwealth to the moral and philosophic strain of life of the people of Utopia it is not exercised anywhere on land, sea or air but in More's mind.

Fiction: Fiction is something that is not being factual but may be real. The very definition seems to be describing More's book Utopia. The premises of Utopia may be imaginative but they are presented in so minute details that little doubt remains in reader's mind about the practicality or execution of those principles. The imaginative ideas about different walks of life are presented in view of real evils in contemporary England in particular and life in general that they present a workable and suitable alternative. The discussions of More and Hythloday check each and every possible merit and demerits of things in Utopia and in contemporary society. Though we recoganise the contemporary is real and the ideal is only imaginative but two things must be said about More ideal. First it is not a partial view of alternative society but a full and detailed view and second More is also aware that there are less chance of his alternative to be exercised as real so the book presents a critique of its own ideal. The character of More in the book and the author Sir Thomas More get so interpolated into each other that an uninitiated reader might confuse them as one and same. The fictional frame of Utopia allows Sir Thomas More to dramatize the discussion of issues and thereby explore those issues from multiple sides. It is worth noting, as does the critic David Wootton, that while More has the same name as Sir Thomas More, the pronoun for "I" in the language of Utopia is "he". Here, Sir Thomas More gives a subtle clue that while More bears his name and perhaps some of his views, Hythloday (the "he" who is also an "I") also embodies aspects of Sir Thomas More's beliefs and ideas. The fictional

frame further allows Sir Thomas More to explore issues that, in a non-fiction work, might get him into trouble. It is no accident that Sir Thomas More gave his name to one of the conservative characters in the book that basically defends the status quo. The fictional More vociferously disagrees with Hythloday's more radical propositions such as the eradication of private property, and in doing so provides a sort of cover for Sir Thomas More. The division into two parts has logic in the framework foundation as the first part creates the background of More's travel, meeting of Hythloday, exposing of contemporary evils through discussions and then the second part as possible alternate through details and debate on life in Utopia.

So we can justify that the materiel that More had in hand and the tradition that was available to More left him with no choice but with the one that he has used in his book. The fictional framework is one of the biggest successes of the book as the passage of time has proved that revolutionary ideas that the book stood for might be just imaginative as was seen in the fall of Soviet Russia and its idea of Commonwealth. The literary aspects of the book were not recognized till late. It is only when we realize that after many adventures and misadventures novel came to recognize the fiction as late as in mid-eighteenth century was actually a form of fiction very close to that More gives us in early sixteenth century in *Utopia.*

2, Contemporary England:

There is nothing new in reading literature as chronicle. Literature definitely reflects a picture of its contemporary society. Through various analogies writer after writer and critic after critic have established the role of literature as history. Thomas More's *Utopia* is no exception. Written in 1516, the book belongs to an era of which we don't have much literature and of an age, which is important in more than one ways. Renaissance was on full swing, Christianity and its contemporary model where under threat because of rising humanist values, political system and religious hierarchy were coming in conflict. The rising education and mass awareness were raising questions against the biased distribution of wealth and work and its impact on society. Aristocracy had lost its sheen and awe and democracy was yet to be born. So the book belongs to an era when British society was on flux. Medievalist forces were fighting their last battles and the sun of modern society was on horizon in the garb of renaissance. Let us try to highlight what kind of picture does Utopia reflect about different walks of British life.

Various issues about contemporary British society get our attention during the course of discussion among various characters in the book but the description of Hythloday's experiences in court is a major source. The ministers and counselors of the King are not man of knowledge and experience as no man of any intellectual worth wont like

to be the counselors king only wants yes-mans not the serious advisers. The issue of capital punishment to the thieves is another major issue. The relationship between the beggars and friars is another such issue. There are sufficient example to show that voices were rising against Oligopoly, which believes in concentration of wealth and work in favour of aristocrats. People are so hard pressed that they don't have even means to earn bread and when they resort to theft they face capital punishment. In words of Hythloday in third chapter it is a society that aims at killing the criminal, not the crime. It is against the very aegis of Christianity and humanity. The systems itself forces them towards crime and then eliminate them in name of justice. The book voices the agony of common man against a system where there is no difference between the penalty of as diverse crimes as homicide and theft- both get capital punishment. The emphasis is not on reforms and the common man tends to be criminal. The very state that is run in the name of religion and God is indulging in activities and policies that are anti humanity in general and anti-Christianity in particular. There is no difference left between a friar, a beggar and a thief in the eyes of the so-called elite. The sick and the old are looked down upon with contempt. The book outlines a number of social, political, and economic realities that in fact produce a never-ending stream of thieves. First, maintaining a standing army creates a population of soldiers who in bad times make very good and cold-blooded thieves. Second, exploitative nobles barely allow peasants to survive without resorting to banditry. Finally, the "enclosure movement," which transforms arable land into private pastures, steals peasants' livelihoods while simultaneously creating an oligopoly (ownership by the wealthy few) that raises the price of bread and wool. In short, the book claims that English society is implicitly engaged in "manufacturing thieves and then blaming them for being thieves." The book comes down very harsh on contemporary society but like a good critic it doesn't stop there only and evaluates the possible alternatives in describing and debating the options used in Utopia in comparison to England.

THE ROLE AND CHARACTER OF RAPHAEL NONSENSO HYTHLODAY IN UTOPIA

Hythloday's name has various interpretations when we translate it into modern day language and this leaves us gasping while rereading the book in light of these. A man named Nonsenso begins any debate at a disadvantage. What kind of information or argument can be expected of such an individual? Can he articulate a rational idea, deduce a logical conclusion? Is the authority of his discourse to be trusted? Or is he simply a man with a name and a nature that are in perfect agreement? These are all questions that Thomas More leaves us to ask of Raphael Nonsenso, the garrulous sailor-philosopher who describes and extols Utopia in the book of the same name.

From his memories of a five-year stay on the island, Raphael conjures up a thorough description of the social and political practices constituting the Utopian way of life, which he unabashedly proclaims "the happiest basis for a civilized community that will last for ever." The details of his speech are astounding and the extent of his knowledge staggering; he vividly describes everything from their wardrobes to their war tactics. It is a dazzling recounting, replete with all the details of fact and unburdened by the vague generalities of the imagination. And yet, at the end of the speech, More confesses to harboring "various objections." He does not call Raphael a liar, for to do so would be to call him a genius, as any man who could create such an enormous (and spontaneous) fiction must be. Indeed, More acknowledges Raphael's "undoubted learning and experience" while still insisting that Utopia seemed "in many cases perfectly ridiculous." Could it really be nonsense, albeit clever nonsense, after all? The answer seems to be yes, at least in part.

The first glimpse we get of Raphael is of a stranger and probably (More postulates) a sailor. Giles soon joins More, indicating Raphael as a friend and confirming that he is a sailor, but a rather extraordinary one at that. He is, according to Giles, "really more like Ulysses or even Plato." This is an ambiguous compliment at best. Ulysses, the great hero of Homer's Odyssey, is not only a globe trotter but also a crafty rhetorician, a persuader, and, to some degree, a manipulator (the Greek word for these traits is teknos). Plato, of course, wrote his philosophy in dialogues, emphasizing rhetorical skill along with logic and reason. The reference to Plato also reminds the reader of that original Utopia, The Republic. Immediately, then, More (the author, not the character) associates Raphael with two great "talkers," known not so much for being honest as for being convincing.

He also associates Raphael with two Greeks. More calculates the comparison precisely - just moments later Giles proclaims that Nonsenso

"is quite a scholar" and that he knows "a tremendous lot of Greek because he's mainly interested in the philosophy." Latin, however, has never really appealed to him. Although the piquancy of this description loses some of its power in translation, More here clearly seems to contrast the Latin of the European Christian world (and of Utopia itself) with the Greek of antique, pagan culture. Latin is a language of action, public affairs, current events; Greek, on the other hand, lends itself to speculation, to thought, to dreamy theorizing. Implicitly, then, More's own political discourse supercedes Raphael's, since it best accommodates the political climate of their day. His skepticism about the sometimes "perfectly ridiculous" Utopia is perfectly in keeping with this view.

While these comparisons with figures from antiquity help, the primary way Raphael Nonsenso's character comes to be revealed is through the contrast between him and Thomas More. Beyond their Greek and Latin preferences, Nonsenso and More each maintain a fundamentally different political philosophy, as we see when Giles urges Nonsenso to obtain a court position and put his wisdom and experience to good use. Nonsenso disdains the idea of holding such a post and eschews the prospect of living and working "among people who are deeply prejudiced against everyone else's ideas." More chides him for his reluctance, telling him: "you've got so much theoretical knowledge, and so much practical experience, that either of them alone would be enough to make you an ideal member of any privy council." Raphael remains impervious to their praise, though. Rather than acquiescing, he tells an anecdote about a debate on capital punishment he held with a celebrated lawyer while on a sojourn to England. By the end of his story, he thinks he has proven that philosophy falls on deaf ears when related to politicians. Instead, he receives another rebuke from More: "there is a more civilized form of philosophy which knows the dramatic context, so to speak, tries to fit in with it, and plays an appropriate part in the current performance."

The "dramatic context" of this particular exchange is the pitting of the pragmatic More against the idealistic Nonsenso. While the thought of giving excellent advice to inferior minds exasperates Raphael, More finds that it is the philosopher's responsibility to make himself understood, to adapt his wisdom to his audience's level of comprehension. "Frankly," he confesses to Nonsenso, "I don't see the point of giving advise you know they'll never accept. What possible good could it do? How can they be expected to take in a totally unfamiliar line of thought, which goes against all their deepest prejudice?" This deftly undercuts Nonsenso's criticism of European society: how will they ever improve if the wisest among them will not deign to give his advice unless guaranteed that it will be understood and implemented perfectly? If European politicians were so savvy and enlightened, they probably wouldn't have so many problems in the first place! There is no doubt that both More and

Nonsenso dislike a great many of the customs and laws of European society, but while More expresses willingness to accept compromises on the road to perfection, Nonsenso demands the ideal or else no improvement at all.

An idealist who despises European convention, Raphael is a rather suspect source of information on Utopia. His political agenda threatens to overtake his factual account, as it indeed does at certain points in his narration. It is not really nonsense that he is dispensing, but rather strategic elaboration, additional details, and particular embellishments. No wonder More cannot overcome his suspicion that the description is, in the end, somewhat of a "grand absurdity."

The narrative begins reliably, which is to say it begins apolitically. Raphael first gives a magnificent account of the geographical and topographical intricacies of Utopia. He moves naturally into urban planning, agriculture, live stock, labor, food preparation and other little mundane practices that any traveler would dutifully note upon encountering a new civilization. Even Raphael's description of the communist organization of the society, though alien to the European perspective, does not begin unbelievably. It is perfectly plausible that a nation would implement such a system in hopes of eliminating social inequalities, crime (a cause of concern on the English mind, according to Nonsenso), and all the other difficulties that plague a monarchical government.

But then come the inconsistencies, primary among them the strange mix of cultivation and philistinism that Raphael (obliviously) attributes to the Utopians. While they have a passion for gardening and attend edifying lectures each day, they find precious metals and gems quite disgusting and base. Raphael assures More and Giles that "these raw materials of money get no more respect from anyone than their intrinsic value deserves - which is obviously far less than iron." They wear plain clothing, eat plain food - they are, in short, Spartan in their ornamentation, lacking (apparently) in all the visual arts. Nature and beauty have become synonymous and exclusively linked terms. Now, from whence comes this distaste for colorful, beautiful things except their associations with luxury and expense in a non-communistic society? There is no reason why the Utopians could not and would not value gold, silver, jewels and fine fabrics for purely aesthetic, not monetary, reasons. It seems, in fact, that it is quite inhuman not to appreciate such beauty; no one, after all, sees the world in such strictly utilitarian terms. In this regard, the behavior Raphael assigns to the Utopians cannot be taken as anything but an invented repudiation of European valuation. They carry on like a communist minority in a merchant economy.

Raphael is similarly untrustworthy (and inconsistent) when discoursing on social practices. Euthanasia, he says, is encouraged in certain cases, though not enforced. Before marriage, the bride and

groom-to-be examine each other naked to determine if their partner is physically sufficient. They believe in a single god and the immortality of the soul, but they tolerate other religious creeds. These practices shock, but because of the flexibility of the Utopians, they do not outright offend. That is, until you realize that there is always a caveat. In the case of Euthanasia, Nonsenso proclaims that it is optional, but his reproduction of a bullying speech that a priest would give to the terminally ill makes this declaration seem highly dubious. What kind of person would find much zest in life after being told "you're just a nuisance to other people and a burden to yourself" ? One can imagine, likewise, the effects of being rejected as an unsuitable specimen for marriage. As for religion, Raphael undermines his original explanation of Utopian tolerance with the addition of rather significant clause. He says there is religious freedom "except [if] you believe anything so incompatible with human dignity as the doctrine that the soul dies with the body, and the universe functions aimlessly, without any controlling providence." It seems there are two possible explanations for these contradictions: either Raphael fabricates these practices himself or his description of them is tainted by his hearty approval; either he lies altogether or tries to soften the harshness of the Utopians to garner the approval of the Europeans. In either case, this is certainly not an objective representation of Utopian life or an ideal society. The problem with the social dynamic in a so-called perfect society is clear: it reduces to nothing more than an impossible quest to eliminate defects, an enforced system of eugenics.

Much in keeping with this, there is a very ruthless (and not wholly coherent) aspect to Raphael's description of Utopian domestic and foreign policy. Internal relations among Utopians are untroubled by jealousy, anger, violence, and the like. They respect each other as individuals and as a community, existing in a state of unmenaced harmony. Utopia's relationship with the outside world, though, appears to be in constant upheaval. Although Raphael says that "they hardly ever go to war, except in self-defense," their military prowess is formidable. They are not so pacifistic as Raphael first hints, for just a moment or two later he notes that "the Utopians are just as anxious to find wicked men to exploit as good men to employ." It is rather puzzling that such a gentle, unworldly people would take on the responsibility of acting as the military and moral scourge of the international community. And even more confusing is Raphael's assurance that the Utopians "possess vast foreign assets for a great many countries owe them money." Assets? Money? Debt? Are they communists or are they not? While Nonsenso has no trouble imagining a Utopian communist nation in isolation, he clearly struggles to come up with a sense of how such a country could function in the context of other, non-Utopian peoples. He resorts here to the kind of belligerent, patriotic rhetoric that belongs to the empirical nations of Europe. Nonsenso's inability to articulate a plausible Utopian foreign policy ultimately demonstrates that his true-life account is more likely a

hodge-podge of facts and fictions. Nonsenso may have an active, idealizing imagination, but his account of Utopia still contains some valuable truths. More himself says: "I freely admit that there are many features of the Utopian Republic which I should like - though I hardly expect - to see adopted in Europe." In a rather sly way, More ends Utopia with this statement, which is really a kind of provocation, a challenge to European nations to outdo what was either incompletely executed by the Utopians or sloppily imagined by Nonsenso. For More, the goal is not to imitate Utopia but to move beyond its deceptive prescriptions and achieve real improvement.

Thomas More as a Realistic Visionary

Though Sir Thomas More took an active role in politics and the corrupt government of King Henry VIII, he remained rooted in his political and religious convictions. Famous for his willingness to die rather than betray his ideals, More showed throughout his life a desire to avoid compromising his beliefs. This inner struggle to balance idealistic wishes with less appealing but more attainable practical realities was an important theme in More's Utopia. Though More harshly criticized the wrongs of European society in Book One of Utopia, he idealistically presented a radical view of a new society in Book Two. In this way he manages to force others to consider possible changes to society and to make them realize their own potential in creating better solutions to the problems of the sixteenth century.

More expressed his discontent with the Church through Raphael's strong condemnation of the hypocrisies of the institution and those belonging to it. Preachers "have fitted His doctrine to their lives" because the "greatest parts of His doctrine are opposite" them, declared Raphael. Raphael felt the preacher's actions would only make them "more secure in their wickedness". More also mocked the self-important friar who, angered by a fool's gibe, declared that "all that jeer us are excommunicated" . He disgustedly commented on the Cardinal's counsel, who "in earnest applauded those things" the Cardinal only liked "in jest". More noted the pomposity of one counselor with "all the formality of a debate" saying, "I will make the whole matter plain to you". More presented those surrounding the Cardinal as arrogant, mindless fools who had little religion or religious knowledge.

More disapproved of European government, war, and man because of their devastating effects on society. Government irked More not only because of its own corruption, but also because of its propagation of war and the unnecessary quest for land acquisition. More referred to soldiers

as a "pestiferous sort of people" who were paid to be idle and whose presence was unnecessary. The soldiers became "feeble with ease", unable to fight and a waste of resources. Raphael denounced princes for applying themselves more to the "affairs of war" than the "useful arts of peace". Although More sharply reproved establishments contributing to the disturbing state of society, he chastised individual faults and flaws of human nature, as well. He criticized the "cursed avarice" of a few that makes many suffer, complaining not only of the upper class, but also of the "excessive vanity in apparel" and "great cost in diet" among "all ranks of persons". More, irritated by the irrationality of war and the flaws of human nature, disparagingly wrote of the great costs of these continuing problems.

More strongly disapproved of society's treatment of the poor, seeing the rich's advantage over the poor as a great injustice. In defense of the poor he wrote, "They would willingly work, but can find none that will hire them". The rich " buy at low prices and sell at high rates", he said, leaving the poor no choice but to "beg or rob". More showed his extreme disillusionment with the inequalities of society when talking of the gap between the rich and the poor. He accused society of "first mak[ing] thieves and then punish[ing] them", a true analysis of the rich's lack of concern for the troublesome poor. Incorporated into this was his outcry against capital punishment and cruelty. One of his impassioned arguments was, "God has commanded us not to kill, and shall we kill so easily for a little money?" It is "absurd" for a thief and a murderer to be punished equally, he argued, as this will "incite" the thief to now kill the man he would have only robbed. More greatly supported the poor while attacking the rich for their greed.

In Book Two More explored new ideas for society, such as a lack of materialism and a communal atmosphere of equality and uniformity. More imagined a world in which everyone wore clothes "all of one color cast carelessly about them" and switched houses "by lot" every ten years. People used gold as a "badge of infamy", trying to devalue the strange emphasis of other cultures on objects of no real worth. Utopians sent "overplus to their neighbors" and "freely welcomed anyone into their homes, showing the true sense of communal identity that More envisioned. Agriculture was "universally understood" so that all were capable of working in the fields. Even the towns themselves were uniform; "he that knows one knows them all". More constantly expanded on this theme of equality, giving even the Prince "no distinction" besides a "sheaf of corn". This want of class distinction or material value constituted More's main radical social change.

More introduced a new religious and moral philosophy of tolerance in Utopia and also defended pleasure as a God-given gift. The Utopians considered "inquiries after happiness" without consideration of "religious principles" to be "conjectural and defective". Utopians thought it the "maddest thing in the world to pursue virtue", instead promoting

pursuing one's "own advantages". More advocated freedom to choose religion, as long as there was a belief in a "great Essence". Utopians felt it "indecent and foolish" to intimidate someone into believing something that "did not to him appear to be true". More supported the idea that if there really were one truth, it would "at last break forth and shine bright". To keep the true religion from being "choked with superstition", all were free to believe "as they should see cause". The priests were men of "eminent piety", and though respected, they had few distinctions. More's new, accepting, idealistic church was a very different concept from the European Catholic Church in existence.

More focused much of Book Two on his ideas on justified war and reasonable slavery. The Utopians felt justified in driving natives of their land if the natives didn't allow them to cultivate the land, since "every man has a right to such as is necessary for his subsistence". They felt that there was a "partnership of the human nature", and partly because of this, they detested war as a "very brutal thing". The only instance when they were willing to go to war was in case of loss of life of any Utopian or when a neighbor asked for help. Strangely enough, the Utopians did not object to using mercenaries or harboring traitors, deciding that the number of lives saved by a quick war compensated for this breach of morals. Their punishment system was also interesting and very different from Europe.

More presented contrasting books of Utopia to provide such an extreme example of change that people would be more willing to accept reasonable change. More said at one point that the bride and groom should see each other naked before marriage as even a "horse of a small value" was inspected thoroughly before being bought. More most likely did not expect people to agree to this unemotional, practical practice, but he might have wanted a couple to realize how important it is to be well suited to and familiar with each other. He also wrote of Utopians exchanging houses every ten years; this idea obviously was not very plausible, but the idea of less emphasis on personal property and social status was appealing. Gold does not have to be a symbol of infamy, but people might benefit from placing less importance on the acquisition of it. Avarice does not have to disappear, but nor should it dominate life. By criticizing every aspect of life in Book One, More startled people into wanting at least moderate change. More also hoped to provoke the average individual into analyzing the problems of European society and imagining new possibilities. More presented the problems in Book One, but as he said that Utopia was "absurd" at the end of his book, he made it clear that his answers were not real ones that he thought would actually work. Instead, he presented the problems so that others of his time could attempt solutions. More tried to stir the average man into saving society.

More's Utopia at first seemed like a preposterous attempt to determine which exact qualities a society would need to prosper but is

actually about a society based on experimentation and gradual improvements over time. Though More uses Utopia as a model for European society, he admits its inability to exist and work as planned. Like a romantic More does not have imaginative flights but even his fanciful ides are well established in ground reality and his analysis of his own ideas is a rare site to watch.

Utopia as piece of Social Criticism

Every writer owes a moral responsibility towards society. Many years later Wordsworth wrote that if a writer cannot mend people he should mend shoes. Without the enlightening element the very existence of literature comes under question. Literature has been ever evolving but the idea of exposing faults in society has always been central to it. Utopia is a fine piece of literature as it not only exposes the contemporary society but it goes one step further as it present a glimpses to possible alternates and a critique to the alternatives also.

