

COURSE GUIDE

ENG215 SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE (I) MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE

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Introduction

Welcome to ENG 215: Survey of English Literature II (Medieval and Renaissance)

This course is a two-credit unit undergraduate course aimed at exposing you to two of the major literary periods of English literature – the Medieval and the Renaissance. These periods – the 11th to 16th centuries of the medieval phase, and the early 16th to 17th centuries of the Renaissance phase - exhibit two contrary worldviews, philosophies, beliefs and inventions in the history of England.

The course will also acquaint you with some of the great literary writers – authors, poets, dramatists, translators – of the periods: Geoffrey Chaucer, Edmund Spenser, John Milton, Anne Askew, amongst others. You are encouraged to develop keen interest in the contents of this course in order to be conversant with some of the major achievements and breakthroughs in English literary history.

Course Aims

The general aim of ENG 215 is to introduce you to two of the literary periods in English literature. The specific aims are as follows:

- I. To increase your knowledge about one of the earliest periods in English history, the medieval period, and how this period influenced the development of a refreshingly different literary wave.
- II. To teach you the major reasons that gave birth to the Renaissance period.
- III. To help you to understand and appreciate the contrasting ideological stands of the two literary periods.
- IV. To acquaint you with the writings of some of the (male and female) writers of the periods.
- V. To increase your interest and curiosity about the subsequent period in English literary history, which is the Restoration period, encapsulated in the Part II of this course, ENG 216, 'From Restoration to the Present'.

Course Objectives

This course is divided into 15 units. This is to take you through each aspect of the literary periods. There are specific objectives attached to each of these units. They are placed at the beginning of each unit. Make sure you go through them before you start to read each particular unit. They are a guide to help you understand better the contents in each unit.

At the end of this course, you would be able to:

- a) Have a good understanding of the history of English literature, with particular emphasis on the Medieval and Renaissance periods.
- b) Be knowledgeable in the specific characteristics that differentiate the literary phases from each other.
- c) Have a good grasp of the reasons why the Renaissance period has contrary ideals and interests when compared to the preceding Medieval phase.
- d) Be familiar with the names and writings of particular writers and the literary period they belonged to.
- e) Appreciate the rich documentation of writers in preserving for posterity one of the most interesting periods of English literature.

Working Through this Course

There are some actions expected of you if you want to successfully complete this course. Note that the emphatic word is ‘successful’. So, it is not enough to have a sigh of satisfaction that you have completed the course. But how well you complete the course is what matters. To participate fully in this course, you are expected to have a notebook, pen, the recommended texts that will be studied in this course, and some of the texts that you will need to broaden your insight and critical judgement in the course of the study.

There is a list of questions at the end of each unit which you should answer and submit. There is also a final examination you will write at the end of the course. Your scores from the assignments and the examination will be added to get your final grade.

Course Materials

Your working tools for this course are:

1. Course Guide
2. The Study Units
3. Recommended Texts
4. Assignments File
5. The Presentation Schedule

Study Units

The 15 study units are broken down as follows:

Module 1 An Overview of the Medieval Period

- Unit 1 A Historical Background of the Medieval Era in England
- Unit 2 The Rise of Literature
- Unit 3 Life is a Stage: the Proliferation of Staged Plays
- Unit 4 Morality Essays and Travel Literature
- Unit 5 The Growth of Humanism

Module 2 Major Authors and an Analysis of their Selected Writings

- Unit 1 Life is a Journey: Geoffrey Chaucer and His *Canterbury Tales*.
- Unit 2 The Love of People: Edmund Spenser's Poetry.
- Unit 3 Sober Reflections: John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
- Unit 4 Other Notable Writers: Sir Phillip Sydney.
- Unit 5 A Comparative Analysis of the Stylistic Elements in Medieval and Renaissance Writings.

Module 3 The Renaissance Era and England's Cultural Rebirth

- Unit 1 Historical Highlights of the Renaissance
- Unit 2 The Printing Press and the Increase in Literary Works
- Unit 3 From Humanism to Science
- Unit 4 A Flourishing of the Arts
- Unit 5 Prominent Female Literary Figures of the English Renaissance

Textbooks and Other References

At the end of each unit, there is a list of texts referred to in the unit, and of other critical texts you should try to get and read to increase your knowledge. Visit your institution's library to get some of these books.