In Sir Thomas More's "Utopia," one may find a fascinating adventure story about the sailor named Raphael Hythloday. However, below the surface of this adventure story lies a deep sea of social criticism. In a time period where speaking against the government was very dangerous, More found a way to express his opinions via the fictional character of Raphael. More is quite loyal to his convictions, while also being very careful not to earn punishment for his would-be seditious societal commentaries.

When writing "Utopia," Sir Thomas More must have been thinking about the problems of society and how to combat and correct them. At the same time, he wanted to write his suggestions in a way that would not put him in dire straight with the law. More's first attempt to absolve himself from direct criticism was to write a piece of fiction, not a speech or essay. More creates a narrator in Raphael Hythloday to speak any criticisms or controversial ideas. Sir Thomas even puts himself into the story with Hythloday, participating in dialogues with him, and even asking Raphael the questions that he knew would be asked of him if he spoke such outlandish ideas in public. The first concrete proof of "an escape clause" for Sir Thomas More is the very name of his main character. The surname "Hythloday," when broken down into its Greek roots, is converted to two words: huthlos and daien. Further study of footnote nine on page five of the text provides a definition of the two Greek roots. Huthlos has a translated meaning of "nonsense," while daien has a translated meaning of "to distribute". It is also noted that when the words are brought together, they literally mean "distributor of nonsense" or "peddler of nonsense". This is a quite humorous situation because one could easily imagine a lawman in Renaissance England

challenging More about the text of Utopia and the ideas presented by Raphael Hythloday. More could save himself by passing it off as simple drollery. He could reply to any charges by saying, "It was all in fun. Everything Hythloday says is nonsense. His surname translates to 'peddler of nonsense,' don't you get it? It is comedy." Throughout the text, More embodies a lawyer's precision in avoiding self-incrimination.

Many times in the text More and Hythloday are engaged in a dialogue concerning the common practice of societies considering any new ideas unacceptable and against tradition. At one place Hythloday recalls, "Now in a court composed of people who envy everyone else and admire only themselves. If a man should suggest something he had read of in other ages or seen in far places, the other counselors would think their reputation for wisdom was endangered, and they would look like simpletons, unless they could find fault with his proposal". Hythloday goes further to explain "...such proud, obstinate, ridiculous judgments I have encountered many times, and once even in England". This was one of the strongest statements of the passage. Perhaps even dangerous for Thomas More to even address the possibility of his beloved England being guilty of closed mindedness. However, More quickly extinguishes any fire underneath him by challenging ideas of Hythloday. "What! Where you ever in England?" This is another, mildly humorous case of More's apparent fear of the government and his subsequent attempts to cover his tracks. One other careful criticism is made my More's alter ego "Hythloday" when he speaks of a dinner he had in the presence of the Cardinal, a high official of the church. More creates another "patsy" when Hythloday speaks of a layman that was "...learned in the laws of your country, who for some reason took occasion to praise the rigid execution of justice then being practiced upon thieves". In footnote to this statement, it is noted that "It was unusual at that time for a layman to have legal training; but More, who is going to attribute cruel and stupid opinions to this man, wants to dissociate him from the Church and the Cardinal". Here again, More is careful to clearly point out that the layman in no way represents the views of the Church. Any criticism of the Church of England would surely bring about death.

The layman represents a common societal point of view when he challenges Hythloday's view of the punishments not fitting the crimes. "There are the trades, and there is farming, by which men may make a living unless they choose deliberately to be rogues". Obviously, Sir Thomas More believes that the society should not be structured around the fear of being executed. His puppet character, Hythloday, goes further to strike down the retort of the layman by saying, "Oh no, you don't, you won't get out of it that way. We may disregard for the moment the cripples who come home from foreign and civil wars, as lately from the Cornish battle and before that from your wars with France. These men, wounded in the service of kind and country, are too badly crippled to follow their old trades, and too old to learn new ones. There are a great

many noblemen who live idly like drones, off the labors of others…Lords would rather support idlers than invalids". This serves as another logical criticism of a common practice in renaissance England that Sir Thomas More was obviously offended by.

The finale of Utopia is the last example of More's careful criticism. He speaks of his own thoughts after Hythloday finishes his story of the island of Utopia. He affirmed, "…my chief objection was to the basis of their whole system, that is, their communal living and moneyless economy. This one thing alone takes away all the nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty which (in the popular view) are considered the true ornaments of any nation". This is a statement of contradiction because any man, who has the ability to identify imperfections in society and also suggest remedies for those imperfections, as More did in the text of Utopia, could not consider nobility, wealth, and majesty as the "true ornaments" of society. No, More's character in the text is only saying this to avoid incriminating himself. It is important to recognize that in the parenthesis, More notes that the elements he listed are "the popular view" of society. Therefore, one could say that he finds a way to stay true to his convictions by letting the readers know that the statement is the public consensus, not necessarily his own.

Sir Thomas More must have possessed great vision of a better society in order to portray his ideas so precisely and honestly through the words of Hythloday. Although the time period did not allow him the freedom to criticize, he still found a way to point out unfair practices by the government and immoral executions of the law. More was clever enough to leave himself an escape route by manipulating elements of a fictional story and puppet characters. Utopia is a story that someone had to write. Humanity needed new ideas and fresh critiques of age-old laws and customs. More's flawless execution of careful criticism in Utopia serves as reminder to the modern era that even passive resistance can bring about change. Utopia proved to be a visionary book as one the one hand it foresaw communism and socialism on the other it present the literary world the possibilities of using predator literature such as Huxley’s Brave New World and Orwell’s 1984.

Feminism and Place of Women in More's Utopia

First published in 1516, Sir Thomas More's Utopia is considered as one of the most influential works of Western humanism. Through the first-person narrative of Raphael Hythloday, More's mysterious traveler, Utopia is described as a pagan communist city-state or "polis" governed by intellect and rationality. By addressing such issues as religious pluralism, women's rights, state-sponsored education, colonialism and justified warfare, the main protagonist seems to be a very recognizable character to many contemporary readers. Even after more than five centuries while Utopia itself remains a foundational text in human philosophy and political ideology through the world.

In his description of the religious practices held within More's perfectly structured Utopia, Raphael Hythloday informs the reader that "Women are not debarred from the priesthood, but only a widow of advanced years is ever chosen, and it doesn't happen often". Examples of this rather discriminatory, symbolic remark can be found throughout the text of Utopia, which is embedded with many inconsistencies, and conflicts related to philosophy. At the conclusion of Utopia when Hythloday has terminated his extremely detailed narrative of the Utopian polis, Thomas More interjects with "When Raphael had finished … it seemed to me that not a few of the customs and laws… as existing among the Utopians were quite absurd. Their methods of waging war, their religious ceremonies and their social customs were some of these, but my chief objection was to the basis of their whole system … their communal living and… moneyless economy".

According to Stephen Greenblatt in his book "*Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare*", this "communal living" appears to be the "central motivation" of the entire story, yet More's opinion on this condemns it and virtually upsets all the important aspects of his Utopian culture. Greenblatt sees this upset as part of the numerous factors underlying More's entire idea of the communal system which view communism as less than "a coherent economic program" and teeming with "selfishness and pride".

After analyzing the personal and political views contained in Utopia, recent feminist scholars have deciphered More's application of inconsistencies into a progressive statement regarding gender rights and privileges. Upon citing certain resigned attitudes in Utopia pertaining to women's equality, these scholars have come to the conclusion that women must thoroughly be encouraged to arm themselves, become professional and intellectual and chose their own husbands. Also, More's obvious tolerance for women's rights has influenced the progressive tactics of the feminist in the face of defeating the conservative bias of the modern world.

With Hythloday's revelation that "Women are not barred from the priesthood," it becomes clear that two operatives are in action--the maintaining of female/male equalities and the experience of seniority over the innocence of the young, much like William Blake's poetical thesis. According to More, communal living allows for the breakup of many familial obligation roles as shown by Hythloday's statement that "No man is bothered by his wife's querulous complaints about money, no man fears poverty for his son, or struggles to scrape up a dowry for his daughter" (Utopia 82). Through this, all male-female relationships, usually dependent on some sort of financial stability, are reconstructed via utilitarian means. All gender and familial positions are placed on a lower level for the good of every citizen and others deem every contribution made by a member of this society as being equal to all those made. This creates a sense of commonality; however, this type of gender indifference creates numerous limitations as far as individual freedom is concerned. Women are allowed to work and achieve a certain amount of self-power while at the same time giving up those powers traditionally held as domestic. The power to debate or criticize one's husband for insufficient financial means or to ensure that one's daughter marries into a respectable and stable family is lost in More's ironic Utopia.

Most certainly, much of the indifference to gender in the citizens of this polis can be traced to their dislike for private property (land, wealth, jewelry, clothing, etc.) which creates an entire plethora of problems related to the self and familial prosperity. The domestic side of this issue, i.e. physical and emotional activities, becomes completely secretive which enables the women to maintain conditional power. In this Utopian civilization, privacy is transformed into public, as in the wearing of traditional gender clothing or that associated with being married. This brings to mind the ideals of the modern-day Amish or Shakers communities, which deplore individualistic displays of gender-related activities and aim to place all citizens in one enormous basket of sameness. In Utopia, the separation of the sexes is greatly implied as exemplified by women being strategically placed on the outside of the dining table. This is done "so that if a women has a sudden qualm or pain, such as occasionally happens during pregnancy, she may get up without disturbing the others, and go off to the nurses".

This situation could easily be considered as a private affair, yet with more discussion on this topic it becomes evident that it is nothing out of the ordinary and serves as another symbol of sameness in this society:

"Each child is nurses by its own mother, unless death or illness prevents. When that happens, any woman, who can, gladly volunteers for the job, since all the Utopians applaud her kindness, and the child… regards the new nurse as it natural mother".

In a "normal" society, the act of child nursing is considered as part of a woman's motherly duties, but in More's Utopia all members of the community monitor it. Utopian marriage customs, where the roles of gender are conventional and subject to change by the mindset of the whole community, are most disturbing, not to mention the punishment which accompanies premarital intercourse, adultery and sexually related secretive acts. In addition, this so-called Utopian society sees sexual pleasure as an act of utter depravity and any action made by an individual which attempts to deflect from the sameness inherent in all of the citizens is rewarded with disgrace for both the perpetrator and his entire household.

The act of displaying one's nakedness to the brides and grooms prior to marriage in order to discover if "deformity may lurk under clothing" is seen as a preventive step towards men and women seeking forbidden sexual/carnal relationships. Once the marriage is consecrated, a group of elders come together so as to "forbid a husband to put away his wife against her will for some bodily misfortune" with the aim being complete monogamy which derails any sort of secrecy, abandonment or solitude. This it would appear constitutes that privacy is a very illegal act with the outcome being further disgrace for both parties.

Another significant aspect of More's Utopia is how an individual or group intention is just as severely punishable as a specific action against another citizen. Hythloday's narrative specifies this with "A man who (tries) to seduce a woman is subject to the same penalties as if he had actually done it. They think that a crime attempted is as bad as one committed, and that failure should not confer advantages on a criminal who did all he could to succeed". From a feminist point of view, this "law" where both men and women are equally punished allows women some freedom and power over their own bodies and a relative amount of bodily security. By exposing the neglected area of seduction, a crime such as rape that was traditionally punished. After the revelation of the crime, women in More's Utopian ideal gain a degree of protection that deters violence against their bodies and prevents them from being stigmatized or brought under the umbrella of shame. As a consequence, the power of the female bridal bed, courtship and the so-called "feminine mystique" are pushed aside in favor of equal protection "under the law" manifested in this Utopia.

It also appears that war and religion in Utopia are viewed as non-domestic areas where power seems to be specifically gendered; women are encouraged to "take up arms" but are not enticed to participate in battles. Yet, as Chris Ferns asserts, "any assertion that women are "liberated" to any degree by participating in battle doesn't take into account the public retribution they suffer, should they refuse, or should they return from the front without their families". This in part brings back the public sphere of Utopia as to the topic of gender and the prevention of individual privacy. The religion of the Utopians considers it

a sacrilege to worship the self and have a conscience that makes it mandatory to have confession through the publication of private thoughts under the constant threat of punishment. Paradoxically, if women refuse to participate in battle either by themselves or with their husbands or choose to remain at home while the fighting rages elsewhere, or if they return from battle without their husbands or other family members, they are publicly ridiculed and shamed. Domestically speaking, this creates for women in More's Utopia the quintessential situation of being "stuck between a rock and a hard place" where one's actions are both exalted and damned at the same time.

Thus, in this fabricated Utopian ideal, the metaphor of communal living that supposedly transforms both the public and private arenas does nothing but wreck havoc on all the institutions associated with this society. The entire community thus governs the places where women traditionally and exclusively operate. This reminds a situation in Shirley Jackson's classic short story "The Lottery" where the citizens of a small town annually gather together to choose who lives and who dies based on the drawing of a lottery from a little "black box."

Yet the self and the individual is not entirely wiped out in Utopia, for communal living encourages the whole to operate as one specific unit. The potential of each person, regardless of gender, is altered by physical and intellectual education that prepares him/her for exceptional service in the public sphere. Thomas More's socio-political agenda in Utopia creates a paradigm for feminist based on family interaction, gender bending, non-wealth and property and bizarre sexually oriented situations.

As the author and creator of Utopia, Thomas More has clearly shown his own personal tolerance and progressive views concerning women's rights and social privileges. His overall view of how to make a better world for men and women to live in has fascinated the minds of thinkers and philosophers in every age. From Plato to the present day, a span of almost two and a half millenniums, men have been thinking and writing about what the world would be like if as a homogenous unity an earthly paradise could be created and maintained.

In the dialog of Sir Thomas More, certain objections to the communal idea are present, yet this seems to be the only point on which he appears to have some reservations, but the words of Raphael Hythloday brings forth the answers to his objections very satisfactorily. In More's Utopian ideal, violence, bloodshed and vice, according to the narrator, have been eliminated. The people of Utopia have chosen instead to labor for recreation's sake in their gardens, improve their homes, attend humanistic lectures, and enjoy music and converse profitably with each other. In other words, they have chosen to pursue more profitable enterprises associated with the mind instead of with capitalistic pursuits of wealth and money.

The Utopian women, for the most part, live very different lives as compared to that of the typical sixteenth-century English woman who usually lived in absolute poverty and slaved every waking hour simply to subsist. In this society, adultery is regarded as a crime and is punished by slavery. Marriage for love is much encouraged, but also prudence in selecting a mate. The welfare of the family is a state matter since it is the basic unit of the Utopian state. The people are anxious for the commonwealth to be rich, for the Utopians buy off their enemies and use their wealth to hire foreign mercenary soldiers which they hope in this manner will encourage potential enemies to murder one another.

The Utopians are described as a religious people who practice toleration almost unknown during More's times in Catholic Tudor England. Some are Christians while others worship God in their own way. Two specific points should be made in connection with More's brilliant yet unsettling Utopia--first, his borrowings from Plato and other Greek writers which prevented him from adding much of his own theories and practices. And second, that in the four and a half centuries since the publication of Utopia, numerous ideas suggested by More have been put into effect in our modern world. Such as tolerance for other's viewpoints, equality (generally speaking) amongst the sexes and most important of all the acceptance of the feminist viewpoint on the world as seen through the eyes of women. The proverbial outsiders who have always been able to understand the faults of current society with objectivity based on logic instead of manipulation. So to sum up it can very easily be said that More's Utopia is predator in one more sense: in its approach to the equality of women.

Utopias and Dystopias: Thomas More's Contribution to the World of Literature

There is no denying to the fact that Plato's *Republic* must have been a source of inspiration for Thomas More when he sat down to write *Utopia*. Critic after critic has gone in deep details to comment upon Neoplatonism and *Republic*'s influence in *Utopia.* But we must not forget that More has attached a unique element to Plato's example- the element of fiction. Plato's book was presented chiefly as an ideal with a tone of prescription and was directed to statesman and students of politics and thus the book generally fails to provoke common reader. Utopia on the other hand is presented in a way that the only element that seems to be abnormal is that that it is geographically away from our world. Moreover More gives vent to his feasible and practical ideal. Plato prescribed Republic but did not describe it to its minimum possible details. Utopia is described to so minimal details that we can almost smell it and here lies the catch. Many writers used More premises to write stories which are away from our civilization but they are not geographically away as in

case of Utopia but are away in time frame. Works that set away from our conditions, geographically or in time frame, and present an idealistic society or at least show positive changes from our society are called utopian. On the other hand there are number of books that present a glimpses of possible negative change in human society, projecting a bleak future, these books are called dystopia. Dystopian books are mostly science fiction work, which centre on scientific discoveries leading to the ruin of the world. Most famous dystopian works are George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. In recent times there have been some science fiction films which have their seeds in dystopian literature such as ET, Star Wars and Jurrassic Park. For the convenience of students brief stories of some utopian/ dystopian works are presented here:

George Orwell's *1984*: Story in brief

Winston Smith is living in London, Chief City of Airstrip One (formerly known as England), in the superstate of Oceania. It is 1984.

Oceania is a totalitarian state dominated by the principles of Ingsoc (English Socialism) and ruled by an ominous organization known simply as the Party. Oceania and the two other world superstates, Eurasia and Eastasia, are involved in a continuous war over the remaining world, and constantly shift alliances. As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that the war is largely an illusion, and that the three superstates maintain this illusion for their mutual benefit. It serves their shared purpose of holding onto absolute power over their respective peoples. These governments, in fact, inflict much of the warfare, upon their own citizens.

Oceanic society is hierarchical and oligarchic. At the bottom‹where the vast majority of the population lies‹are the "proles" or proletariat, the working classes who are uneducated and largely left alone by the government except when it is necessary to tap into mass patriotism or political participation. Above the proles is the Outer Party, less privileged members of the Party who spend their time keeping the wheels of the Party machine well-oiled and running smoothly. These people are systematically brainwashed from a young age and are kept under constant surveillance by ubiquitous "telescreens" (which can receive and transmit visual and aural impulses simultaneously) and the ominous Thought Police. Above the Outer Party are the Inner Party members, who enjoy the fruits of power and production, and whose sole aim is to perpetuate power for the Party, forever. At the very top of the pyramid is Big Brother, the embodiment of the Party, a "face" and glorified persona, which it is easier to love than an abstract collective organization.

On this April day, Winston has left the Ministry of Truth, where he works in the Records Department, to take his lunch break at home,

because he wishes to write in his diary‹a compromising activity and a compromising possession to begin with. Yet, despite his fears, he is overwhelmed with the need to impose some sanity upon his world. Winston is a rebel at heart, a heretic who does not subscribe to Party doctrines or beliefs.

After reflecting on the day's events, notably the event which inspired him to begin the diary on this day, Winston is startled by a knock on the door. Could it be the Thought Police already?

Fortunately, it is only his neighbor Mrs. Parsons, asking him to help her unclog her kitchen sink drain. He does, and after being briefly tormented by her children‹dangerous little demons already brainwashed by the Party and certain to turn on their parents one day‹he returns to his flat.

Winston's diary and his dreams and memories of the past are all testament to his need to anchor himself in the past, believing it to be more sane than the world he lives in now. The description of his dreams and memories gradually unfolds the developments that have led to the current world order.

Winston's job at the fraudulently-named Ministry of Truth involves the daily rewriting of history: he corrects "errors" and "misprints" in past articles in order to make the Party appear infallible and constant‹always correct in its predictions, always at war with one enemy. Currently the enemy is Eurasia, and it follows (according to the Party) that it has always been Eurasia, though Winston knows this to be untrue.

Despite his horror at the Party's destruction of the past, Winston enjoys his part in it, taking pleasure in using his imagination in rewriting Big Brother's speeches and such.

It becomes apparent, through a painstaking unfolding of detail, that the standards of living in Oceania are barely tolerable. For the majority of the population, goods are scarce, and everything is ugly and tastes horrible. Depressed, Winston wonders if the past were better. Once upon a time, did people enjoy marriage, was sex pleasurable, were there enough goods to go around? He recalls his own dismal marriage to Katharine, a frigid woman so inculcated with Party doctrine that she hates sex but insists upon it once a week as "our duty to the Party."

Winston feels that the only hope lies in the proles, if they wake up one day and realize that they are not living the kind of life they could be. But will they wake up?

Tormented by memories and searching for answers, Winston walks aimlessly through a prole area. He tries to talk to an old man about the past, but can't seem to get anywhere. Eventually, he finds himself in front of the antique shop where he had bought the diary. He enters, starts to chat with Mr. Charrington (the proprietor), and wanders through the quaint antiques. He buys a beautiful glass paperweight. Mr. Charrington talks to him some more and shows him an upstairs room

furnished with old furniture. There is no telescreen in this room, amazing Winston, and inspiring him to consider renting this room as a hiding place‹though he immediately dismisses the idea as lunacy. Still, enchanted, he resolves to come back sometime.

Upon leaving the shop, he is startled to see a girl with dark hair who works in his Ministry. There is no reason for her to be in this area, and he deduces she must have been following him. Terrified, he hurries home and tries to write in his diary, but cannot.

The second part of the book traces hopeful events.

It opens with a startling encounter with the girl with dark hair. They pass one another in a corridor. She trips and falls on her injured arm; Winston helps her up. As he does, she slips him a note. He is surprised but tries not to show it. When he finally reads it, he is astonished to see that it says, "I love you."

Knocked for a loop, but forgetting all his previous fear and hatred of her, Winston tries to figure out how they can meet. After a few days, they finally manage to exchange some words in the canteen, and meet later that evening in Victory Square (once, apparently, Trafalgar Square). There, the girl discreetly gives him directions to a meeting place where they will rendezvous on Sunday afternoon.

Sunday afternoon rolls around, and Winston and the girl, Julia, meet out in the countryside. He is surprised and delighted to find that she detests the Party and goes out of her way to be as "corrupt" as possible. They spend a pleasant time together, and make love.

Winston and Julia start to meet clandestinely in the streets to "talk by instalments," as Julia calls it; private meetings are rare and difficult to coordinate. But they do manage once more that month. They talk as much as they can and get to know one another's personalities and histories.

Finally, the pressures and troubles of arranging meetings induce them to take the risky step of renting Mr. Charrington's upstairs room. In this room, they start to act like a married couple Julia puts on makeup and plans to get a dress. She does it so she can feel like a woman, while Winston enjoys the sensation of privacy and the novelty of being able to lie in bed with your loved one and talk as much (or as little) as you want about whatever you wish. As time passes, they grow closer and talk about escaping together, though they know it is impossible.

At about this time, O'Brien‹an Inner Party member for whom Winston feels an inexplicable reverence, and some sort of bond‹suddenly makes an overture, presenting Winston with his address. This seems to be a sign. Winston and Julia go to O'Brien's flat together. There they are inducted into the Brotherhood, a legendary underground anti-Party organization founded by Emmanuel Goldstein, a former Party member. O'Brien gives them instructions and details on what to expect and what not to expect.

Here Hate Week intervenes. Months and weeks of preparation are nothing to the flurry the Ministry of Truth is cast into when suddenly, at the climax of Hate Week, it is made known that Oceania is at war with Eastasia rather than Eurasia. Winston and Julia and all their co-workers are thrown into a 90-hour-stretch of correcting old newspapers, since it must be made to appear that Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia.

Winston has received the book, the bible of the Brotherhood written by Emmanuel Goldstein, but has not had time to read it until his work at the Ministry finally finishes. All workers are given the rest of the day off, and he and Julia head separately for their upstairs room.

There Winston reads a good deal about what he already knows. Julia comes in, and after they make love he settles down to read the book to her. She falls asleep, and shortly after he realizes this, he closes the book and goes to sleep too.

When they awaken, the old-fashioned clock says 8:30, but various hints indicate that it is 8:30 a.m., not p.m. as Winston and Julia suppose. They stand together, looking out at the world, feeling how beautiful it is, feeling hopeful that the future will be all right even though they will not live to see it.

Suddenly they hear a voice and jump apart. There has been a telescreen in the room, behind a picture hanging over the bed. Winston and Julia have been caught. Helpless, they are taken away by the Thought Police, their momentary glimpse of happiness shattered.

Part III recounts the downfall of Winston and Julia.

After being held in a common prison for a while, Winston is transferred to the Ministry of Love. He sits in his cell, starving, thirsty, tortured by fear, waiting for he does not know what. As he waits, people come in and out, including Ampleforth, the poet from his department, and Parsons, who has been denounced by his seven-year-old daughter. Other people he does not know come in, and through them he hears about "Room 101," which seems to terrify everyone. He thinks longingly of being smuggled a razor blade by the Brotherhood, though he knows he probably wouldn't use it.

At last the door opens and, to his utter shock, Winston sees O'Brien come in. His assumption is that O'Brien has been captured; but it turns out that O'Brien was never a member of the Brotherhood, and that the whole thing had been a trap.

Winston is tortured and interrogated for a seemingly endless time. Somehow he feels that O'Brien is behind it all, directing the entire process with a twisted kind of love. Finally he finds himself alone with O'Brien, who tells him he is insane and that they are to work together to cure him. Winston's discussions with O'Brien dwell on the nature of the past and reality, and reveal much about the Party's approach to those concepts. They also uncover a good deal in O'Brien's personality, which is a puzzling and intricate one. Perhaps most importantly, the

discussions finally answer Winston's former question, "WHY?" The Party, O'Brien explains with a lunatic intensity, seeks absolute power, for power's own sake. This is why it does what it does; and its quest will shape the world into an even more nightmarish one than it already is.

Winston cannot argue; every time he does, he is faced with obstinate logical fallacy, a completely different system of reasoning which runs counter to all reason. His final attempt to argue with O'Brien ends in O'Brien showing Winston himself in the mirror. Winston is beyond horrified to see that he has turned into a sickly, disgusting sack of bones, beaten into a new face.

After this, Winston submits to his re-education. He is no longer beaten; he is fed at regular intervals; he is allowed to sleep (though the lights, of course, never go out). He seems to be making "progress," but underneath he is still holding onto the last remaining kernel of himself and his humanity: his love for Julia.

This comes out when, in the midst of a dream, Winston cries aloud, "Julia! Julia! Julia, my love! Julia!"

This thoughtcrime is his undoing. He is taken to Room 101, where he is threatened with the possibility of being eaten alive by rats. Insane with panic and terror, he screams that they should do it to Julia, not him. Physically he is saved by this betrayal; but it has wiped away the last trace of his humanity and his ability to hold himself up with any sort of pride.

The end of the book finds Winston a shell of a man, completely succumbed to the Party. He and Julia no longer love each other; after Room 101, this is impossible for both of them. He is essentially waiting for his death. As he sits in the Chestnut Tree Cafe, musing distractedly (but never rebelliously) on the wreck of his life, word comes over the telescreen that Oceania has won a major victory against Eurasia (with which it is back at war) and that she now has complete control over Africa. Winston is just as triumphantly excited as everyone else, and he gazes up at the portrait of Big Brother with new understanding. At last, he loves Big Brother

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*: Story in brief

The novel is set in A.F. 632, approximately seven centuries after the twentieth century. A.F. stands for the year of Ford, named for the great industrialist Henry Ford who refined mass production techniques for automobiles. World Controllers who ensure the stability of society rule the world. To ensure social stability, a five-tiered caste system ruled by Alphas and Betas has been created. The labor force comes from the lower three castes, known as Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons. A drug called soma ensures that no one ever feels pain or remains unhappy, and

it is rationed out to and used by members of every caste. Social stability is further ensured through the use of pre- and postnatal conditioning.

Brave New World opens with the Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre giving a group of young students a tour of the facilities. They view the various techniques for producing more babies and watch as the babies are segregated into various castes. After the babies are decanted from their bottles they are conditioned. This is done through Neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopaedia. For the Neo-Pavlovian conditioning, babies are placed in a room filled with books and roses. Alarms and sirens sound, as well as a small electric shock, which so frightens the babies that when they are confronted by the same items a second time they recoil in fear. Hypnopaedia is used to teach the children ethics. While the babies and children are asleep, ethical phrases are played numerous times so that the phrases will become a subconscious part of the each person.

The World Controller of Western Europe, His Fordship Mustapha Mond appears and gives the students a lecture about the way things used to be. Before the Utopian world order was established, he indicates that people used to be parents and have children through live birth. This led to dirty homes with families in them where emotions got in the way of happiness and stability. The first world reformers tried to change things but were ignored by the old governments. War finally ensued, culminating in the use of anthrax bombs. After the so-called Nine Years' War the world went through an economic crisis. Exhausted by the disastrous living conditions, people finally allowed the world reformers to seize control. They soon eradicated religion, monogamy, and most other individualistic traits. The society became stabilized with the introduction of the caste system and the use of soma.

Bernard Marx is introduced as a short, dark haired Alpha who is believed to have accidentally received a dose of alcohol as a fetus. He is not well liked by his coworkers, who talk about him in derogatory tones. Bernard has a crush on Lenina Crowne and she informs the reader that he asked her to go with him to the Savage Reservations several weeks earlier. Lenina has been dating Henry Foster for the past several months, but since long term relationships are discouraged, she agrees to go with Bernard Marx to the Reservations.

Bernard goes to the Director (named Tomakin) and gets his signature to enter the Reservations. The Director tells a story about how he went there twenty-five years earlier with a woman. During a storm she got lost and he was forced to leave her there. The Director then realizes he should not have told Bernard this story and turns defensive by yelling at him. Bernard leaves unruffled and goes to talk to his good friend Helmholtz Watson about his meeting with the Director.

Helmholtz Watson is an intellectually superior Alpha who has become disillusioned with the society. He is tired of his work that consists of writing slogans and statements to inspire people. Helmholtz

indicates that he is searching for a way of expressing something, but he still does not know what. He pities Bernard because he realizes that neither of them can completely fit into the society.

Bernard flies with Lenina to the Savage Reservations. While there he realizes he left a tap of perfume running in his room, and so he calls Helmholtz Watson to ask him to turn it off. Helmholtz tells him that the Director is about to transfer Bernard to Iceland on account of the fact that Bernard has been acting so antisocial lately.

Bernard and Lenina enter the compound and watch the Indians perform a ritualistic dance to ensure a good harvest. A young man named John approaches them and tells them about himself. He was born to a woman named Linda who had been left on the Reservation nearly twenty-five years earlier. John is anxious to learn all about the Utopian world. Linda turns out to be the woman that the Director took to the Reservation and left there. She was unable to leave because she became pregnant with John, and since the Utopian society is disgusted by the notion of live birth, mothers and children are considered taboo topics.

Bernard realizes that John and Linda could save him from getting transferred to Iceland. He calls Mustapha Mond and receives approval to bring them back to London. When Bernard finally returns, he is forced to meet with the Director in public. The Director publicly shames him and informs Bernard that he is being sent to Iceland. Bernard laughs at this and introduces Linda and John. At the disclosure of his past, the Director is so humiliated that he resigns. Bernard becomes an overnight celebrity due to his affiliation with John Savage, whose good looks and mysterious past make him famous. Reveling in his sudden popularity, Bernard starts to date numerous women and becomes extremely arrogant.

Bernard eventually hosts a party with several prominent guests attending. John refuses to come and meet them, at which point Bernard is embarrassed in front of his guests. The guests leave in a rage while Bernard struggles to make amends. John is happier afterwards because Bernard is forced to be his friend again.

Helmholtz and John become very good friends. Helmholtz has managed to get into trouble for writing a piece of poetry about being alone and then reading it to his students. John pulls out his ancient copy of the Complete Works of Shakespeare and starts to read. Helmholtz is overwhelmed by the fiery passion of the language and realizes this is what he has been trying to write.

Lenina has gotten a crush on John the Savage and finally decides to go see him. After a few minutes he tells her that he loves her. Lenina is very happy to hear this and strips naked in front of him in order to sleep with him. John is taken aback before getting extremely mad at her. Crying, "Strumpet!" he proceeds to hit her and chases her into the bathroom. Luckily for Lenina a phone call interrupts John and he rushes off.

John goes to the hospital where Linda has finally succumbed to taking too much soma. While he tries to visit her, a large group of identical twins arrives for their death conditioning. They notice Linda and comment on how ugly she is. John furiously throws them away from her. He then talks to Linda who starts asking for Pope, an Indian she lived with back on the Reservation. John wants her to recognize him and so he starts to shake her. She opens her eyes and sees him but at that moment chokes and passes away. John blames himself for her death. He is once more interrupted by the young twins and silently leaves the room.

When he arrives downstairs John is confronted by several hundred identical twins waiting in line for their daily ration of soma. He passionately thinks that he can change the society and tells them to give up on the soma which is poisoning their minds. He grabs the soma rations and starts to throw the soma away. The Deltas get furious at this and start to attack him. Bernard and Helmholtz receive a phone call telling them to go to the hospital. When they arrive and find John in the middle of a mob, Helmholtz laughs and goes to join him. Bernard stays behind because he is scared of the consequences.

All three men are taken to meet Mustapha Mond who turns out to be in intellectual. He tells Bernard and Helmholtz that they will be sent to an island where other social outcasts are sent. The island is for people who have become more individualistic in their views and can no longer fit in with the larger society.

John and Mustapha engage in a long debate over why the society is structured in that way. John is upset about the fact that history, religion and science are all regulated and banned. Mustapha tells him that the society is designed to maximize each person's happiness. History, religion and science only serve to create emotions that destabilize society and thus lead to unhappiness. In order to ensure perfect stability each person must be conditioned and forced to ignore things which would lead to instability. John continues protesting. The climax of the book comes when Mustapha tells John that, "You are claiming the right to be unhappy." Mustapha then mentions a long list of mankind's ills and evils. John replies, "I claim them all."

Mustapha sends Bernard and Helmholtz away to an island, but refuses to allow John to leave. He tells John that he wants to continue the experiment a little longer. John runs away from London to an abandoned lighthouse on the outskirts of the city. There he sets up a small garden and builds bows and arrows. To alleviate his guilty conscience over the way that Linda died, John makes a whip and hits himself with it. Some Deltas passing by happen to see him in self-flagellation and within three days reporters show up to interview him. He manages to scare most of them away. However, one man catches John beating himself and films the entire event. Within a day hundreds of helicopters arrive carrying people who want to see him beat himself. John cannot escape them all. Lenina and Henry Foster also arrive and

when John sees Lenina he starts to beat her with the whip. The crowd soon begins to chant Orgy-porgy, a sensual hymn used to generate a feeling of oneness. John gets caught up with the crowd and is wakes up the next day having taken soma and engaged in the sensual dance of the hymn. He is overwhelmed with guilt and self-hatred. That evening he is found dead in the lighthouse, hanging from an archway

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*: Story in brief

Set in the 24th century, Fahrenheit 451 tells the story of the protagonist, Guy Montag. At the start of the story he takes pleasure in his profession as a fireman whose job is not to put out fires - houses are now fireproofed - but rather to set fires to burn books, which are contraband, and the houses in which they are kept illegally.

Montag soon begins to question the value of his profession and, in turn, his life. As he develops a friendship with his 16 year-old neighbor, Clarisse McClellan, the girl's humanistic outlook and inquisitive nature prompts Montag to examine himself. He realizes that he is unhappy in his relationship with his wife, Millie, who is unwilling to deal with reality and instead chooses to immerse herself in an addiction to tranquilizers the virtual world provided her by television and radio. He is unfulfilled by his occupation as a book burner, and discontent with his society, which seems unconcerned with reports of an impending war, he begins to wonder what it is about books that makes them such a danger.

Driven by his increasing uneasiness, Montag steals a book from a collection that he has been sent to burn. Soon after, he is shaken when the owner of the books, an older woman, refuses to leave her home, which is to be burned to the ground. Instead, the woman sets fire to her house herself, and remains there as it - and she - is destroyed by flames. That a person could feel so strongly about books and the information contained therein makes Montag realize that perhaps the key to the happiness he lacks lies in the written word. He returns home sick to his stomach, made so by the scene he has witnessed and the thought that he has been an instrument of destruction rather than service during his ten-year career. When he learns that Clarisse had been killed more than a week before from the unfazed Millie, who hadn't thought to tell him earlier, his condition worsens.

The next day, his boss, the abrasive and patronizing Captain Beatty, visits Montag. Beatty hints that he, somehow, knows that Montag is in possession of a book. He lectures Montag about the offensiveness of books and the superiority of their society, where homogeneity and structure are mandated to one where free thought is encouraged and differing opinions are allowed to arise, leading to conflict. When Beatty departs, Montag retrieves some 20 books that he has stolen from "alarms" over the years and begins to read.

Unsure as to what to do next, Montag recalls meeting a retired professor, Faber, a year earlier and discussing with the old man the value of ideas. He decides to visit Faber, who is at first afraid to speak with him, fearing that he will be the firemen's next victim. However, as the two men grow to trust one another, Faber becomes a mentor to Montag, sharing insight with the fireman and conspiring with him to have copies of his books made. Faber gives Montag a small two-way radio to insert in his ear so that the two men will always be in communication.

At home, Montag becomes disgusted with his wife and her friends as the sit idly watching television and engaging in gossip that reveals their extreme selfishness and lack of awareness of, much less concern for, the seemingly inevitable war that is fast approaching and the world around them. Against Faber's advice and with his objections echoing in his ear by way of the radio, Montag engages the women in a debate about family and politics and proceeds to read to them from a book of poetry. When Mildred's two shaken friends depart, she retires to her room to take some sleeping pills and Montag hides his books in the backyard before heading off to work, where Beatty engages in more anti-book, anti-intellectual rhetoric. The firemen are called to an alarm, and Montag is dismayed to discover that it is his own house that is to be burned.

After burning his home and possessions himself, room by room, as ordered by Captain Beatty, Montag is chided by his boss, and the two men engage in a scuffle, during which the radio is knocked from Montag's ear. When Beatty remarks that both Montag and his "friend" (Faber) will be dealt with severely, Montag threatens him with the flame-thrower and, when Beatty continues to verbally abuse him, kills the chief. At once he is pursued by the Mechanical Hound, a computerized attack dog that can track down any human being, which stabs him in the leg with a procaine needle before he is able to annihilate it with the flame-thrower. Montag retrieves his remaining books from the yard before running to Faber's, pausing to plant the books in the home of another fireman, to collect himself at a gas station where he hears reports that war has been declared, and when he is nearly run over by a reckless driver.

Faber provides the fugitive Montag, who is by now being hotly pursued, with some old clothes (to mask his scent to impede the Mechanical Hound that has replaced the one he destroyed in pursuit of him). He tells him to go to the river and float downstream to the train tracks, where he will hopefully find a hobo camp of intellectual outlaws who can help him. Faber sets off for St. Louis to commission a former printer he knows to print some books and Montag does as he suggests, soon finding a group of former writers, clergymen, and academics. The leader of the group, an author named Granger, welcomes Montag and offers him a concoction to change his pH so that the Hound cannot detect his presence. The men then use a portable television to watch the televised police chase, and Montag is shocked to see the Mechanical

Hound kill another man as the announcer proclaims that "Montag is dead!" The police, not wanting to lose the confidence of a public who would like to see "murderous" Montag taken care of, set the Hound on the innocent man when it lost Montag's scent. Granger tells Montag of how the men have each memorized literary works so that someday, when it is safe to do so, they can again print books, this time from memory. When bombs destroy the city, the men set out to sift through the rubble and begin anew by fostering a society where books and the free thought they inspire can flourish. This will be a new society where everyone, including the new, enlightened man that Montag has become will be free to grow and learn.

MA ENGLISH

PART–I

UNIT–D

FRANCIS BACON

ESSAYS

About the Writer

FRANCIS BACON, son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Queen Elizabeth, was born in London on January 22, 1561. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of twelve, and in 1576 he interrupted the law studies he had begun in that year, to go to France in the train of the English Ambassador, Sir Amyas Paulet. He was called home in 1579 by the death of his father; and, having been left with but a small income, he resumed the study of law, and became a barrister in 1582. Two years later he entered the House of Commons, and began to take an active part in politics

From an early age Bacon had been interested in science, and it was in the pursuit of scientific truth that his heart lay. He conceived, however, that for the achievement of the great results at which he aimed, money and prestige were necessary; and he worked hard for both. He was a candidate for several offices of state during Elizabeth's reign, but gained no substantial promotion, and was often in hard straits for money. He received aid from influential patrons, notably the Earl of Essex; and his desertion of this nobleman, with the part he took in his prosecution for treason, is regarded as one of the chief blots on his personal record

Shortly after the accession of James I, Bacon was knighted; in 1606 he married the daughter of an alderman; and in the following year he received the appointment of Solicitor-General, the first important step in the career which culminated in the Lord Chancellorship in 1618. In the latter year he was raised to the peerage as Baron Verulam, and in 1621 he became Viscount St. Albans. He was now at the summit of his public career; but within four months the crash came, and he was convicted of bribery, and sentenced by the House of Lords to the loss of all his offices, to imprisonment, and to the payment of a large fine. He died in retirement on April 9, 1626, leaving no children.

Bacon's most important writings in science and philosophy are parts of a vast work that he left unfinished, his "Magna Instauratio." The first part of this, the "De Augmentis," is an enlargement in Latin of his

book on “The Advancement of Learning,” in which he takes account of the progress in human knowledge to his own day. The second part is the famous “Novum Organum,” or “New Instrument”; a description of the method of induction based on observation and experiment, by which he believed future progress, was to be made. The later parts consist chiefly of fragmentary collections of natural phenomena, and tentative suggestions of the philosophy that was to result from the application of his method to the facts of the physical world.

Bacon’s own experiments are of slight scientific value, nor was he very familiar with some of the most important discoveries of his own day; but the fundamental principles laid down by him form the foundation of modern scientific method

Bacon’s writings are by no means confined to the field of natural philosophy. He wrote a notable “History of Henry VII”; many pamphlets on current political topics; “The New Atlantis,” an unfinished account of an ideal state; “The Wisdom of the Ancients,” a series of interpretations of classical myths in an allegorical sense; legal “Maxims”; and much else.

But by far his most popular work is his “Essays,” published in three editions in his lifetime, the first containing ten essays, in 1597; the second, with thirty-eight, in 1612; and the third, as here printed, in 1625. These richly condensed utterances on men and affairs show in the field of conduct something of the same stress on the useful and the expedient as appears in his scientific work. But it is unjust to regard the “Essays” as representing Bacon’s ideal of conduct. They are rather a collection of shrewd observations as to how, in fact, men do get on in life; human nature, not as it ought to be, but as it is. Sometimes, but by no means always, they consider certain kinds of behavior from a moral standpoint; oftener they are frankly pieces of worldly wisdom; again, they show Bacon’s ideas of state policy; still again, as in the essay “Of Gardens,” they show us his private enthusiasms. They cover an immense variety of topics; they are written in a clear, concise, at times almost epigrammatic, style; they are packed with matter; and now, as when he wrote them, they,

to use his own words of them, “come home to men’s business and bosoms.”