Assessment File

In order to make sure that your interest is sustained in this course, an assessment file and a marking scheme will be given to you. The assessment file contains details of the work you must carry out and submit to your tutor for marking. The assessment of this course will be done in two ways: tutor-marked assignments and the written examination. The scores you get in these two areas will added together to make up your final marks. Each assignment has a stipulated deadline for submission, which is stated

in the presentation schedule and assignment file. Make sure you submit all your assignments to your tutor for formal assessment before the expiration of the deadline.

Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)

Each unit in this course has a tutor-marked assignment. You are strongly advised to attempt all the questions, but four (4) will all be assessed out of which three which have the highest scores will be used for your 30% grading. After completing each of the assignment, ensure you send it with a Tutor-Marked Assignment form, to your tutor. We reiterate the importance of submitting each of your assignments on or before the deadline for submissions. However, if for any reason you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor to discuss the possibility of an extension. Extension will not be granted after due date except in exceptional circumstances.

Final Examination and Grading

The final examination of ENG 215 will be of two hours' duration and you will be examined in all areas of the course. Make out time to study all the units thoroughly before the examination. The final examination is 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the type of practice exercises and tutor-marked assignments you have attempted before. You are advised to review your tutor-marked assignments and the comments of your tutor on them before the final examination.

Course Marking Scheme

The table below shows how the actual course mark allocation is broken down:

Assessment	Marks
Assignment 1 – 4 (The best three out of the four assessed is recorded)	30%
Final Examination	70%
Total	100%

Table 1: Course

Marking Scheme

Presentation Schedule

The dates for the submission of all assignments will be communicated to you. You will also be notified of the date for completing the study units and dates for examinations.

Course Overview and Presentation

The table below shows all the units, the assignments attached to each, and the number of weeks you should take to complete them.

Unit	Title of Work	Week's Activity	Assessment (End of Unit)
	Course Guide		
Module 1	AN OVERVIEW OF THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD		
Unit 1	A Historical Background of the Medieval Era in England	Week 1	Assignment 1
Unit 2	The Rise of Literature	Week 2	Assignment 2
Unit 3	Life is a Stage: the Proliferation of Staged Plays	Week 3	Assignment 3
Unit 4	Morality Essays and Travel Literature	Week 4	Assignment 4
Unit 5	The Growth of Humanism	Week 5	Assignment 5
Module 2	MAJOR AUTHORS AND AN ANALYSIS OF THEIR SELECTED WRITINGS		
Unit 1	Life is a Journey: Geoffrey Chaucer and His <i>Canterbury Tales</i>	Week 6	Assignment 6
Unit 2	The Love of People: Edmund Spenser's Poetry	Week 7	Assignment 7
Unit 3	Sober Reflections: John Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i>	Week 8	Assignment 8
Unit 4	Other Notable Writers: Sir Phillip Sydney	Week 9	Assignment 9
Unit 5		Week 10	Assignment 10
Module 3	THE RENAISSANCE ERA AND ENGLAND'S CULTURAL REBIRTH		
Unit 1	Historical Highlights of the Renaissance	Week 11	Assignment 11
Unit 2	The Printing Press and the Increase in Literary Works	Week 12	Assignment 12
Unit 3	From Humanism to	Week 13	Assignment 13

	Science		
Unit 4	A Flourishing of the Arts	Week 14	Assignment 14
Unit 5	Prominent Female Literary Figures of the English Renaissance	Week 15	Assignment 15
	REVISION	1 Week	
	EXAMINATION	1 Week	
	TOTAL	17 Weeks	

Table 2: Course Overview

How to Get the Most from this Course

You are required to study the units on your own. However, you may want to ask your tutor to arrange tutorials for you and your course mates on an optional basis at a study centre, or you can organise interactive sessions with your course mates.

One of the advantages of distance learning is that the study units replace the university lecturer. This is why your programme is a Distance Learning one. You can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might give you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read your recommended books or other materials. Just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate points.

Each study unit is for one week. Each of the study units follows a common pattern. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use them to guide your study. When you have finished the units, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this, you will significantly improve your chances of passing this course, ENG 215. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from your course materials.