Historical and philosophical context

Bacon's most immediate philosophical context is that of Aristotelian philosophy, which was still one of the prevalent intellectual currents of Bacon's day. Aristotle's *Physics,* which emphasized the role of a complex system of causes, form and matter, offered a theoretical rather than experimental picture of the natural world. Medieval Aristotelian philosophers, collectively known as the scholastics, sought to interpret and update Aristotle's system. However, absolute consensus around Aristotle clearly did not exist, even in the universities. When Bacon was at Cambridge, attacks on Aristotle's logic by the French thinker Ramus were being debated. Recent scholarship emphasizes the wide range of opinions that can be classed as "Aristotelian."

Bacon was by no means the first thinker to react against Aristotle, but to understand his reaction one must recognize the importance of Aristotle in early modern intellectual life. This reaction was indeed a severe one; Bacon's key aim throughout *The New Organon* was to replace what he believed to be Aristotle's universal truths with the idea that truth had to be discovered.

Bacon's involvement with contemporary experimental philosophy is also important. From comments in *The New Organon* itself, and from his letters, we know that Bacon took a keen interest in scientific developments and discoveries, despite his criticism of purely "empirical" philosophy. His discussions of Galileo's theory of tides, Gilbert's concept of magnetism, and of the use of the recently developed microscope, show a philosopher in touch with contemporary developments. Bacon also performed and directed his own experiments, some of which were more successful than the chicken-freezing enterprise that hastened his demise. The modern view of Bacon emphasizes the role of scientific practice in his work, and his links to contemporary experimenters.

The immediate reception of *The New Organon* was varied. James I famously claimed not to understand a word of the book, and the scientist William Harvey accused him of

writing philosophy "like a Lord Chancellor"; that is, of arguing in a manipulative, political way. On a similarly negative note, John Chamberlain agreed with the judgment that "a fool could not have written such a work, and a wise man would not." Bacon's new method was more popular amongst the scientists and natural philosophers that made up the newly created Royal Society in London. They adopted him as a kind of philosophical patron saint, and figures like Robert Hooke tried to model their own investigations on Baconian lines.

Bacon's later influence is debatable. Certainly, the modern "scientific method" bears no resemblance to Bacon's inductive method. On these grounds, his project can be judged to have failed. But although no modern scientist uses inductive methods, Bacon is still credited with influencing the development of modern science. His philosophical reputation was greatest in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but has declined ever since. Many later historians agreed that his criticism of Aristotle and his emphasis on experiments and practice were important steps, but these historians also argued that the concept of induction was outdated and represented a false step in the development of the modern scientific method. The most recent Bacon scholarship is less judgmental, and emphasizes Bacon's historical and theoretical contexts. Most informed historians agree that criticizing Bacon because his method did not survive the test of time, or because of his "moral failings" is a mistake. The nineteenth century's obsession with vindicating Bacon of political corruption at the expense of studying his philosophy has disappeared. Whether Bacon would have welcomed this development is unclear.

Important dates in Bacon's Life

1561 January 22, born in London to Sir Nicolas Bacon, the lord keeper of seal, and the sister-in-law of Lord Burghley.

1573 April, enters Trinity college, Cambridge where he studies all the sciences then taught.

1576 Enters Gray's Inn with his brother Anthony. Travels with the Ambassador to Paris, Sir Amyas Paulet.

1579 Resides at Gray's Inn. Father's death leaves him penniless so he begins a career in law.

1582 Made outer barister at Gray's Inn.

1584 Takes a seat in parliament for Dorsetshire.

1591 Confidential advisor to the earl of Essex.

1593 Takes a seat in parliament for Middlesex.

1597 Publishes his *Essays* along with *Colours of Good and Evil* and the *Meditationes Sacrae*.

1601 February 8, Essex leads a plot to kidnap the queen in order to force her to dismiss his enemies from her court. The leaders were arrested and Bacon was instrument al in securing for the queen a guilty verdict at Essex' trial.

1603 Queen Elizabeth dies, succeeded by James I in whose service Bacon flourishes.

1607 Receives office of solicitor.

1608 Named treasurer of Gray's Inn.

1613 Bacon becomes attorney general.

1617 March 7, made lord keeper of the seal, the same office his father had held. 1618 January 7, made lord chancellor, and received the title of Baron Verulam.

1620 Publishes *Novum Organum*.

1621 Created Viscount St. Albans. Charged with bribery and found guilty upon his own admission. Fined forty thousand pounds, sentenced to the Tower of London, prohibi ted from holding office for the state, and prohibited from sitting on parliament. The sentence was reduced and no fine was paid and only four days were spent in the Tower but he never again held office or sat for parliament.

1622 Presents to Prince Charles the *History of Henry VII*. Publishes *Historia Ventorum* and *Historia Vitae et Mortis*.
1623 Publishes *De Augmentis Scientiarum*.

1624 Publishes *Apothegms*.

1626 March, while driving near Highgate, decides to experiment with the effect of cold on the decay of meat, purchases a fowl and stuffs it with snow. Catches cold and develops bronchitis, dies on April 9.

The Age: Renaissance, Enlightenment and Scientific Development

The Late Middle Ages (1300–1450) saw the decline of medieval civilization. Here we will examine the intellectual and artistic currents that developed in this climate of upheaval. By the end of the period, the seeds of a distinctly modern outlook had been sown, seeds that would flower during the Renaissance and continue to grow over the succeeding centuries.

Late-medieval Europe suffered the cumulative effects of famine, disease, and warfare. As the fourteenth century opened, an agricultural crisis developed, causing full-scale famine by 1315. In 1347, the Black Death struck for the first time. By the end of the last outbreak, approximately one-third of Europe's population had died. Western Europe was further torn by the Hundred Years War between England and France. The war finally ended when the French drove the English from virtually all of France.

Destructive as these upheavals were, nothing undermined medieval civilization so deeply as the decline of the papacy. Conflicts with the French monarchy culminated with the Babylonian Captivity, during which the papacy resided in France and was forced to pursue pro-French policies. The Great Schism further eroded papal authority as a series of opposing popes, ruling from Avignon and Rome, struggled for control of the church. By 1418, the work of the Conciliar Movement healed the schism, but a strengthened papacy thwarted its larger aim of transforming the church into a constitutional system. As the papacy fought to maintain its position, it neglected its spiritual and moral responsibilities, prompting attacks on the concept of papal power.

These attacks came from both political critics and the leaders of dissenting sects. Critics such as Marsilius of Padua denied the church's temporal authority. That authority belonged to secular rulers, who must exercise it without clerical interference. Similarly, the dissenters John Wycliffe and Jan Hus challenged the church's temporal and spiritual authority. Denouncing the wealth of the

higher clergy, both stressed that individuals could achieve salvation without the church by cultivating a personal relationship with God. The church declared both leaders heretics and persecuted their followers.

Paralleling these political and social crises were changes in philosophical thought and artistic expression. As the papacy declined, the scholastic synthesis of faith and reason unraveled. Philosophers such as William of Ockham argued that reason could not prove the truth of Christian doctrines. Those doctrines, including the existence of God, were matters of faith alone. Belief, therefore, was the sole basis of theology and reason the proper tool for investigating nature. Challenging as these ideas were, their proponents did not seek to undermine faith entirely. Rather, they sought to disentangle faith and reason

Similarly, late-medieval artists did not reject completely established themes and forms. Writers such as Catherine of Sienna and the Pearl Poet, as well as many visual artists, examined traditional Christian themes through familiar forms—e.g., romance, dream vision, and the techniques of Gothic art. However, following the example of Dante, several important authors explored new themes and ways of using established forms. Petrarch, Chaucer, Christine de Pizan, and others developed a vernacular literature that pushed the limits of formal convention and demonstrated fresh interest in human talents, worldly activities, and the complexities of heterosexual love. Further, many of these authors, again following Dante, rediscovered classical literature, adapting its rhetoric and forms to their purposes.

Likewise, late-medieval visual artists and musicians expanded the possibilities of their arts. Sculptors such as Claus Sluter and the Pisanos experimented with spatial perspective and naturalistic representation of the human form. The Limbourg Brothers included in their manuscript illuminations realistic portraits of their patrons and detailed depictions of peasant life. Some of the most lasting innovations came from Italian painters. The most important of these was Giotto, whose dramatic, psychologically engaging style would not be rivaled until the Renaissance. Similarly, late-medieval music built upon

older styles. The *ars nova* broadened the limits of the *ars antiqua* by incorporating into liturgical music a greater rhythmic and vocal range. Further ars nova composers, including Guillaume De Machaut and Francesco Landini, introduced new systems of notation and musical analysis, and developed secular vernacular forms such as the madrigal and caccia.

The decline of medieval civilization did not occasion an abrupt break with the past. Medieval institutions persisted well into the modern age. Feudalism, for example, survived into the eighteenth century and helped shape such modern ideas as liberty, the rule of law, and representative government. Further, Christianity continues to influence concepts of justice, and modern thought and art could not have developed as they did without the foundations laid by medieval philosophers and artists. However, significant changes did occur. During this period, for instance, Europe began to outstrip the rest of the world in the use of technology. Further, a secular modern outlook began to emerge. Over the succeeding centuries, that outlook would replace religious explanations of nature with scientific ones; promote the essential equality and freedom of individuals; and uphold the independence of human reason.

The Middle Ages were long centuries of stability in the intellectual world. All scientific and philosophical expression was monitored extensively by, and most often produced from within, the Church. During the Middle Ages, the Church ruled conclusively on a number of truths about the natural world, which it claimed were undeniable. These alleged Biblical study and the widely accepted Aristotelian system, which became Official Church doctrine, produced truths. The Aristotelian system defined the laws of physics erroneously in many cases. It claimed that the rate of fall of an object was determined by its weight, held that matter was constructed out of four possible elements, with different matter containing different combinations of these four. It described the universe as the Greek astronomer Ptolemy had described it, as a static and finite thing in which the Earth occupied the central position, with the sun and planets in revolution and the distant stars inhabiting its farthest edges. The physicians of the period considered

that the human body contained four different kinds of liquid and that illness was caused by the imbalance of these 'humors.' These truths went generally unquestioned for years, backed up by the teachings of the Church and the common teaching of the educational institutions of the era.

With the rise of the Renaissance, new interest sparked in reference to the physical world. In part boosted by the spirit of geographical exploration, which dominated Europe and provided many new specimens for study and experimentation, the artists and thinkers of the Renaissance were infused with the desire to know and portray reality, prompting a dramatic rise in scientific exploration. Botany and biology flourished, as artists sought to better understand their subjects. This focus on the investigation of reality naturally began to create questions regarding the accepted Aristotelian norms. However, learning institutions continued to preach the Aristotelian system and the Church reinforced the dependence on past authority, thus, to an extent, drowning out the spirit of inquiry and doubt. The Protestant Reformation, begun by Martin Luther in 1517, radically transformed the theological and political landscape of Europe. Many Europeans began to question the authority of the Church. Indeed, a large faction broke away from the Church, in doing so breaking free from the restriction of intellectual progress. The fierce censorship of the Church's response to the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, further pushed people from the Catholic fold and appeared to many as foolishly protective of it's outdated doctrines. In this atmosphere the Scientific Revolution blossomed, and the Aristotelian system fell. By breaking the hold of the Aristotelian system, the Scientific Revolution opened the door to modern science. Much of the work done during the latter sixteenth and seventeenth century is still considered the foundation of the major fields of modern science, including physics, chemistry, biology, and astronomy. The Scientific Revolution left the world with a more logical description of physics, in which the laws of motion and gravity were well understood, setting the stage for many future breakthroughs and inventions. In the field of biology, where much had been left to mysticism until the seventeenth

century, thinkers of the Scientific Revolution made great strides, pushing understanding of the human body to unprecedented heights. Out of this knowledge sprung the advancement of prevention and treatment for illness, a field that grew markedly after the Scientific Revolution. Perhaps the largest advance of the Scientific Revolution occurred in astronomy. Fueled by better understanding of physics and math (Newton's explanation of the motions of heavenly bodies relied heavily on his development of the mathematical field of calculus), astronomers unlocked the door to the universe.

Born out of the Scientific Revolution was the Enlightenment (Enlightenment has been discussed separately in detail), which applied the scientific method developed during the seventeenth century to human behavior and society during the eighteenth century. The Scientific Revolution influenced the development of the Enlightenment values of individualism because it demonstrated the power of the human mind. The ability of scientists to come to their own conclusions rather than deferring to instilled authority confirmed the capabilities and worth of the individual. The power of human beings to discern truth through reasoning influenced the development of the Enlightenment value of rationalism. Such influences, combined with the decreasing reliance on the traditional teachings of the Church, led to a period of philosophical activity unparalleled in modern times.

The Renaissance revived classical learning in a way that broke with the medieval Christian outlook. Though not anti-Christian, Renaissance individuals embraced the possibilities of this life rather than focusing on the hereafter. Further, instead of renouncing earthly endeavors for contemplation of God, these elite cultivated personal excellence, sought the recognition of their achievements, and explored their own personalities. This individualism was expressed through mastery of the classics. Like the thinkers of the Twelfth-Century Awakening, Renaissance scholars valued classical learning. However, unlike their medieval precursors, these scholars delved more deeply into classical texts and appreciated them for their own sake. Renaissance scholars assumed that classical authors could teach them much about life, civic duty, and graceful self-

expression. However, these thinkers, unlike their medieval forebears, did not take the classics as timeless wisdom, but studied them critically in their historical context.

The Renaissance unfolded in a politically fragmented Italy. Except for forty years of relative peace, the peninsula was torn by warfare among the Italian states and, from 1494 to 1559, between France and Spain. During the early fifteenth century, humanism emerged in Florence and became the principal vehicle of the classical revival. With the patronage of the powerful Medici family, Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruno defined the *studia humanitatis* as an educational program based on the study of Greek and Roman authors. The goal of their civic humanism was to train aristocratic men for public affairs. Glorifying Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio as crucial forebears, both men stressed the study of classical languages, grammar, religion, moral philosophy, history, and poetry. Men and women alike could study these subjects, but only men could take up rhetoric, science, and mathematics.

Though humanism was not itself a philosophy, it prompted notable works of philosophy, history, and political and social thought. Instructed by Byzantine scholars, many humanists mastered Greek and explored Platonism and Aristotle in the original. Under the influence of Greek philosophy, humanists including Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and Pompanazzi developed increasingly secular ideas about ethics, the human soul, and the power of reason. Humanists often consulted ancient historians for moral and political guidance, cultivating a critical historical awareness that they applied in their own historical writings. Florentine secular humanism suffered a short but violent Christian reaction led by Savonarola. After his fall, humanism found two of its most important expressions in the work of Machiavelli and Castiglione. Scrutinizing history and contemporary politics, Machiavelli developed a secular theory of the state in which rulers maintain civil order through coldly pragmatic policies. This political ideal addressed the realities of sixteenth-century politics, as did Castiglione's social ideal. By defining the broad, versatile attributes of the courtier and court lady, Castiglione put the humanist ideal of well-rounded individuality at the service of princely rule.

Renaissance art broke with the medieval past by emphasizing the human form and the natural world. Alberti and Vasari articulated this break by, respectively, establishing the principles of mathematical perspective and defining the Renaissance as a distinct age, a cultural rebirth after the period of medieval decay. During the Early Renaissance, sculptors, architects, and painters all made the human figure and its proportions the center of their work. Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, and Masaccio all adapted the principles of linear perspective to their respective arts, while Donatello revived the classical tradition of freestanding sculpture. To capture further how the eye sees the world, Masaccio developed aerial perspective, while both he and Donatello realistically modeled the shapes of their figures. Brunelleschi embodied Renaissance ingenuity by creating an innovative dome for the Florence Cathedral. Other painters—including Fra Fillipo Lippi, Botticelli, and Ghirlandaio—experimented with a variety of techniques, including the use of sensual color, sculptural precision of line, and Flemish-influenced realism.

High Renaissance artists absorbed their precursors' innovations and adapted them to a style marked by classical balance, simplicity, and harmony. Leonardo da Vinci pioneered the new style in painting, developing circular motion and pyramidal design to arrange figures both realistically and harmoniously. Michelangelo introduced a new degree of emotional and physical tension into sculpture and, as painter of the Sistine Chapel, skillfully adapted the proportions of his figures to fit the contours of the space while giving them monumental weight and definition. He also excelled as a poet and an architect, executing his revision of Bramante's plan for St. Peter's in Rome. Raphael brought harmonious pyramidal design to its highest refinement in his Madonna-and-Child paintings and monumental *School of Athens*. The Venetian style revolutionized color by introducing oil paints. Titian developed this style by modeling his figures through color rather than line, using tone to create individualized portraits. Tintoretto pointed toward Mannerism with his unusual perspective lines and unearthly light.

Fueled by sixteenth-century political and religious upheaval, Mannerism fractured High Renaissance harmony and

balance. Painters including Parmagianino and El Greco cultivated discord and instability, distorted human proportions, and employed eccentric colors. Sofonsiba Anguissola gained fame as a painter of psychologically insightful portraits, and Vasari distinguished himself as both a painter and architect.

During this period, music underwent no profound transformation. Italian composers produced sacred and secular music in medieval polyphonic styles. However, in the sixteenth century, *intermezzi*, initially composed as interludes during plays, emerged as a distinct form that pointed the way toward opera. The members of the Florentine camerata, who experimented with music that would both facilitate and emotionally complement the recitation of texts took further steps toward opera. Renaissance art and thought decisively broke with the medieval worldview. By embracing secular reason and emphasizing earthly human achievement, Renaissance thinkers introduced the modern outlook still familiar to us today. Further, by envisioning history as an evolution from bloom to decay to rebirth, these thinkers established the idea of progress. During the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, humanism spread from Italy, prompting the Northern Renaissance.

As Renaissance ideas took hold in the North, humanism there assumed a distinctly Christian character: what Italian humanists had done for classical antiquity, Northern humanists sought to do for Christian antiquity. Accordingly, Northern humanists founded schools devoted to critical study of the church fathers, prepared new editions of those thinkers' works, and studied Greek and Hebrew for the purpose of biblical scholarship. They also published scholarly editions of the Bible and translated it into vernacular languages. Important Northern humanists include Rudolf Agricola, the first to promote the *studia humanitatis* in Germany; Lefèvre d'Étaples, who wrote an important commentary on Paul's epistles; Cardinal Ximénez, who advanced Spanish Catholicism as Grand Inquisitor; and Thomas More, whose enigmatic *Utopia* offers the fist modern exploration of the perfect state. The most prominent Christian humanist was Erasmus, who wrote the popular satire, *The Praise of Folly*, edited the Greek New

Testament, and wrote on the education of the Christian prince.

Christian humanism inspired many Reformation thinkers, particularly Martin Luther. His own close study of Scripture led him to formulate the crucial Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. This idea, and his outrage at the practice of indulgence, prompted Luther to deny the spiritual mediation of the clergy, claim Scripture as the only authority for Christians, and reject all the sacraments except baptism and the Eucharist. After clashing with both church and imperial officials, Luther lived under the protection of the Elector of Saxony, where he translated the Bible into German. Though Luther did not oppose the secular state, his ideas spoke to the dissatisfactions of the impoverished classes, who cited some of his writings to justify revolt. In 1547, war erupted between the Lutheran and Catholic German states and continued until the Peace of Augsburg (1555).

Paralleling Luther's Evangelical Protestantism was the Reformed tradition. Founded by Zwingli and advanced by Calvin, this tradition broke with Lutheranism in significant ways. While Luther reinterpreted the Eucharist in terms of consubstantiation, Zwingli argued that Christ was only symbolically present in the Host. Further, Calvin extended the idea of justification, making predestination his central theological tenet. Calvin also wrote an influential summary of Protestant theology and advocated state maintenance of public morality through the consistory.

As Calvinism spread through Europe, Catholics responded harshly. The most violent reaction occurred in France, where Huguenots suffered brutal persecution. After the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the Huguenot nobleman Mornay theorized Protestant resistance to secular authority. Bloody religious warfare continued until the Protestant Henry IV converted to Catholicism and issued the Edict of Nantes protecting Huguenot rights. In the Netherlands, the Catholic Hapsburgs fought the united Dutch Protestants in a series of wars that continued until 1648. After Henry VIII detached the Church of England from Rome, England swung between Catholicism and radical Protestantism. Under Elizabeth I, the Catholic threat ended

with the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588), and the radical Puritans were temporarily neutralized. Mainstream Protestantism quickly developed a radical fringe. Sects including the Anabaptists emerged to demand even greater church reform. Unlike Luther or Calvin, members of these sects rejected any link between the church and civil government. Further, they advanced their own interpretations of the Bible and appealed to the poorer classes with radical social doctrines, angering both Catholics and other Protestants. These doctrines spurred uprisings, most notably the Anabaptist capture of Münster that was crushed by a combined Catholic and Lutheran army. During this period, Christian attitudes toward Jews grew increasingly complicated. Both humanists and Reformation leaders vilified Jews. Luther initially promoted kindness toward Jews but later condemned what he saw as their resistance to Christian truth and advocated civil action against them. Reformed leaders both denounced Luther's hatred of Jews and believed Jews threatened their religious communities. Later, as Protestants suffered greater persecution, they began to identify with Jews as an exiled and oppressed people.

The church launched a systematic response to the Protestant challenge through the Catholic Reformation. Clerical discipline and morality were reformed, and Pope Paul III convened the Council of Trent to formulate condemnations of and theological replies to Protestant teaching. New religious orders rose to advance church doctrine, most notably the Jesuits. Founded by Ignatius Loyola, author of the influential *Spiritual Exercises*, the Jesuits committed themselves to Christian education and serving the papacy. The church also published the Index of Forbidden Books to restrain the spread of Protestant ideas. Along with the Renaissance, the Reformation laid the foundation of the modern world. By undermining church authority, the Reformation supported the rise of the modern centralized state, and by contributing to ideas of political liberty, it advanced the claims of individual freedom against those states. Further, by promoting concepts of spiritual equality, the Reformation helped undermine medieval class distinctions. Reformation spiritual individualism reinforced Renaissance intellectual

individualism, contributing to the Western ideal of confident, assertive selfhood. Although many Reformation thinkers denounced capitalism, Protestant self-reliance did contribute to the rise of the sober, disciplined middle-class businessman. Finally, although Protestants persecuted dissenters within their own ranks, just as Catholics persecuted Protestants, Reformation thinkers also planted the seeds of modern religious tolerance

Story.

As the political, religious turmoil of the Reformation spread, humanist writers and artists began to doubt humanist assumptions about the universe and humanity. This chapter discusses how these and other concerns shaped the intellectual and artistic developments of the Late Renaissance.

Writers of this period expressed skepticism of human possibility and the idea of absolute truth. In France, Marguerite de Navarre, Rabelais, and Montaigne used their humanist learning to question human nature and the ability to grasp higher meaning, employing styles ranging from scatological lampoon to the exploratory essay. In Spain, Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*, examining a protagonist who steadfastly understands his absurd imaginative world as real. English literature flourished amidst the competing forces of Protestantism and Catholicism. Drawing on diverse literary sources to praise Elizabeth I, Spenser's *Faerie Queen* presents England as an ideal realm uniting the two cities of Augustinian theology. Marlowe's plays examine characters driven by desire for power, while Shakespeare explored the full range of emotion and motivation. Best known for tragedies, Shakespeare wrote in several dramatic and poetic genres (including the uniquely English chronicle play), portraying human psychology with unprecedented complexity and insight. Jonson excelled at lyric and comedy satirizing human folly, and Donne wrote intellectually rigorous poetry and meditative prose exploring varieties of love and religious belief and in the stream are Bacon’s essays. During Renaissance learning was no longer only to be devoted to securing salvation, but should address the conditions of ordinary life as well. The pre-Christian cultures of the ancient Mediterranean had introduced Europeans to philosophies that valued human society and its

future generations; studying classical texts afresh, thinkers began to attend in new ways to the world around them. The writers and scholars responsible for the rebirth of a secular culture have been known as "humanists," because they read "humane" as well as "sacred" letters; and their intellectual and artistic practices have been termed "humanism."

The humanists cultivated certain habits of thought that became widely adopted by early modern thinkers of all kinds: skill in using language analytically, attentiveness to public and political affairs as well as private and moral ones, and an acute appreciation for differences between peoples, regions, and times. It was, after all, the humanists who began to realize that the classical past required *understanding;* they recognized the past as unfamiliar, neither Christian nor European, and they knew, therefore, that it had to be studied, interpreted, and, in a sense, reborn.

At the same time, changes were occurring for which there were no precedents. During these years, the modern world was born as much as an older world was reborn, and for this reason the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have also been called the "early modern period." Its modernity was registered in many ways. Instruments for measuring time and space provided a knowledge of physical nature, a mapping of land, sea, and even the sky that began to permit global travel. Means had to be designed to compute the wealth that was being created by manufacture and trade, and new methods were employed by a people keen to exploit all kinds of resources, including the labor of individuals. Money was used in new and complex ways, its flow managed through such innovations as double-entry bookkeeping and letters of exchange that registered debt and credit in interregional markets. The capital that accumulated as a result of these kinds of transactions fueled merchant banks, joint-stock companies, and—notably in England—trading companies that sponsored colonies abroad. In England especially, wealth was increasingly based on money, not land, and the change encouraged a social mobility that reflected but also exploited the old hierarchy. Riches could and did make it possible for an artisan's son to purchase a coat of arms and become a

gentleman, as William Shakespeare did. More important, moneyed wealth supported the artistic and scholarly institutions that allowed the stepson of a bricklayer to go to the best school in London, to profit from the business of the theater, and to compose literary works of sufficient brilliance to make him poet laureate, as Ben Jonson did. "Ambition is like choler," warned Francis Bacon; it makes men "active, earnest, full of alacrity and stirring." But if ambition "be stopped and cannot have his way, it becommeth adust, and thereby maligne and venomous." Early modern society was certainly both active and stirring; but the very energy that gave it momentum could also lead to hardship, distress, and personal tragedy.

Urban life flourished in conditions that were increasingly hospitable to commerce; rural existence became precarious as small farms failed. During the fifteenth century the nobility had begun to enlarge their estates by the incorporation or "enclosing" of what had formerly been public or common land. They sought to profit from a new activity: sheep farming. Thousands of men and women who had worked the land on modest estates lost their livelihoods as a result. Many came to the cities, particularly London; others traveled through the country, looking for odd work, begging, and thieving. The situation got worse when Henry VIII broke England's tie to the Catholic Church, for Henry added to the property of the very rich by giving them the land he had confiscated from the church. On the other hand, the great centers of commerce—Bristol, Norwich, and London—sustained not only trade but also many kinds of manufacture. One of the most important was printing. The invention of movable type in 1436 by a German printer, Johann Gutenberg, revolutionized the dissemination of texts. A single illuminated manuscript took years to produce and provided what was often a unique version of a text, an item that might cost as much as a small farm. A printing press could quickly produce multiple copies of identical versions of a text for as little as a few shillings.

Both the mentality of the "Renaissance" and the more comprehensive culture of the early modern period are illustrated by the history of the most frequently disseminated and contested text of these centuries: the

Bible. It was the work of humanists to establish what that text was (after centuries of corrupted versions) and then to translate it into the vernacular languages. Desiderius Erasmus provided accurate Hebrew and Greek texts and translated them into Latin. Printed English translations begin with William Tyndale's New Testament, introduced to England in the 1520s. Later versions included the Geneva Bible with its Calvinist commentary; the Bishops' Bible, repudiating much of that commentary; and the King James Bible, or "Authorized Version," a work by forty-seven translators that was published in 1611. Protestant doctrine emphasized the importance of reading Scripture as a means to spiritual enlightenment, and the preface to the King James Bible insists that for this purpose a translation is as good as the original: "No cause why the word translated should be denied to be the word." But the importance of the Bible went beyond its status as the basis for religious belief.

People from various walks of life, not only humanists found the Bible a source of inspiration for social reform, a means to link together religious conviction and political practice. Drawing on the Bible to justify their ideas of government, writers as different as the radical Bishop of Winchester, John Ponet, and the scholarly King James VI of Scotland, eventually James I of England presented arguments for distinctive kinds of monarchy. Ponet insisted that a monarch was obliged to obey the law of the land and thus to adhere to a "constitution"; James thought that a monarch should respect only divine law and be considered "absolute." Other writers, inspired by their own understanding of God's word, forged new concepts of the state, the subject, and sovereignty that would continue to shape political philosophy to the American War of Independence.

The Bible and the attitudes it prompted were also factors in the establishment of an English church. The English people had been forced to break formally and definitively from the Catholic Church because their king, Henry VIII, wished to be independent of the papacy and its government in Rome. His reasons were many and complex. Certainly responsive to the demand for changes in church government, doctrine, and liturgy, Henry was motivated by

personal and political interests as well. In love with a lady of the court, Anne Boleyn, he was persuaded that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, the widow of his older brother, Prince Arthur, violated divine law. Catherine, mother of the girl who would become Mary I, had failed to give Henry a son, and he saw in his frustrated hopes for the dynastic stability that would come from having a male heir a sign that God was displeased with his marriage. He sought a divorce from the Pope and was refused. In 1533, however, his pliable Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, defying the Pope out of loyalty to his king, pronounced Henry's marriage to Catherine invalid. The following year, Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy; besides making the monarch of England head of an English church, it made Henry immediately free from the Pope's jurisdiction. English clergy who had promoted the idea of a reformation began to institute the changes they had envisaged. But the socially destabilizing effects of the English reformation, far from abating, grew more profound as time went on.

Huge numbers of the faithful would suffer, Protestants as well as Catholics. The creation of an English church not only separated England from most of the continent, it disturbed the religious peace that had prevailed for centuries. The story is a grim one: Catholics in the north of England unsuccessfully resisted Henry's imposition of Protestantism in their Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. Protestants were in turn persecuted by Mary I throughout her reign. Elizabeth I suppressed Catholics; and sectarians of various denominations were required to adhere to Anglican forms of worship under the Stuarts.

The prodigiously revolutionary changes in early modern England were vividly reflected in its profuse and varied literature. Topics and issues that for centuries had been considered by relatively small numbers of literate people were now registered in general debate. New and evolving conditions of religious, intellectual, and political life provided writers with a vast subject matter, and their work shed light on the world that they saw unfolding before them. They showed its potential for prosperous development through all kinds of human activity; they represented its long and varied history as proof of providential direction;

and they praised its myriad forms as the expression of a divine and beneficent artificer.

As early twenty-first century readers, we come to the literature of this period with our own perspectives on what is modern and what we understand as postmodern. Many features of early modern culture are again in transition today: the printed book, which once superseded the manuscript, is now being challenged by computer-generated hypertext. The nation-state which once eclipsed the feudal domain and divided "Christendom," is now qualified by an international economy; and the belief in human progress, which was once applauded as an advance over the medieval faith in divine providence, is now subject to criticism. As modern and postmodern readers, we have a special affinity with our early modern counterparts. Like them, we study change

The enlightenment in Europe

The Enlightenment was yet another step in the rapid evolution of the western world in the modern era. The Renaissance was the first step, shattering the stability and relative intellectual narrowness of the long Middle Ages. The Renaissance awoke the spirit of intellectualism, science, and artistic expression, looking to the glory of the ancient past for a model upon which to base the revival of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. With the coming of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, Europe began to stop looking to the past and begun to look toward the future. The Protestants, making up a large and powerful faction within the Catholic Church, rejected many of the Church's teachings and decried the corrupt nature of traditional Church rule. The Protestants broke ranks with the church and established a religious following that grew steadily to a position nearly of co- dominance alongside the Catholic Church in Europe. This step greatly limited the power of the Church, which had been the dominant force of the Middle Ages. With this obstacle aside, the barriers of tradition began to fall even more rapidly.

The next step in the evolution of Europe away from the constraints of tradition was the Scientific Revolution, which lasted through the seventeenth century. The thinkers

of the Scientific Revolution capitalized on the prevailing attitudes about questioning tradition and authority, applying them to supposed scientific truths that had been preserved by the Church during the Middle Ages. These truths had been handed down from the ancient thinkers of Greece and Rome under the Aristotelian System and were considered undeniable until the seventeenth century. The luminaries of the Scientific Revolution found that the ancient thinkers had been gravely mistaken in their explanation of the universe and the organisms within the universe. Gradually, traditional authority was torn down and the great thinkers of the Scientific Revolution began to discern the laws governing the operation of the world around them. New truths were established and conclusively proven in biology, mathematics, chemistry, physics, and astronomy.

The Enlightenment grew up alongside and out of the Scientific Revolution. The elucidation of laws governing the functioning of nature led philosophers to desire a similar set of laws to govern the interactions of men. One main difference was that there was no established authority to serve as a starting point for this inquiry. Thus, the Enlightenment produced a wide variety of philosophies on the nature of man, with none able to claim the position of truth, since philosophies cannot be easily tested for accuracy. However, a common strain of thought did emerge from he Enlightenment, stating that men could improve, and perhaps perfect, human life through education and the effort to discover the laws of human interaction. Theories on what these laws might be exhorted free will, democracy, liberty, and ethics.

Armed with these philosophies, Europeans moved from the Enlightenment to a period of revolution, during which the citizenry attempted to prove the Enlightenment theory that men could improve their lot in life by conforming to the laws of nature. Conforming to the laws established by the eighteenth century philosophers involved, more than anything, liberalization of government to give the citizenry a more direct role in governance. The French Revolution exemplified this desire, its goal to end the political irrelevance of the lower classes and overthrow an oppressive monarchy. The American Revolution also borrowed

heavily from the ideas of the Enlightenment philosophers, and American leaders such as Thomas Jefferson are often considered among the Enlightenment ranks. As the bastions of absolute power in Europe crumbled in the ensuing centuries, the ideas of the Enlightenment on the nature of humankind and the responsibilities of government clearly informed the creation of new governments and new cultural mores.

The Enlightenment is often considered the founding period of modern thought and intellectual expression. The style, ideals, and subject matter employed by Enlightenment philosophers heavily influenced their direct successors in philosophy and literature. The works of the Enlightenment have remained widely studied, and their influence continues to be felt even today

The Enlightenment was in many ways a continuation of the Scientific Revolution that preceded it. During the Scientific Revolution, scientists sought to discern the laws of nature using deductive reasoning and the scientific method. The great achievement of the Scientific Revolution, the *Principia,* set forth a comprehensive portrait of the laws that governed the operation of the physical universe. Enlightenment thinkers saw this and sought to apply the scientific method to human behavior so as to discover the laws that governed human institutions and human society. Whereas what little analysis had been previously done regarding human interaction had focused on groups or broad categories of people, the Enlightenment focused on the individual in its search for the laws of human behavior. Enlightenment thinkers witnessed the power of the individual mind during the scientific revolution and became convinced that the key to understanding human society was to understand the motives, beliefs, and needs of the individual.

The Scientific Revolution also inspired the Enlightenment value of rationalism. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were infused with the belief that the human mind, using reason, could arrive at truth. During the Scientific Revolution, individual minds had seen past false authority and made much progress toward the true understanding of nature. The theorists of the Enlightenment observed this and easily transferred it to their quest to

better understand human interaction. Most Enlightenment philosophers were optimists who believed that if humans sought to discover, and were subsequently educated in, the laws governing society, these laws could be employed to improve the condition of human life. Some Enlightenment thinkers saw human society as potentially perfect. The rise of exploration was instrumental in setting the stage for the Enlightenment. Just as exploration had played an important part in the Scientific Revolution by bringing new specimens to Europe for observation and experimentation, exploration increased European exposure to foreign ways. The Enlightenment philosophers in effect had a greater number of societies and cultures for observation and experimentation. This increased exposure led to the rise of relativism. Many Enlightenment thinkers, unlike those before them, saw foreign cultures as just as natural and valid as European culture, and the spirit of tolerance grew out of this. Events in European politics, such as the English Civil War and the death of Louis XIV, reinforced the liberalism of Enlightenment political theory. With the rise of individualism, Enlightenment thinkers stressed the importance of the government's role in protecting the individual, and the individual's right to take part in his own governance to some extent. Political thinkers of the Enlightenment overwhelmingly advocated systems in which the individual exercised control over his own actions to a great extent, and also played a role in setting societal standards. Whereas Europe was dominated by monarchs who ruled according to a claim to divine right, Enlightenment thinkers most often claimed that government should derive its power from the consent of the governed. This idea would prove a powerful one, and has continued to play an important role in political theory to this day.

Francis Bacon and his Scientific Thinking

Long ago, Bacon asserted that science must begin with doubts in order to end in certainties, a paradox that stills leads to misunderstandings about Bacon and about science.

Detractors of modern science sometimes refer to themselves as skeptics, because they dare to question long-accepted doctrine. But skepticism as a method is not just a resolve to disagree. It is the presumption of error and fallibility on which our science is based. Francis Bacon first put this paradox forth in The New Organon (1620), building on his previous Advancement of Learning (1605). He announced that great things were possible in science, provided that nearly all the old methods and beliefs were cast away. What struck him was the mixture of unproductive dogma and unresolved controversy over basic theory in science despite long centuries of data collecting and thought. He had ideas about a remedy, yet he believed no remedy could be complete because the human mind itself had faults and limitations that made it almost incapable of seeing truly. Today, when people claim as a novel discovery that scientists are not godlike beings, that emotions and culture may limit thought, and that language is not the same as natural fact, they are merely reiterating Bacon's starting assumptions.

We think of the seventeenth century as a golden age of science. Yet when Bacon considered the matter, inquiry was busy but not very fruitful. Cosmology was up for grabs. The old Scholastic system of four elements offered no definite path to new discoveries. Alchemists were at odds about basic laws of chemistry, and when an innovator such as William Gilbert (1540--1603) did achieve knowledge about magnetism, he then went overboard with mystical extensions of his discoveries. Whether stressing reason and logic, symbolic connections and intuition, or hands-on experiment, the active disciplines had yielded few outcomes solid enough to be built upon.

But there was practical progress in navigation, engineering, and astronomy. Empiricism was not lacking, but it did not underlie broad scientific theories. These tended to soar aloft, in obedience to what Bacon called "Idols of

the mind" because they diverted men from examining divinely created nature. What was needed was "a closer and purer league between ... the experimental and the rational (such as has never yet been made)"

Bacon's Paradox

Bacon saw that good thinking is a sort of paradox. The mind is all too effective, not only in feeling and imagining, but even in reasoning. Fastening on one idea, it traces implications, follows up parallels, leaps to conclusions, and creates a tight and persuasive system of beliefs. This power can be useful, if properly disciplined, but it tends to shrug aside direct observation of nature. Man, according to Bacon, does nor have a privileged intuition into the construction of the cosmos--a direct link to the Creator's intentions--as many then believed. He must let the actions of nature in the uncontrollable future be the arbiters of his theory's soundness. Initial speculations must issue in a well-formulated experiment, and that, in turn, must yield to a sensory judgment of the experiment's result. Though Bacon didn't think of double-blind testing, he saw that these stages must be made as distinct from each other as possible.

Bacon called endemic human limitations "Idols of the Tribe." Even the cleverest minds leap to generalizations, notice-striking events more than typical ones, and seek out supportive data more than counterexamples. They fasten on apparent patterns too quickly and don't let go.

"Idols of the Cave" were the individual's limitations and enthusiasms. He may apply favorite ideas or remedies to every-thing, like a wonder drug.

"Idols of the Marketplace" were the limitations of common language, suitable for everyday life, but not to describe nature accurately. "Substance," "heavy," "moist," and "dense" were all vague terms. New words must refer to measurable physical phenomena.

In developing these ideas, Bacon outlined a devastating critique that might well doom any science.

When the human mind has once despaired of finding truth, its interest in all things grows fainter, and the result is that men turn aside to pleasant disputatious and discourses and roam as it were from object to object ... a

wandering kind of inquiry that leads to nothing. But he rejected the immobile skepticism, common at that time, which doubted whether any human theory about nature would ever be a clear advance. Some raise doubts, he said, as lawyers do, without any aim of settling a question. They may embrace a "deliberate and factitious despair" of learning anything new, for the sake of thinking their own thought perfect.

Here Bacon aptly depicts that spongy indecisiveness of mind that can masquerade as "being critical." Today many academics, having grown uneasy about the concept of seeking truth, deal mainly in ingenious detractions, aimed at proving that various forms of supposed excellence are really (but not "in truth") invidious shams. If public debate is mere entertainment and debunking is an automatic reflex with no drive to find central, usable insights, we are imitating the learned men whom Bacon criticized, whose scholarship sought just to get by according to some group's limited conventions. But Bacon wanted people to address great issues and strive to be adequate to their demands.

Just as analyzing government mismanagement should actually give hope (Bacon wistfully reflected) because it shows the failure was not inevitable, so he will offer "arguments of hope," by analyzing the bad habits of mind and futile methods so far used in science. Both mind and senses are unreliable, yet the right method of using mind to correct mind, as we look from a different angle to correct sight, might repair our faults just enough to achieve reliable theories. And this, in essence, has proven true.

Bacon's Checks and Balances

Unlike most revolutionaries (but like the American founders), Bacon offers not a cure, but "helps": checks and balances. First is the thinker's deliberate attention to each pitfall. Second, his limits will be bypassed by involving diverse inquirers. And finally, the theory-making urge itself must be challenged by experimental tests of each assumption and conclusion. The inquirer's thinking will also be affected. What counts as a theory or a scientific term will be guided by his awareness that an eventual empirical test is in the offing. (And, conversely,

dubious scientific thought is influenced by the knowledge that no rigorous test will be applied.)

Bacon's paradoxical message--the mind is faulty, the mind can achieve wonders--is usually misunderstood, ignored, or quoted misleadingly. Yet it is at the heart of the mission of SKEPTICAL INQUIRER. For Bacon grasped that scientific method must be intimately linked with a critique of pseudo-science, and that such a critique was not to be just a start-up routine for modern science, but would be of continuing, even increasing, importance. The more that inquiry prospered, the more its intellectual, semantic, and institutional offshoots would be vulnerable to the Idols of the mind.

Bacon saw that the three Idols might generate whole systems of belief, tightly in woven, fiercely defended, securely institutionalized, and thus hard to dislodge. His fourth category, "Idols of the Theatre," referring to the "vain show" of such a system, incorporates all the others. Though familiar mainly with the Scholastic system, he expected that as freer thought was permitted, many new, specious systems would arise. The fame of his initiating role for modern science has obscured his concern with the perennial. Even Stephen J. Gould, in a recent article, mentions only "outmoded," or "older, traditional" systems as Bacon's target, rather than the system-making propensity of the human mind.