If there are some aspects or parts you do not understand, call your tutor. Always remember that your tutor is ready to help you whenever you are in difficulty in the

course of your study. So, when you need assistance, do not hesitate; make that call to your tutor. The following steps offer a practical strategy for working through the course:

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly; this is your first assignment.
2. Organise a study schedule. Have your own 'Course Overview' to further guide you through this course. Know the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever method you decide to adopt, you should have your own dates and schedule of work for each unit.
3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason why students fail is that they fall behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
4. Turn to Unit 1 and read the Introduction and the Objectives for the Unit.
5. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the 'Overview' at the beginning of each unit. You will always need both the study unit you are working on and your recommended books on your desk all the time.
6. Read through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a pattern for you to follow. As you work through the unit you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.
7. Review the objectives for each unit and ensure that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or see your tutor.
8. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
9. Long before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before the due dates), keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.
10. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the Assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment form and also the written comments on the assignments. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.

11. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the Course Objectives (listed in the Course Guide).

12. Keep in touch with your study centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.

Tutors and Tutorials

There are 8 hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. The dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor will be communicated to you. This will be done as you are allocated to a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter, and provide assistance to you during the course. You must mail your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible. Immediately contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail or discussion board if you need help. The following might be the circumstances in which you will find help necessary. Get in touch with your tutor if:

- You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings;
- You have difficulty with the self-tests or exercises; and
- You have a question or need further clarification with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment, or with the grading of an assignment.

You must not fail to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to interact with your tutor by asking questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To maximise the benefits of the course tutorials, it is advisable that you prepare a question list before attending them. When you participate in the discussions, your intellectual knowledge will be deeply enriched.

Summary

ENG 215 is a core English course that introduces you to the literary writings of some selected English writers between the 11th to 17th centuries. Working through some of the poems, drama, fiction, and critical essays of these periods will also give you a general overview of the English society. The course introduces you to two of the earliest literary

phases in English literary history – the Medieval and Renaissance periods, dwelling on the morality and serious outlook of the former, to the scientific and adventurous spirit of the latter.

The themes, beliefs, views, philosophies, styles, amongst others, that preoccupied the writers of those periods are still the literary subjects of many writers today. It is important also to have a historical understanding of English Literature, where and how it all began, and who the major exponents were. You cannot study and critically appreciate the English Literature of today without having a good knowledge of its beginnings.

We wish you success in the course. We do hope you will find it interesting and enlightening.

Course Code: ENG 215

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MODULE 1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Unit 1	A Historical Background of the Medieval Era in England
Unit 2	The Rise of Literature
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Unit 4	Morality Essays and Travel Literature
Unit 5	The Growth of Humanism

UNIT 1 A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MEDIEVAL ERA IN ENGLAND

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3.2	The High Middle Ages
3.3	A Century of Crusades
3.4	The Late Middle Ages
3.5	The Hundred Years War
3.6	Black Death
3.7	The Peasants' Revolt
3.8	Wars of the Roses
3.9	Cultural and Intellectual Revival
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you and I will take a trip to old England and relive major events that occurred there. These events are a rich source of material for you to ponder on and write about. An important fact to know is that centuries ago, the whole of Europe, including England, was ruled by the Romans, who were quite enlightened and were also lovers of the written word and the Arts. The major language of communication was Latin. However, the Romans did not have it easy maintaining a peaceful rule over the world of Europe; there were many countries that regularly staged wars to be free from the gripping rule of the Romans. From the 2nd century therefore, the Romans' rule became unpopular—they had lost many of their soldiers and their finances had grown lean from trying to fight wars with many tribes who wanted to be autonomous of their rule. As the 5th century gradually rolled to an end, the Roman Empire all over Europe started its gradual decline, and this eventually ushered in the medieval era. It is important you have this background information in order to understand better the

medieval period, especially as it occurred in England. The English literature as we have it today is shaped by the events of the old English or medieval era. The medieval period describes a time in Europe when all aspects of the society – political, economic and socio-cultural – were patterned after a body of beliefs and philosophy that were mainly religious in outlook. This is true of every country, state and community all over the world. There are always stages of development – at the physical, moral and social levels. Try to ask questions and read about your hometown or state history and you will observe this progression, the change from one stage to the other, usually referred to as development. In world history, a thousand years (at the least) usually make up a period. Just like many origin stories about communities, there have been many submissions about *when* the medieval period started; the 3rd to 10th centuries are usually proffered by many authors, with no one sure about the exact date. However, over time, the medieval period is believed by many to have existed in Europe from the fall of the Roman Empire in 500AD when the Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, was deposed, to the beginning of the Renaissance period in Italy in early 15th century.