Bacon did not envisage the mathematical physics to come; indeed, he could hardly know what a powerful theory would look like. Thus he thought more generally about the search for meaningful patterns in the confusion of phenomena, making his ideas particularly relevant to fledgling and would-be sciences. He hoped that ethics and politics would also yield to his ideas: But the notion of creating a science of society tends to make people aim for universal laws, exact measurements (of something), and the prestige of a system. Soon after Bacon's death, Thomas Hobbes attempted such a science, with simple mechanical principles in the style of physics. But such efforts ought to be "scientific" first in heeding Bacon's warnings about straying from the facts and clinging to assumptions or terminology that cannot lead to new, testable insight. Bacon would have us spend more time with tentative "middle

principles." Pioneers such as Freud, eager to make their ideas science, are in danger of taking any plausible mechanism to be a universal principle. Bacon's reluctance to assume uniformity, though misplaced in physics, is more pertinent in studying human nature.

Bacon's list of features in Scholasticism that held back inquiry is surprisingly up-to-date. For example, he includes worship of antiquity; worship of the new; picking on points for argument rather than new discovery; didactic presentation of what is not yet understood; premature formalizing of dubious beliefs; reverence toward an oft-quoted founder; and eloquent elaboration of trivial ideas.

We still rush to call things knowledge and teach formally what we cannot yet be sure of. In alternative medicine the ancient and the brand-new are equally valued for that trait alone. Excessive quoting of a founder (whether Lenin or Freud) whom experience has superseded suggests that one is not trying to move on. Bacon thought Aristotle and others should he treated as "counselors" to give advice, not "dictators" to enforce belief. Thus he himself offered not an opinion to be held, but a work to be done".

What Bacon called "contentious" learning originated in the twelfth century as a laudable attempt to consider more than one view. But the formal debate had become a mere contest in which flooring an opponent took precedence over gaining new insight. Similarly, modern talk shows, debates, and documentaries may virtuously state contrasting views without working them over to reach new insight.

Bacon's value is in pressing us to question the systems or rhetorical habits of many modern gurus, from Hegel, Marx, and Freud to Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan. Posing questions of pertinent concreteness is, to be sure, a central intellectual skill. Mastering it may require a long struggle with one or more slippery systems finally abandoned. Alexander Herzen, in nineteenth-century Russia, discovered in Bacon's New Organon radicalism more exact than the left-wing Hegelianism of his time. This quintessential liberal critic of right and left extremes felt surprising affinity with Bacon's thought, as we may also.

Dilution and Misunderstanding of Bacon's Method

Bacon's ideas were both heeded and ignored in the centuries following. His insistence that theory be in continual interchange with experiment is fundamental to science and was assumed by Galileo, Kepler, and Newton. Yet the rise of mathematical physics, which seemed to contain its own safeguards against error, encouraged renewed trust in reason alone. Descartes's influence also gave authority to the mathematical mind and reasserted the old hunger for intuitive certainty, in contrast with Bacon's portrayal of a tricky, self-doubting, circuitous quest.

In the 1660s, promoters of experimental methods in England hoped that direct study of nature would offer a refuge from the theological wrangling and ensuing violence of the Civil War. Bacon's talk of enchanted mirrors and idolatries of mind had an almost Calvinist ring to those eager to link religion with the clear light of reason. Even Robert Boyle, who was closest to Bacon in his methods, intentions, and interests, wanted science and religion mutually to vindicate one another in "natural theology." But Bacon regarded scientific assumptions derived from religion as "anticipations of nature" which had always prevented sound discoveries. Specifically, he rejected attempts to use the book of Genesis as an authority for science.

But in the heyday of natural theology (the eighteenth century), this was forgotten, and it was possible for a geologist to think he was heeding Bacon just because he looked at physical evidence, though his purpose was to vindicate the account in Genesis. The historian of science Charles Gillispie points out the discrepancy while offering another distortion. He derides Bacon for his "popular" notion that science required "not difficult abstract thought but only patience and the right method." He makes the common mistake of assuming that some mechanical ascent from experiment to theory is all that Bacon proposed. Actually, Bacon's wished-for method of constantly questioning and retesting one's thought, going from works to axioms and back, as he put it, could hardly be more difficult.

In fact, Bacon feared that people would judge his ideas wholly by his tentative suggestions for moving from data to low-level hypotheses. And that is exactly what has happened. These proposals (which have some limited value) are usually cited as the Baconian method, then dismissed as inadequate. Often, as Henry Bauer does in Scientific Literacy and the Myth of Scientific Method, critics proceed to their own view of what is important, ending up with reflections similar to Bacon's about pitfalls in the mind. Bacon himself said that his positive proposals should be thrown out if they didn't serve. What mattered was the empirical testing of each theory's assumptions and conclusions, neither accepting old dogmas nor hurriedly forming new ones. For "the art of discovery" would also improve as science advanced.

The point is that Bacon's "method" is really a meta-method, a set of principles underlying method. He assumed that native wit would generate theories and that the real problem was to discipline them.

But the false "Baconianism" is not the only shadow blotting out Bacon's meaning. A common misconception is that he wanted science to aim at power instead of truth. He is associated with the modern slogan, "knowledge is power," which he did not say. Usually, people mean by it that knowledge will bring us worldly triumph. Or, at best, that knowledge brings power to humanity in the form of useful technology. Bacon did want to achieve the latter eventually. But he was referring to the proof of scientific theories in saying:

Knowledge and power meet in one; for where the cause is not known, the effect cannot be produced. Nature to be commanded must be obeyed; and that which in contemplation is as the cause is in operation as the rule.

That is, only by making nature act a certain way (exercising "power") can you be sure that you understand how it does act, and only by knowing that can you control it.

This simple idea, like Dewey's "learning by doing," is far-reaching in implication. It reflects an appreciation of how people usually do behave: they talk highfalutin nonsense that is far from any facts. In Bacon's famous triad, they produce "fantastical," "contentious," or

"delicate" learning; statements that are false, rhetorically persuasive only, or merely aesthetic wordplay.

Bacon's hope of eventual technology is regularly confused with his methodological concern with experiment (power) to verify knowledge. He didn't want people to stop at quick practical gains. To shrink from intellectual challenge was as cowardly as to fear testing one's suppositions against reality. "Works themselves are of greater value as pledges of truth than as contributing to the comforts of life." Yet he did believe that to ease human misery was a noble purpose. Most people, he said, seek knowledge for professional advancement, profit, or to triumph over rivals; sometimes for idle curiosity. The benefit of one's country was a higher end, and better than all these, the good of mankind.

In The Advancement of Learning, Bacon explained that by "use" he didn't mean achieving wealth or success, but what would be "solid and fruitful" as opposed to "vain and fantastical." If it is real knowledge, it has implications; it leads on, and makes one want to try it out. The hypothetical path to concrete reality should be intelligible, however complex. Sometimes people embrace dense ideologies of politics or psychoanalysis while avoiding the question, "But how exactly will any of this help?" even though their stated purpose is social reform or healing.

Grand philosophic systems are the fruit of struggle with some human problem. If their adherents retreat to obscurantism, often they have failed and refuse to admit it. When Khrushchev (a Baconian at times) asserted that there is "no Communism without sausages," the Marxist-Leninst experts in Moscow saw him as a buffoon. But his down-to-earth concern about hunger was part of a drive to truth that also made him speak out about Stalin and recognize the madness of nuclear war. [9]

What is called "utility" or "pragmatism" can be given different slants. William James tended to accept the practical value of ideas (loosely applied) that might not strictly be true. George Orwell, in 1984, showed the dire everyday consequences of living by lies. For Bacon, practice proved the worth of ideas, but also (as for Orwell) showed the failure of false ones.

Bacon saw clearly the dichotomy between the shifty language of men and nature's power, which could not be bought off by flattery or incantation. "To overcome not an adversary in argument, but nature in action" was his aim and the most important distinction he made (1960, pref., 36). He knew he was surrounded, as we are now, by adroit rhetoricians who refused to accept that words sometimes succeed and sometimes fall to get close to the things they purport to describe, and that it matters. The idea that thought can never be anything but rhetoric or "conversation" will only satisfy those who never feel obliged to act, and therefore to get reality right.

Iron and Love, Science and Art

Our literary-aesthetic traditions place great value on the metaphorical use of words that reached its height in the poetry of Bacon's day. This drew on the very habits of symbolism that Bacon saw must be eliminated from strict science, which uses language differently. The query, "Is this really love?" will never fully parallel, "Is this really iron?" We have agreed-upon tests to determine that a thing is iron. Love is an open concept, and iron, since modern chemistry, a closed one.

Science adds knowledge by showing what can't be. Mystical thinking sets no such bounds. Its glory is to give meaning to every perceived pattern, and its method permits any number of meanings applies. Sensitivity in pursuing metaphors is essential to art; it is needed only sparingly in science. Today, the revivers of pre-scientific medicine often use language evocatively, as advertisers do, piling on terms without indicating and proving what thing does what. Attempting to heal by suggestion or placebo is not alternative, but "aesthetic" medicine.

Setting himself against such habits, Bacon was indeed saying that the aesthetic way of thought could not be the scientific one, and people have been saying "ouch!" ever since. But should they? Must we have one big thing, the unified art-science that has become so fashionable a craving, rather than two different, equally valuable things? Must the universe melt down into a beautiful dream of our own--can it not be seen as a separate thing that we must specially equip our minds to decipher?

Science seeks ways to give a definite "no" to a plausible idea; in literature, plausibility is all. If a Shakespeare play has many interpretations, we say it is rich and complex. If a natural phenomenon does, we say the science is incomplete. Art frees us by creating a refuge against the time flux, but science frees us by enabling us to "command" nature by "obeying" her. It uses necessity to create freedom, as art uses freedom to create its own formal necessity.

Art may spur us to a scientific inkling; science, to an aesthetic one but that is all. The distinction should be cherished, not broken down. It permits us to value our mental motions for their own sake, or to adapt them for use in action, without confusion or self-deception.

The mingled promise and disarray of natural philosophy in his time led Bacon to appreciate two great freedoms of the mind. We can question whole systems that seem to violate evidence or logic. It does not matter how many people swear by such beliefs, or for how many centuries they have done so, or with what coercive power. But we can do better than reject the affirmations of the madding crowd. We can thread our own path through the forests of unsorted experience, trusting our minds not to guess right, but to devise tests for detecting falseness. Bacon did no science that today would have won him a Nobel Prize. He founded no schools of philosophy. He was not, like Aristotle, "the master of them that know." But he was the friend of those who think, and for that reason, his writings should not be laid aside.

Machiavelli and his *Prince*

Bacon and his age saw Machiavelli as the greatest inspirations. Bacon's practical realism and realistic idealism owe much to Machiavelli and his greatest book *Prince*, so let us try to know them.

Niccolò Machiavelli was born on May 3, 1469, in Florence, Italy, and passed his childhood peacefully, receiving the humanistic education customary for young men of the Renaissance middle class. He also spent two years studying business mathematics, then worked for the next seven years in Rome for a Florentine banker. After returning to Florence in 1494, he witnessed the expulsion of the Medici family, oligarchic despots who had ruled Florence for decades, and the rise of Girolamo Savanorola, a Dominican religious zealot who took control of the region shortly thereafter.

Italy at that time became the scene of intense political conflict. The city-states of Florence, Milan, Venice, and Naples fought each other for control of Italy, as did the papacy, France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire. Each of these powers attempted to pursue a strategy of playing the other powers off of one other, but they also engaged in less honorable practices such as blackmail and violence. Charles VIII of France invaded the same year that Machiavelli returned to Florence, Italy. This was the first of a number of French invasions that would occur during Machiavelli's lifetime. All of these events influenced Machiavelli's attitudes toward his country and government, forming the backdrop for his later impassioned pleas for Italian unity.

Because Savanorola criticized the leadership of the Church, Pope Alexander VI cut his reign short by excommunicating him in 1497. The next year, at the age of twenty-nine, Machiavelli entered the Florentine government as head of the Second Chancery and secretary to the Council of Ten for War. In his role as chancellor, he was sent to France on a diplomatic mission in 1500. He met regularly with Pope Alexander and the recently crowned King Louis XII. In exchange for a marriage annulment, Louis helped the pope establish his son, Cesare Borgia, as the duke of Romagna. The intrigues of these three men would influence

Machiavelli's political thought, but it was Borgia who would do the most to shape Machiavelli's opinions about leadership. Borgia was a cunning, cruel, and vicious politician, and many people despised him. Nevertheless, Machiavelli believed Borgia had the traits necessary for any leader who would seek to unify Italy.

In 1500, Machiavelli married Marietta di Lodovico Corsini, with whom he had six children. Three years later, Pope Alexander VI became sick with malaria and died. Alexander VI's successor died after less than a month in office, and Julius II, an enemy of Borgia's, was elected. Julius II later banished Borgia to Spain, where he died in 1506.

Meanwhile, Machiavelli helped raise and train a Florentine civil militia in order to reduce Florence's dependence on mercenaries. Later that year, he served as Florentine diplomat to Pope Julius, whose conduct as the "warrior pope" he observed firsthand. In 1512, the Medici family regained control of Florence, and Machiavelli was dismissed from office. A year later he was wrongly accused of participating in a conspiracy to restore the republic, held in jail for three weeks, and tortured on the rack. He left Florence for the quiet town of Sant'Andrea and decided to pursue a career in writing. In 1513 he began writing his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius,* a book that focused on states controlled by a politically active citizenry. It was not finished until 1521, mainly because he interrupted his work on *Discourses* to write *The Prince.*

Machiavelli desperately wanted to return to politics. One of his goals in writing *The Prince* was to win the favor of Lorenzo de' Medici, then the governor of Florence and the person to whom the book is dedicated; Machiavelli hoped to land an advisory position within the Florentine government. But Medici received the book indifferently, and Machiavelli did not receive an invitation to serve as an official. The public's reaction to *The Prince* was also indifferent at first. But slowly, as word spread, the book began to be criticized as immoral, evil, and wicked.

Besides the *Discourses,* Machiavelli went on to write *The Art of War* and a comedic play, *The Mandrake.* After Lorenzo's premature death in 1519, his successor, Giulio, gave Machiavelli a commission to write *The Florentine*

History as well as a few small diplomatic jobs. Machiavelli also wrote *The Life of Castruccio Castracani* in 1520 and *Clizia,* a comedic play. In 1526, Giulio de' Medici (now Pope Clement VII), at Machiavelli's urging, created a commission to examine Florence's fortifications and placed Machiavelli on it.

In 1527, the diplomatic errors of the Medici pope resulted in the sack of Rome by Charles V's mercenaries. The Florentines expelled their Medici ruler, and Machiavelli tried to retake the office he had left so long ago. But his reputation got in the way of his ambitions. He was now too closely associated with the Medicis, and the republic rejected him. Soon, Machiavelli's health began to fail him, and he died several months later, on June 21, 1527.

The most revolutionary aspect of *The Prince* is its separation of politics and ethics. Classical political theory traditionally linked political law with a higher, moral law. In contrast, Machiavelli argues that political action must always be considered in light of its practical consequences rather than some lofty ideal.

Another striking feature of *The Prince* is that it is far less theoretical than the literature on political theory that was written before it. Many earlier thinkers had constructed hypothetical notions of ideal or natural states, but Machiavelli treated historical evidence pragmatically to ground *The Prince* in real situations. The book is dedicated to the current ruler of Florence, and it is readily apparent that Machiavelli intends for his advice to be taken seriously by the powerful men of his time. It is a practical guide for a ruler rather than an abstract treatise of philosophy.

Machiavelli's book also distinguishes itself on the subject of free will. Medieval and Renaissance thinkers often looked to religion or ancient authors for explanations of plagues, famines, invasions, and other calamities, considering the actual prevention of such disasters to be beyond the scope of human power. In *The Prince,* Machiavelli argues that people have the ability to shield themselves against misfortune, expressing an extraordinary confidence in the power of human self-

determination and affirming his belief in free will as opposed to divine destiny.

> [A]nyone compelled to choose will find greater security in being feared than in being loved.

Ever since they were first published, Machiavelli's ideas frequently have been oversimplified and vilified. His political thought is usually—and unfairly—defined solely in terms of *The Prince.* For example, the adjective "Machiavellian" is commonly used to mean "manipulative" or "deceptive." But Machiavelli's *Discourses,* a work considerably longer and more developed than *The Prince,* expounds strong republican themes of patriotism, civic virtue, and open political participation

Machiavelli composed *The Prince* as a practical guide for ruling. This goal is evident from the very beginning, the dedication of the book to Lorenzo de' Medici, the ruler of Florence. *The Prince* is not particularly theoretical or abstract; its prose is simple and its logic straightforward. These traits underscore Machiavelli's desire to provide practical, easily understandable advice.

The first two chapters describe the book's scope. *The Prince* is concerned with autocratic regimes, not with republican regimes. The first chapter defines the various types of principalities and princes; in doing so, it constructs an outline for the rest of the book. Chapter III comprehensively describes how to maintain composite principalities—that is, principalities that are newly created or annexed from another power, so that the prince is not familiar to the people he rules. Chapter III also introduces the book's main concerns—power politics, warcraft, and popular goodwill—in an encapsulated form.

Chapters IV through XIV constitute the heart of the book. Machiavelli offers practical advice on a variety of matters, including the advantages and disadvantages that attend various routes to power, how to acquire and hold new states, how to deal with internal insurrection, how to make alliances, and how to maintain a strong military. Implicit in these chapters are Machiavelli's views regarding free will, human nature, and ethics, but these ideas do not manifest themselves explicitly as topics of discussion until later.

Chapters XV to XXIII focus on the qualities of the prince himself. Broadly speaking, this discussion is guided by Machiavelli's underlying view that lofty ideals translate into bad government. This premise is especially true with respect to personal virtue. Certain virtues may be admired for their own sake, but for a prince to act in accordance with virtue is often detrimental to the state. Similarly, certain vices may be frowned upon, but vicious actions are sometimes indispensable to the good of the state. Machiavelli combines this line of reasoning with another, the theme that obtaining the goodwill of the populace is the best way to maintain power. Thus, the *appearance* of virtue may be more important than true virtue, which may be seen as posing a liability.

The final sections of *The Prince* link the book to a specific historical context: Italy's disunity. Machiavelli sets down his account and explanation of the failure of past Italian rulers and concludes with an impassioned plea to the future rulers of the nation. Machiavelli asserts the belief that only Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom the book is dedicated, can restore Italy's honor and pride.

About the Genre: Essay and its History.

There is no general consensus to the definition of essay. Generally we have come to agree that an essay has at least two common elements. First, it is a prose composition comparatively short in size and second that it has a feeling of incompleteness and unsystematic. Johnson describes essay as" a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, indigested piece, not a regular and orderly performance". The Oxford English Dictionary calls it "a composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject: originally implying want of finish, but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range". Both definitions are vague and Johnson's is essentially negative. These definitions are too narrow and precise to embrace as varied a genre as essay has become till date. If we conceive the essay to be short and incomplete, on the other hand we certainly conceive the treatise to be lengthy and systematic. But while Hume write *A Treatise of Human Nature* Locke writes *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; and the later work attempts as seriously as the former to be systematic, while it is the longer of the two. At least we can conclude that the essay is a species of prose composition. Usage, however, overleaps even the boundary between prose and verse: and not only do we find in the eighteenth century a metrical Essay on Criticism written by Alexander Pope, but even in the nineteenth we find a metrical essay on mind. It is shocking for a modern reader that essay in verse came even before than essay in prose. For King James' *Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesie* preceded Bacon's Essays. We know fairly well what to expect of a poem called a lyric, sonnet and even of one called an Epic or a tragedy, we have hardly the vaguest idea of what we shall find in a composition entitled an Essay. This extreme indefiniteness is partly inherent in the nature of the thing: etymologically, the word "Essay" indicates something tentative, so there is a justification for the conception of incompleteness and want of system. But partly also it is factitious (full of facts). A term so elastic means little or nothing, just because it may mean anything. If we call Locke's so serious work and Lamb's Dissertation on Roast

Pig alike essays, we have in effect emptied the word of content. There is no subject from the stars to the dust heap and from the amoeba to man that may not be dealt within an essay. Neither in respect of treatment of subject is the range much less wide. Frequently the essay derives its charm from lightness and from superficiality, apparent if not real. There has been essay very emotional and subjective nature like Lambs *Chimney Sweepers* and there is no dearth of essays that are dry and prosaic even in their subject matter. Modern reader apprehends essay to be a comparatively small piece of prose, only one dimensionally treated.

Essay saw its first day of light during the rich late sixteenth- seventeenth century. The age of Elizabeth was a time o literary experiment. Though the Drama became almost an obsession, an drew to itself many men whom nature never meant to be dramatists, that didn't prevent the most varied experiments in poetic forms new and old; nor did the fact that the age was essentially poetic prevent ventures in prose. Prose writings had no tradition except Malory's Utopia Morte d' Arthur and Robinson's translation of More's and Berner's Froissart. Still Lodge, Lyly and Green wrote in prose, though their writings are more close to what later came to be called novel. Francis Bacon is called the father of English Essay because he is the first writer to write pieces that we today know as essays. It suited his thrifty style and varied range of thoughts and issues and thus he excelled as a great essayist. It won't be an exaggeration to place Bacon among the best essayist till date keeping in view his range, style and treatment.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF PRESCRIBED ESSAYS

OF TRUTH

Summary

The essay begins with the reference of the historic trial of Jesus Christ. During the trial the Roman Governor Pilate casually inquired about truth and passed on to other matters without caring to wait for the answer to his query. For this casual approach about truth, Pilate may rightly be taken as a type of those people who wish to tie themselves to only one belief, born of a strict regard for"truth", loving, as they do, perfect freedom of thought as well as action. In ancient Greece there was a school of philosopher, known as sceptics, who acted upon the principle of relativism and doubted the validity of truth of every belief. The old sceptics have gone the way of all flesh, but skepticism is still going strong among the doubting Thomases of the modern world who lack the vigour and vitality of their Greek forebears, but cannot rid themselves of their mental attitude. Here Bacon makes an indirect attack on contemporary liking for doubting everything as Renaissance had raised questions on all established belief. People looked everything with an eye of doubt and Bacon looks at doubting as an exercise of a man who has aversion to Truth.

Bacon is of the view that the reason for this aversion to truth (or love for lie) is not that the quest for truth is a hard exercise or it curtails the mental freedom, as one has to stick to one idea, the cause is something much deeper. Man is born with a liking for lie. It is natural instinct of man. Bacon refers to Lucian who could not find any logical reason to man's general liking for lie. The common tendency to lie in a human being is easily distinct from a poet's tendency to lie for delight of readers and merchant's habit of lying for personal gains. Bacon tries to find ground of this human habit by saying that if man were to live only in truth, the life would have been dry and prosaic. Lie on the other hand helps man to cherish illusions about self and life and this keeps him in good humour and perhaps makes life more livable. In the absence

of such illusions life will become dry for the vast majority of the mortal millions. Nature abhors vacuum and where the human mind is devoid of real worth; it becomes swollen with false pride, egoism, vanities and exaggerated self-estimates. These vanities further become part and parcel of daily existence of the average human being; the banishment of these by the entry of truth into human estimation would make such minds abject, worthless, shrunken things, contemptible and humiliating to contemplate. Some Church Fathers have blamed poets for their creation of fiction that fills the reader's mind with illusions, the mere shadows of reality or truth. In this sense poetry may be defined as the wine of devil, for the devil is the father of lies and " poesy is only feigning". Yet the poetic untruth, entering the mind of the reader, is external, and, consequently, it is less dangerous than the lie internal, which remains settled in the core of the human mind and hear. Bacon here means that poetic lie is external and thus less dangerous but the lies that are existing in our ideas and thus taken as truth are far more dangerous as it exists in the form of truth.

Bacon now changes his tone and calls untruth to be human and truth divine. The first act of God, the Creator, was the creation of the light of sense. On the other hand the last was the creation of reason, the light of mind, and perhaps ever since the Creator has been busy diffusing the light of spirit of mankind. Lucretius, the famous Epicurean poet, has pictured the delight of a person, sitted at the window of a castle and watching the scene of battle, the struggle and flight of soldiers on the ground below. But this delight is only a pale replica of that joy which is experienced by a true philosopher. He attains the summit of truth and the tranquillity born thereof, as he watches with sympathy and compassion, the struggles, the trails and tribulations of the multitude of humanity winding its way through the misty vale of life. The essence of the heavenly life on this earth lies in the habitual love of charity, an unshakable trust in good and in steadfast allegiance to truth. When we pass on from the philosophical truth to the truth in social life, truth that should govern the relation between man and man as members of community. We can easily see that honest and straightforward dealing is noble in

man, while the mixture of untruth, like the alloy in the coin, debases the nature of man, even though it may conduce to his worldly success. The ways of the crooked and crafty persons are like the windings of a serpent, the lowest of all creatures, which crawls basely on its belly. Montaigne has rightly said that a liar is a mean creature who is afraid of man, but fearless of God, who sees his lie. The greatest proof of the preciousness of untruth is the belief recorded in the Bible that when Christ shall return to the earth and shall find no faith. He will know that time has come for the Archangel to blow his trumpet, announcing the advent of the doomsday and the dissolution of the created universe. The essay ends on the cautious note of the end of the world.

Analysis

This essay discusses truth at two levels: the spiritual and philosophic truth and the social and day to day truth. The essay begins at the questioning of the basic and ends at a very high note. The essay presents us with some hard realities such as man's love for lie. Bacon makes us believe that natural love for lie is peculiar for fallen man, tainted with the stain of the original sin (eating the forbidden fruit), man lives in his own dreams and illusions. Man thinks that life is real but the truth is that this pride and glory, this life is only a passing shadow, a mayajaal to borrow Hinduic word. This is the reality of fallen man, but it does not hide the nobility of ideals, which rest upon the convictions that spiritual truth is divine. This is the height that good should strive to attain in order to regain that godliness which was the human endowment before the mortal taste of forbidden fruit. The nobility of this spiritual truth is also reflected in its civil counterpart, the truth of social life. Even in daily life honesty and truthfulness are ornaments of human nature while serpentine crookedness is a quality of depraved mind. The essay reaches its climax in the last sentences – that contains the most emphatic argument concerning the viciousness of falsehood or untruth in the world: when faith will disappear from this world, creation will relapse into chaos because faith is the beholder of creation.

The essay is classical example of Bacon's famous style. Apart from lucid and systematic evolution of thought, the essay is remarkable for the beauty and richness of its style. The main source of richness is certainly the masterly use of analogies that serve not only to clarify and sharpen the arguments but lend a concrete pictorial beauty to an abstract discussion apt to degenerate into dullness. At least two analogies are worth discussion. The first occurs in the second paragraph where Bacon explains the man's love for lie for its own sake. The vanities of the world appear to be real and attractive in the dim light of mixed truth, just as masks and pageant have beauty and grandeur in the light of the candle. The second analogies occurs in the conclusion to the first part of the argument where the heavenly life on this earth is pictured on the analogy of the Universe in old astronomy, as moving in charity, resting in providence and turning upon the truth. The reader can easily found out that there are a variety of source from which these analogies are drawn; their effectiveness in the context and Bacon's rhetorical skill in presenting his argument in most emphatic terms remarkable alike for the aptness of phrasing and of the images. The symbol of serpent is allegoric as well as figurative. The language is lucid throughout and the construction of sentences is remarkably small, small sentences work like punches of morality in reader's face. The essay shows Bacon varied learning and his scholarship. In such a small piece of work he refers people as varied as Pilate, Montaigne, Lucian and Lucretius.

It is very important to observe that this essay occupies the first or foremost place in the collection. Also that this essay opens and concludes with the allusion to our Savior, who was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Bacon commences with the words "What is truth? Said jesting Pilate, *and would not stay for an answer.*" And the essay ends with the words, " Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgment of God upon the generations of men. It being foretold that when Christ cometh He shall not find faith upon the earth." This is repeated in the essay "Of Counsel."

It is worthy of note, too, what Bacon says of Pilate, that he*"would not stay for an answer"* implying that there was an answer, but that he did not want to hear it. And this is often the attitude of the world towards any problem that offends its prejudices, rouses its passions, or dares to challenge its universal consent upon some echoed tradition which has never hitherto been looked into or examined.

Tennyson once made the remark *"that the world was the shadow of God,"* meaning that it not only argued, as all shadows do, a great light to produce shadow, but also concealed God. Matter is more or less" a false truth," and in parabolic poetry (which is the *"shadow of a lie"),* the vehicle of truth is the veil which shadows forth the truth. Spiritual truths are always immeasurably greater than their vehicles of utterance, and are those forms, or philosophical ideas, which are conveyed by means of poetic myth and fable.

"Truth in closet words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors."

More than half the force of language, especially of poetical language, consists in its hints, suggestions, half-lights, which its words do not directly imply, yet habitually conveys indirectly. Bacon's essay *Of Truth* can be seen as an apology for poetical fiction, and for the masking and mumming of his theatre, on the score of man's absolute love of lies, and hatred of truth. The modern love of novels is a very strong corroboration of this statement. Put a profound truth in the form of a problem novel and thousands will read it, attracted by its outward dress, whereas if it is written as a treatise it would attract little attention.

OF UNITY IN RELIGION

The essay begins at the premises that religion is the chief cementing force in a community and Church which is the symbol and fountainhead of religion, should have essential unity within its fold. The old pagan religion (Greek and Roman) was free from conflict and division because it more a matter of rituals and ceremonies that of fixed belief and doctrines, and is no wonder that its priest and propagators were poets. But Christianity is monotheistic, believes in worship of one lord God, who can brook no rival and is jealous about the undivided allegiance of his followers. It is, therefore, necessary to consider briefly the advantages of unities in the Church, its bounds and the best way for securing it.

Bacon states that the unity of Church is pleasing even to the jealous God. It has two advantages: first in relation to the person outside the fold of Church and second to the persons who are within. For outsiders, even the corruption the moral in the ranks of the Church is not so scandalous as its division and open conflict, which impair its influence. So, when discordant views arise about God and cardinal principals of religion it is well to recall the warning of Christ to "not to go out", and remain within the fold. St. Paul has rightly said that the quarrels and noisy disputes in the Church would sound as the ravings of maniacs to the heathen if he were to visit earth. The Church, thus, becomes a laughing stock in the eyes of non-Christians, who find no inducement to join it. Rabelais, the French comic writer, has ironically labelled a religious book as ' the Morris- Dance of Heretics' underscoring thereby the tendency of every Churchman to be at war with another in opinion and in actions.

To the people who are within its fold this unity shall conduce to peace which is an incalculable blessing in itself. This external peace shall pave the way for that peace of the soul that passes understanding. Unity strengthens faith, kindles charity and enables the churchmen, freed from the necessity of expending their time in the reading and writing of controversial pamphlets, to devote their leisure to the composition of books of devotion.

Bacon now comes to discuss the frontiers of the unity. The first extreme that he precautions against is the fanaticism, which is the position where moderation is not possible. Fanatics are not interested in the peace within Church and their sole interest is in multiplication of their followers and partisans. The opposite extreme is represented by Laodiceans who are only too anxious to reconcile the opposites, even though the compromise effected may be more ingenious than the diverse voices in the Church. The best way of eliminating conflict will lie in the rational interpretations of two sayings of Christ, which on the face of them are contradictory. The sayings are– *He that is not with us is against us and He that is not against us is with us*, that is, difference regarding trivial points and external formalities are not incompatible with the unity with regard to fundamental principles. It is only the difference on views regarding the fundamentals that is the cause of real division. The main object is unity not uniformity. The Church might have differences on rituals and ceremonies but the major ideologies shouldn't have any differences. Bacon further elaborates this point. He warns the Christians against disrupting the Church by two kinds of controversies. First when the point at issue is small and slight but the controversy gathers heat and momentum through the friction of rasping tongues. Second when the matter of controversy is serious but it is rendered all the more vexed and confused by the use of novel and rigid phraseology. It can be understood as a difference arising out of use and interpretation of the language. St.Paul has very wisely warned his followers against sticking to terms and vain parade of learning. Words are the servants of meanings and it is dangerous to make them masters. Bacon warns that there may be two kinds of false unity in religion: the unity based on ignorance and unity that is mere patchwork and thus only mere appearance of unity.

Regarding the means of unity Bacon says that while Church and state are two arms for the defense and propagation of religion; the Christians should in no case adopt the inhuman way of the Muslims, followers of Prophet Mohammed, to propagate religion at the point of sword. This will amount to the performance of our duty to God at the

cost of our duty to man, and enrich our religion by sacrificing charity and fellow feeling. But the most dangerous, indeed, is that religious fanaticism which foments agitation and rebellion and incites the common man to use his sword against his king. Even states should be cautious to take recourse to war in the name of religion, but for common people such a liberty is monstrous. The ambition of the devil was to ascend to the height of God. What should we say to the action of those people who try to bring their god down to the level of devil, by shedding the blood of His creatures in His name, thereby converting the dove of peace in the vulture of war and butchery. The counsels of the wise, on this point are at one: the wrath of man cannot work for the glory of God, and those who are out to convert others through pressure and coercion are serving their own private ends, and never the cause of their religion. Thus the people who use religion for their ends are real atheists.

Analysis

To understand this essay one needs an understanding of the contemporary religious conditions. The Reformation, Renaissance and the enlightenment of Europe are discussed in the beginning of this book to acquaint students of the conditions that prevailed in the contemporary society. Students are advised to read those sections for better understanding.

Fierce religious controversies were prevalent in Bacon's times. England, the protestant country was in war against the Roman Catholics like France and Spain. In England, the golden Elizabethan age was agitated by religious conflicts, which, apart from the spates of essays and pamphlets resultant from them, created considerable concern and consternation, by harboring and abetting the fanatics, native as well as alien, to do away with brave Queen.

This essay, no doubt, is dispassionate, cogent and thought provoking. It is the final example of what Saintsbury has called Bacon's mastery over rhetoric. Rhetoric is the art of effective speaking and writing and much of this effectiveness arises from the marshalling of

arguments and their ordering in a vague conducive to the building of an effective climax. Bacon shows his argumentative skill to great advantage by his adroit manipulation of biblical text and saying of Christ and saints to lend weight to the point he is anxious to drive home, namely, the indispensable unity in religion. In the same way, he successfully passes from one point in a crescendo till the climax is reached towards the end. There, with words, quivering with latent passion, he proceeds to show how bloodshed, butchery and rebellion in the name of religion tend to drag God to the low level of the devil and transform the dove of peace and love into an ugly vulture of destruction and manslaughter. The essay though written in Christian and sixteenth century context but has a universal appeal.

The analogies and references to Christ and other saints though make the essay rich but they tend to take it towards obscurity too. The appeal crosses the boundary of Christianity and is a strong request for all people, especially in contemporary Indian conditions the essay is much useful and apt. The title of the essay is quite indicative– it is about the unity in religion(s) and not unity in Christianity.

OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

Summary

A man of family is disqualified for an adventurous life, whether for good for ill. His family absorbs all his cares and energies. This is why works of public benefit have generally been executed by men who had no family of their own and could espouse the public Yet men of family should be more anxious to ensure the betterment of the future times which their children will eventually enter upon. Single men can afford to ignore the future and count family as a drain on their purse. There are, thus, many greedy rich men who are content to dispense with the family life in order to ensure their richness. Yet men generally prefer single life in order to enjoy an unfettered liberty. Such single men are best friends, best masters and best servants, but they are not good subjects because being rootless they are apt to migrate from one country to another. They are rolling stones. Single life is necessary for churchmen, as it enables their charity to operate abroad not begin and end at home. For judges single life is of much use in as much as if he happens to be of man of corrupt morals his servant may function as his instrument as effectively as his wife and children generally spurs them on to fight the enemy with utmost courage and bravery.

A married man is emotionally enriched by his care for his wife and children, while a single man, though capable of exercising greater charity, is generally cold or hard hearted for lack of emotional discipline. Men of grave nature are naturally constant in their love and make good husbands, but chaste women, under consciousness of their virtue, are prove to become proud and over bearing as wives. A woman tends to be a chaste and obedient wife if she finds her husband wise and free from jealousy. In youth wives are the objects of romantic love; in middle age they serve as the partners in the cares and duties of life, and in old age they function as loving nurses. So a man may marry at any stage in his life and reap advantage out of it, yet many wise heads have questioned the necessity and propriety of entering into the wedlock. It is often been

that bad husbands have good wives, either because kindness in them is so rare that the wife feels overjoyed at this favour from her source of her delight and pride. But this goodness of the wife is unfailing if the bad husband happens to be her choice against the wishes of her friends. Because she will be at all times anxious to hide her belated realization of her folly and maintain the goodness of her selection.

Analysis

Bacon's observation on the comparative advantages and disadvantages of married and single life is a fair illustration of his juiceless nature and his natural tendency to subdue emotion and give full play to his scientific and rational bias in the consideration of even domestic and emotional problems. Thus, he does not say a word about the psychological advantage accruing to a married man whose individuality, neglected suppressed in the world outside. This apt to be fully gratified in his family, where he is the central figure around whom the hopes, satisfaction and affection of other members evolve. The emotional side of the problem is either ignored altogether or is only indirectly hinted at. Many of the observations and explanations are superficial and unconvincing. One may take for example the suggestions that the wife is the instrument for the furtherance of execution of unfair practices in a corrupt judge; or wife of a bad man is good because she takes pride in her patience under trying circumstances. Bacon's approach to this domestic problem is, again, utilitarian and his usual tendency to prepare a balance sheet of assets and liabilities is quite apparent in this essay also. The style of the essay, however, has the usual Baconian brevity, aptness and density and the very opening sentence may be taken as a fair sample of Bacon's uncommon capacity for charging brief, simple sentence with a word of meaning. Another remarkable feature of his style is the peculiar structure of certain sentences where Bacon carefully builds a three-fold balance –'Wives are young men's mistresses: companies for middle age: and old men's nurses'.

Contemporary critics have lately read this essay from newer angles. Bacon has been blamed of not preferring heterosexual relations between man and woman. Some even go to the extent of reading a case for gay relationship in this essay. At least to an extent, their voice is valid. Bacon's attitude toward marriage is quite negative:

> *He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; 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. ["Of Love and Marriage"] . . . 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. ["Of Marriage and Single Life"]*

Like Montaigne (***Essays***, 2.8), Bacon quotes Thales (Plutarch, ***Symposiaca***, 3.6):

> *Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses, so as a man may have a quarrel 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 may not yet, an older man not at all."*

Many modern critics have blamed Bacon that he preferred masculine friendship to heterosexual love, for "although nuptial love *maketh* mankind, friendly love *perfecteth* it" ["Of Love"]. His essay on heterosexual love is a critique of the "weak passion," or that which was called "phrensie" by Mantuan: "And therefore it is well said, that it is impossible to love and to be wise" ["Of Love"]. He is speaking of love between men when he says "a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love," and "If a man have not a friend, he may quit the stage" ["Of Friendship"].

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At a time when moralists described gay love as "unnatural lust," and a variety of other degrading terms, Sir Francis

Bacon was the first person in the English language to use the non-stigmatizing phrase "masculine love" (in ***New Atlantis***). Although, as required by the expectations of his reading public, he never excluded it from his utopia. But we can gather from most of his writings, and his life, that morality for him was a matter of personal integrity, not a matter of following socially approved conventions: "Reading good books of morality is a little flat and dead."
Critics have blamed him that he showed great inclination for homosexuality. In Bacon's *Essay*, Bacon reflects what he thinks personally about men, manners, and morals. However, in this essay Bacon's attitude toward marriage is quite negative:

> He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; 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. (*Of Love and Marriage*) . . . 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. (*Of Marriage and Single Life*)

Francis Bacon is the first person in English language to use the phrase "masculine love". He praises the superiority of homosexuality over the "lawful" heterosexuality. For him, morality is the matter of personal integrity not a matter of following socially approved conventions.

It might be a case of reading with a prejudice but this cannot be totally sidelined as lately almost every writer, especially Elizabethan, ranging from Shakespeare, Marlowe and T.S.Eliot.

OF FRIENDSHIP

Summary

Aristotle's remark that a man who loves solitude is either a wild beast or an angel is, according to Bacon, a half-truth. For, while contempt for society leading to retirement in solitude may be a symptom of a person's savagery, it can be a seldom be a mark of godliness, unless it is a part of the renunciation of the world for higher spiritual purposes. But solitude has a larger scope than people are generally apt to believe. For, in the absence of love, a crown may be simply a gallery of pictures, and talk a meaningless succession of sounds and a great city a great desert. In short, if one has no friend in the world or lacks the aptitude for friendship one is surely the denizen of a wilderness.

Friendship, in the first place, is a means of ventilating those secret feelings, desires and frustrations that would otherwise impair the health of one's heart. Friendship is a medium of secular confession. Great kings and princes, handicapped by their high position in the free choice of friends from among their subjects, have generally taken great risks in raising a person to the level of their dear friend Who is to share their secret desires and cares of the state. In English such a person is called a 'favorite', which is less significant, than the Roman phrase, 'sharer of the king's cares. Roman history furnishes several examples of even wise and politic emperors who exalted even very common people by their friendship and made them the custodians of their confidences and policies.

The parable of Pythagoras, 'eat not the heart', has a sound core of meaning. A great man who keeps all his cares and yearnings to his own heart and is averse to sharing them with a trusted friend is nursing a canker in his heart which would gradually eat into his vitals and destroy its health. On the contrary, friendship is a double of blessings in as much as enhances the joy and reduce the grief of a person, because joy shared is joy redoubled and grief communicated is grief divided. Secondly, a friendship

ensures and conduces to mental health by generating perpetual cheerfulness. The mare communication of one's thoughts to a friendly counselor contributes to their clarity and precision, and an hour's discourse adds more to the wisdom and understanding of a person than a whole day's meditation. Indeed, it would be better for a person to open his mind to a statue or a picture than to keep it folded. Moreover, a counsel being objective is truer and more illuminating than the personal estimates of our sole self which is hard to be detached from sentiments of self-flattery. The friendly counsel, whether related to a man's own manners or his business, is always useful; it is he best corrective with regard to the former (manners) and a reliable safeguard against errors in matters of business. In this respect, scattered counsels or counsels imparted by different persons on various heads of business are generally useless and confusing. Above all, a friend is not only one's second self, but also one's second life. For he shares his cares and duties, supplements his achievements and performs those offices which a person is reluctant to undertake, such as praising his own parts and virtues. At the same time a person may end his life with the cheering hope that the things left unfinished by him will be taken up and completed by his surviving friend. Again, a man's capacity is limited by his relation to, say, his son, his wife, his brother, and his discourses are often hampered by such personal considerations, but a friend, working in his behalf, is free from such constraints.

Analysis

This essay was written at the request of Toby Matthew to celebrate their life-long and unclouded friendship. Moreover, Bacon was writing on a subject of universal significance and interest in an age when the classical conception of friendship, as the noblest relation between man and man, was colouring prose, poetry and drama alike when we remember these facts. We can not but receive the views of Bacon with 'a shock of mild surprise', because his whole approach is utilitarian. He dwells upon the advantages a person may derive from friendship with

another, but says not a word about the sacrifices a man is or should always be ready to make for his friend, and on friendship as an ennobling experience in itself, irrespective of the advantages which may flow from it. Of course, whatever he says about these advantages, well supported as it is by the wisdom of the ancient writers, is quite just and convincing. But what the reader misses here is the reference to the nobler straias in human nature which we find in essays like 'Of Truth' and 'Of Goodness' etc.

Apart from this characteristic limitation, this is one of the most popular of Bacon's essays, remarkable alike in the fuller treatment of the subject and richer graces of style.

OF STUDIES

Summary

Studies are a source of delight in leisure and loneliness; they provide apt phrases and sentences to garnish one's conversation with, and they also make men able to judge and plan the business of life. They develop and prefect the natural powers of the mind, but the wisdom yielded by them is vague and indefinite unless it is checked and corrected by the experience of real life. Men, cunning by nature, disparage studies, while simple men tend to wonder too much at every bit of their information, but wise men alone know the way of using them properly. For the way of using them properly cannot be learnt from books themselves, it is a wisdom that comes from the experience of real life and the observation of men and manners. One should not read a book simply to criticise or contradict its arguments, nor to accept everything passively, but to weigh its contents and separate the sound grains of truth from the heap of chaff overlying them. There are books and books and all do not deserve equal attention. Some books can be read selectively or in parts only; some wholly but hurriedly, while a few only deserve to be read with close care and attention accompanied with thinking and cogitation. Quite a few books may be read only through their abstracts made by a deputy, though the essence of a book is totally lost in the process of its distillation.

Reading fills the mind with ideas and images; conversation makes it quick and agile, while writing serves to define and systematize one's thoughts and ideas. Studies influence character according to the nature of their subjects. For example, the study of history contributes to one's wisdom, of mathematics to one's mental subtlety; of science to one's intellectual depth, of philosophy to gravity of mind and of logic and rhetoric to one's power of reasoning and arguing with ability and success. And just as the physical defects and diseases are cured by proper exercise, in the same way every defect or weakness of the mind can find its proper remedy in an appropriate course of study. Thus, if a man's mind lacks power of concentration,

he should read mathematics, where every step demands close attention. If the mind is lacking in the power of discrimination, the patient should devote his days and nights to the pages of the mediaeval philosophers, who were rightly nicknamed as 'hair-splitters'. In the same way, if a man's mind is not apt to recall references and illustrations to clarify and clinch his arguments, let him read law cases, where precedents are of necessity pressed into service at every step. In this way every mental defect has its proper remedy in studies.

Analysis

Bacon's essay, 'Of Studies', is justly popular for the wisdom of the precepts it embodies and also for the simplicity, precision and charm of its style. Whatever the author has said about the uses and limitations of studies, the proper way of reading books and utilizing their fruits, the different attitudes of the various kinds of readers to studies and remedies they can provide for the mental defects, are all calculated to command general acceptance. It is considered as opinions of a celebrated scholar who spent his entire life among books of all kinds, and who was also possessed of a large fund of practical experience to correct and chasten his bookish knowledge.

As regards the style of this essay its main charm lies in the simplicity and felicity of phrasing and the frequency of apt analogies with which the argument is interlarded. The analogies are taken from the common, every day, familiar processes and occupations of life and are well calculated to add point and pungency to the style and bring the wisdom of the writer home his readers. The second remarkable aspect of the style is related to the cast of sentences, which invites the reader's careful attention. Consider, for example, the three-fold balance in most of the key sentences, of which the opening sentence provides a fine specimen-'studies serve for delight, for ornament and for ability.' This is repeated in others which follow: 'some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested', or 'Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man; and writing an exact man'. Some sentences even prolong their structure by

further elaboration of the balance, so that the total effect of a sentence appears to be built by means of a succession of small units rising in crescendo, as it were

OF SIMULATION AND DISSIMULATION

Summary

The practice of dissembling is the policy or wisdom of a weak man, for the strong minds and hearts are possessed of power to tell truth as the occasion demands. Emperor Augustus, the strong, was marked by a keen penetrating judgement necessary for the successful practice of policy, while his son, Tiberitus, the weaker man, was a notorious dissembler. A man of discerning intellect knows the time fit for frank and open conduct, and the occasions when he should be secretive. He can fully adjust the varying degrees of self-revelation to the demands of the changing situations. But a weak man lacking this flexible and unerring insight into the particulars of his policy has to take recourse, as his only alternative, to dissimulation.

There are three degree of man's self-concealment:

a) Closeness or secrecy, which is a total concealment of one's real intention ;

b) Dissimulation of negative kind when a man indicates indirectly the fact that he is not what he pretends to be:

c) Simulation of the affirmative kind, when a man deliberately pains to be quite different from what he really is.

A man of secrecy or reserve has the advantage of attracting others to open out their hearts to him. Thus, he can easily discover the secrets of many hearts, which are eager to relieve themselves by discharging their weight. Moreover, taciturnity of nature lends dignity to a person which is denied to men of light minds and fluent tongues. A Man should be on his guards against the weakness of betraying his secrets by the expression on his face, which are a surer index of reality than the words uttered by his tongue.

Dissimulation many times results from secrecy as a necessary effect or outcome. Where secrecy is not possible, dissembling is the only alternative. Men are inquisitive about the real intentions of another and they will not allow him to remain non-committal. Hence, the secretive man has to adopt dissimulation as a matter of policy.

The third degree, simulation or false profession is a serious fault or defect of behavior and can be tolerated only in rare cases. It is symptomatic of natural baseness or serious weakness of mind and arouses the suspicion that the person is aware of some serious defect in him, which he is anxious to hide by simulation.

Dissimulation yields three advantages:

a) It keeps opposition unprepared and to be easily surprised at the proper moment.

b) It gives a person opportunity to suspend action, which is not possible when his intention is openly declared.

c) It gives a man power to discover others, who will be indisposed to think and speak

Freely before him if his intentions are known to them from open declaration.

To the advantages may be added three disadvantages also: –

a) Simulation and dissimulation indicate a weakness or timidness of disposition which

Prevents a man to go straight and boldly to his business.

b) It puzzles the minds of many who would otherwise co-operate with him.

c) It deprives a man of the best aid to action, which is trust and belief a person can inspire by his frank and honest behavior.

Hence, Bacon concludes that the best human temper is composed of openness, generally acknowledged; habitual reserve; dissimulation on proper occasion and simulation as the last alternative.

Analysis

This essay is more psychological or scientific than literary. Apart from Bacon's characteristic brevity and precision of expression, it has no literary excellence to commend itself to the reader. It is more in the nature of a judicial document than a piece of art and falls in the category of the literature of knowledge. Its significance lies in the light it throws upon Bacon's attitude towards men and his prescription for putting them to the best possible way. Like Machiavelli, Bacon argues here that men

are generally crooked and timid, and honest, round dealing and openness of disposition constitute only a counsel of life not known to man, he must take recourse to craft and policy in order to ensure success in life. The conception of success itself is utilitarian; Bacon obviously accepts the wisdom embodied in the well-known saying: 'Nothing succeeds like success, its peculiar limitations and wisdom lie in getting the best out of its strength and avoiding the risk incidental to its limitation. The man behind the essay, therefore, is a sober realist without any illusions about man, the restless link between the angel and the beast, with an unmistakable accent upon the latter. Bacon neither condemns nor wastes his regret over to illuminate the real. He simply accepts human nature as it is or as he finds it to be from his study and his observation of men and women around him. The philosopher in him was quite at home in the world of concrete humanity where the prizes of life where open to men of judgement and policy and the weak and innocent were to serve as there instruments in the universal struggle for getting on. No reasonable student of over times can have any legitimate objection to this picture of the human nature.

Bacon's Prose Style

Bacon composed a total of fifty-eight essays, which deal with a variety of subjects. Bacon defined his essays

as "dispersed meditations, set down rather significantly than curiously". The original essays are in the nature of 'distilled wisdom', a series of terse, pithy and aphoristic statements standing like heads, joined together by a single thread, the thread being the set theme to which each separate remark is related. But in the later essays these skeleton like compositions were clothed with flesh, given a more rounded shape, grace and amplitude of form with the help of suitable illustrations, analogies and appropriate elaboration of arguments. Yet the basis of bacon's style remained aphoristic throughout, and his tendency to express his wisdom in brief, pregnant and condensed sentences, which have a proverbial ring about them and easily stick to memory, was seldom relaxed. This makes Bacon the most quotable among English writers, comparable only to Shakespeare and Pope. Apart from his own sentences Bacon's essays abound in '*sententia*', a brief text quoted from the Bible and the classical writers and philosophers either to clinch his argument or to elucidate his meaning or to initiate the argument.

A typical essay of Bacon, like his full-length discussion of philosophical themes, follows a plan of definition. There is a division of the arguments under precise heads, followed by the development of each head or division in such a way that the sense of unity or of the whole is never allowed to be obscured by the consideration of parts. They are prompted by the desire for clarity and completeness. This method often descends to the structure of single sentence, more frequently in his ambitious works, but by no means too rarely in his essays. Bacon uses the organic metaphor of a tree, of which the several parts "are but like the branches that meet in a stem, which has a dimension and quantity of entireness and countenance, before it comes to discontinue and break itself into arms and boughs". A close look at any of his essays makes one realise how Bacon used a very scientific distribution of his topics in heads, sub-heads and further on. In his essays On Simulation and Dissimulation he first presents us with his topic then divides it into three major parts and then discusses each of them in detail. Bacon then discusses pros and cons of all the three in a wonderfully detached language and crisp sentences.

Bacon has a remarkable control over his language. Like any great writer of prose, Bacon uses sentences of various casts and length, which are often determined by meaning they are intended to objectify and the author's changing tempo, attitude and emotion. In the early essays aphorisms abound and Bacon's style throughout remains basically aphoristic. And the result of it is that he is one of the most quoted authors. The point is too obvious to need elaboration and illustration; what is more important is the use of aphorism as part of style in the whole essay. In some of the essays Bacon uses aphorism in the beginning in order to stimulate attention at the very outset. For example, just have look at the first line of his essay Of Studies– ' Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability'. Aphorism is also used at the end of an argument to clinch a point, as Shakespeare used to employ couplets to end his sonnets. In the essay Of Truth, for example, Bacon proceeds to account for man's natural proneness to falsehood. After elaborating the contrast between daylight and candlelight, the price of a pearl and of diamond he uses aphorisms to clinch the point ' a mixture of a lie doth ever add a pleasure. Bacon also makes use of aphorism as an analogy to support a particular observation by a universal experience. In ' Of Unity in Religion', for example, Bacon is exploring two false unities, which call forth two aphorisms of condensed experience. On unity based on ignorance he commented 'for all colours agree will agree in the dark'; on the second instance of patchwork as unity he says ' disharmony may cleave, but they will not incorporate'. Indeed Bacon's skill in controlling and suddenly changing the tempo in the parallel part of his sentences is very remarkable and need a close attention. For example, in his essay On Simulation and Dissimulation he says, 'openness in fame and opinion; secrecy in habit, dissimulation in seasonable use; and a power to fame, if there be no remedy'.

Bacon's prose style is marked by apt and extensive use of images, similitude, metaphor and analogies, which since the days of Plato and Aristotle had been recognized as devices, even more appropriate to prose than to poetry. Bacon's theory and practice are in perfect keeping with the views of the rhetoricians of antiquity as well as of

renaissance. They looked at these devices as functional and integral part of the main object of the writer or speaker, namely, to persuade, move, convince and inform the readers or the hearers. The essays of Bacon bear his hallmark of an erudite mind, as manifested in the extensive use of quotations and allusions drawn from various sources, classical fables, the Bible, the Roman history, Seneca, Horace and Virgil and the familiar stock of the proverbs. But these allusions and quotations like images and analogies are functional. They serve to illustrate, elucidate and enforce the argument, not to give a decorative garb to it.

Precision, aptness and strict economy mark Bacon's choice of words. He would never use two words where one could serve his purpose, nor would he care for a learned or unfamiliar word if a homely substitute were ready at hand. For the most part, thus, Bacon's vocabulary is made up of common, current and familiar words, which an average contemporary student could follow. Bacon was writing in the late Elizabethan age, when language was more fluid and rules of grammar and syntax had not become precise and abstract. Moreover, Latin was still the language of learning and writers like Bacon who were well versed in Latin could readily coin or derive words from it. Bacon's essays are full of Latin words which he uses to convey exact meaning succinctly. The use of Latin phrase '*cymini sectors*' for the one who gets to the minutest details in his essays 'Of Studies' is one such example.

Macaulay says that Bacon had two distinct styles. He illustrates these two styles by presenting extracts from his two essays; first one from 'Of Studies', which was published in 1597 and second from 'Of Adversity, which was published in 1625. Almost all critics agree that there are definitely two distinctive styles in early and late works of Bacon. But critics like Hugh Walker question the inference of Maucaulay that in Bacon the judgement had grown faster than fancy. In the early essays the sentences are nearly all-short, crisp, sententious. There is hardly any use of connectives. Each sentence stands by itself, the concentrated expression of weighty thoughts. But it would be wrong, perhaps, to say that Bacon's imagination had not developed. The style is so because the essay was to him, at

least at this age, ‘an attempt at a subject’. It was something incomplete, something that ought to wear its mark on the face, the visible marks of unfinished conditions. In later essays Bacon finds room for conjunctions and connective clauses. His keen sense of analogy enables him to discover illustrations everywhere. Walker comments on this change of style in later years that “ Bacon’s conception of the essay had developed and therefor he clothed his dispersed meditations in a richer vesture”.

The most remarkable formal feature of Bacon’s essays is their brevity and moderate length. The external magnitude is determined by Baconian treatment of the subject and the style in which his arguments are clothed or presented. Bacon confines his attention only to those aspects of a theme that are strictly relevant to his purpose. Throughout his essays, one cannot find even a single word which is unnecessary or a single idea which may be called digression. Brevity and matter of fact approach are hand in glove in Bacon’s essays. Bacon seems to exemplify the adage that ‘brevity is the soul of wit’.

Bacon's zest for grandeur was colossal, but he also cherished reading 'in privateness and retiring' and savoured gardening as 'the purest of human pleasures'. Most of his works begin as splendid facades, and some of them consist of little more than a front of vast promises, dedications, introductions, and preliminaries. But his range as an author also extended to long treatises and brief essays. Though his life glittered with costly stores of fine raiment, grand mansions, vast staffs of liveried servants, and superb ceremonials, he also found contentment in retreating to the relative simplicity of his rooms in Gray's Inn. Since he lived extravagantly, his debts and generosity were as grand as his tastes and talents.

Above all, he was endowed with suppleness of mind, virtuosity that has few parallels, and universality of interests. He is the supreme English exemplar of the Baroque Man, a master of the traditions and methods of the past, able to exploit or surpass or vary them with adroit dislocations, reversals, and twisting – in short, with the incredibly flexible technique of a baroque artist. Though his career and ideas fell into a pattern, they were constantly shifting focus and undergoing transformations,

resembling the metamorphoses in the court masques of his time. His goal was power for grand ends and philanthropic glory. He won both, and contempt as well. Like baroque art, he embraced a dialectic of opposites and extremes and a vastness of scope which intricate the sacred and the secular, the sublime and the sordid, the practical and the ideal, and somehow involved them all in precarious balance.

BACON AS WRITER OF PRACTICAL WISDOM

In the essays Bacon's usual method is to weigh and balance matters, indicating the ideal course of action and the practical one, pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of each, but leaving the reader to make the final decisions. Since his purpose is not the expression of his own feelings, it is inappropriate to approach the essays like a Romantic critic in search of an author's revelation of himself, just as it is anachronistic to judge Bacon's career by the yardstick of Victorian morality. The essays on marriage, children, and single life alternate between arguments in their favour and arguments in their disfavor without committing him certainly to either side. As his other works reveal, he was not lacking in egotism and exhibitionism, but what he made public in the essays was not an introspective probing of his private being, but a persona, a public role that he assumed. He puts on the mask of a sagacious, hardheaded counselor who is aware of the ways of the world and not afraid to point out what will accord with them. He describes how men succeed in competitive society. The enjoyment of truth may be the 'sovereigns good of human nature', but, having acknowledged that fact, he passes to 'the truth of civil business', the facts about what men do in ordinary affairs where 'the mixture of a lie' is sometimes elective. It is 'holy and religious' to meditate upon death, but obsessive fear of dying impedes a man's efficiency. 'Revenge is a kind of wild justice', but it is best left to the law or nobly neglected, for it distracts a man's time and energy from the advancement of his career. Adversity is unpleasant to endure, but practical people learn fortitude from it and thus gain strength to move on to success. A wife and children may be impediments to great enterprises, but they are a discipline to humanity and may curb a husband and father from harmful endeavors. The envy of others is often dangerous to a man in high position, but a clever man avoids its ill effects by managing things so that the envy is transferred to someone else, such as his dependents or associates. (No wonder that William Blake called the essays ‘good advice for Satan's Kingdom’) Love is all right for the stage, ‘but in life it doth much mischief’, especially

in its 'mad degree'; therefore 'men ought to beware of this passion' and, 'if they cannot but admit love', they will 'do best' to 'sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life'. In such passages Bacon sees that men are mixtures of good and bad and accepts them as such. A reader should approach him in the same manner. Certainly, to interpret him romantically as a disappointed idealist is to misunderstand his nature and intentions. His essays, like his whole philosophical system, are rooted in realistic observations of facts. Though he may sometimes seem cynical in his appraisal of those facts, it should be remembered that his estimate of them led him to optimism.

Critics describe Bacon as a utilitarian, pragmatist and Machiavellian. He is generally referred to as a cold rationalist who wrote head and packed his heart away. He was a clear-eyed rationalist who knew very well what men should be and what they actually are. The secret of success in this world, where men and women are guided by self love and various possessions of their hearts, anger, envy, ambition, greed and vain glory, lies in the objective assessment of the stark facts of human nature and the skill to turn them to one's advantage. Pope's description of Bacon as 'the wisest, brightest and meanest of mankind' is the most famous comment upon him. It may be debatable whether he is the wisest or meanest but perhaps most of the critics have agreed that he was nearest, if not there, to be called brightest. Hazlitt has rightly remarked that wisdom may be regarded as the most distinguishing feature of Bacon's personality yet it is not hard to guess that Baconian wisdom is worldly and utilitarian and its whole aim is material success. The eye is fixed on the end and not on the means and it is apt to sacrifice all emotional or ethical considerations to the 'goodness of getting on'.

Worldly success being the aim of his wisdom it must judge even personal relationship, such as friendship, love, marriage and even one's attitude to beauty in rational and utilitarian terms. His wisdom becomes Machiavellian (for the understanding of Machiavelli and his philosophy read chapter 'Machiavelli and his Prince') in the essays dealing with civil and political affairs. Bacon's worldly wisdom is totally devoid of moral considerations in as much as it places the question of goodness or badness, fairness or

foulness of actions out of his considerations. But it would be wrong to call it 'mean' and perhaps the proper word for it would be 'realistic'. Its appeal is universal and validity permanent, because the human nature has not changed with the change o circumstances, political set-up or the advancement of human civilization. This wisdom is rather widely practiced by the vast number of leaders and politicians who prize success in the world. His practical consideration and the philosophy regulated the wisdom that Bacon possessed in an uncommon measure or science that he spent his lifetime to build and evolve was intended to confer only material benefits upon mankind. Similarly, the wisdom embodied in the essays is frankly utilitarian, where noble ideas are frequently glanced at, but attention is fixed all the while upon men as they really are. Bacon accepted the basic assumption of Christianity that man was made after the image of God, who however, was corrupted by sin leading to his fall, which brought death in the world and all our woes. Bacon's utilitarianism was determined by the incontrovertible fact that the vast majority of the people in the world are guided by this attitude and success in the world for them is essentially material. Bacon applies this utilitarian measure even to such subjects as in travel and study.

Bacon was clearly and deliberately opposed to the life of contemplation and preferred the life of action and his whole attitude to knowledge was deeply coloured by this active, practical bias. He was at pains to impress upon the pragmatic men with his conception so that they may not go away with an opinion that '*learning is like a lark that can mount and sing, and please herself, and nothing else: but may know that she holdeth as well of the hawk, that can sore aloft, and can also descend and strike upon the prey.*' Like a doctor, he prescribes various subjects to be studied by people who have typical problem: ' histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend.' So even a subject like studies is discussed from the perspective of a utilitarian. Bacon values friendship highly, but mainly for the fruits to be gathered from it- comfort for the emotions, light to the understanding, aid in the affairs of life. "A friend is another himself," and

something more. But it is always what a man receives from his friend, never for a moment what he gives that seem to be insisted on by Bacon. He never hints that a man may be ennobled by a deed of pure unselfishness. Bacon comes very close to an attentive reader and like a close counsel he tells us: ' the great advantages of simulation and dissimulation are three. First, to lay asleep opposition, and to surprise…. The second is to reserve a man's self-a fair retreat…. The third is, the better to discover mind of the other…' having counted the advantages Bacon doesn't stop here and he thinks it to be his duty to make the reader aware of even disadvantages. So one has to say that more than once in his essays Bacon presents full picture and thus cannot be blamed of presenting only half or biased picture. Examples from the essay 'Of Truth' where he presents how we feel like telling a lie but truth is what holds our life can be quite helpful in making a proper evaluation of Bacon.

So, to conclude, the Critics may blame him of being utilitarian or mean or whatever but Bacon is perhaps one of the rare writers who live in the stark realities of world rather than living in the idealistic world of literature. Reader gets from him what he can really use in his life.