The word, ‘medieval’, is from the Latin language and it means, ‘middle age’. In other words, this period was flanked by two periods, before and after it respectively: the classical period and the modern age. You should know that each literary period exhibits peculiar characteristics which make it unique and in a class of its own. But this is not always so in the strictest sense; periods borrow certain features from the one before it and practise these in a more pronounced manner.

The medieval era emphasised religion and most of its writings revolved around God and morality. Much attention was also placed on values and the practice of good works, and the individual conscientiously adheres to these values. You can relate this belief system to that of any ethnic nationality in Africa whose value system is known. The attainment of Heaven was the ultimate goal, as the literary works of English medieval period show.

This unit will look at the medieval period in England – its people, taste, lifestyle, values and philosophy. Why England? Don’t forget that the literature you study in school is known as Literature in English, or its former term, English Literature. This is because English as a language belongs primarily to the English, whose home is England. That is why till today we still study in our higher institutions the literature of the English, because really, the Literature in English we know today, which is more encompassing as it involves literatures from other countries, stems from English Literature.

This module will pay particular attention to the medieval period in England and major political and natural events that influenced the writings in the era.

So, are you ready for a trip into old England in the medieval times? Alright, be alert; get your jotter or notepad ready, just in case you have to write some important points for later revision and possible recall.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the highpoints of the different kings that ruled medieval England;
- discuss the major events in the Late Middle Ages and High Middle Ages;
- state the specific issues that led to the Hundred Years War;
- compare the Peasants' Revolt in Medieval England with a similar event in your country;
- identify the causes that led to the Wars of the Roses.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Early Middle Ages (The Dark Ages)

'The Dark Ages' is a term used to describe the medieval era in European history from 476 – 1066 AD. It was first used by a 16th century Italian Cardinal and historian, Ceasar Baronius, in his 12-volume book titled, *Annales Ecclesiastici*. The book gives a detailed and chronological history of the Catholic Church; however, Baronius was stuck when he got to the medieval era. He found that there hardly exist any readily accessible information and data of that period. In frustration, he labelled that era the "Dark Age", to describe the lack of materials and information, as knowledge was kept in the hands of few people. What reason can you give for the lack of documentation of the early middle period in England? The answer is not farfetched. Don't forget that we had earlier seen the collapse of the Roman Empire all over Europe. What do you think will happen when a generally perceived overbearing government is sacked? Many of the smaller states or kingdoms will fight to have independent status and also try to annex weaker states as part of their own. So this period saw invasions and counter invasions. Europe became one great mass of movements: battles, conquests, agreements, invasions, secessions, to mention a few. The situation was not much different in England. Documentation of records and history was far from the minds of many people during this period. This exercise is possible when there is relative peace, stable and united government.

With the exit of the Romans, political and social upheavals occurred, and this affected the economy of many kingdoms, including England. Moreover, England's military could not withstand the more advanced armies of other regions; so many parts of England fell under the rule of other countries. For instance, the east of England was dominated by the Angles, Anglian culture, and the south was overpowered by the Saxons. However, there were some conquests of England that changed its history, culture and language. The most prominent ones were the conquest of large areas of England by King Penda of Mercia in 7th century; the Vikings carried out sustained and veracious attacks on England between 789 and 856 AD; then the Danish Great Army also invaded England and captured York. But the English fought valiantly for control of different parts of

their kingdoms, especially under the able leadership of Alfred of Wessex, who pushed back many of the invaders and brought almost the whole of England under his rule. But with his death, and the reign of his son, Edgar, came many succession disputes, political disruptions and economic imbalance. In all of these, do you think there was any creative writing going on? The events occurring all over England provided sufficient materials to write about but did this early medieval period, the ‘dark age’, produce any writer?

The medieval period had a rich intellectual environment made up of many writers and creative works, some of which are still being referred to today. Through the tumultuous events that emanated from the fall of the Roman Empire, England eventually settled into an era that had God at the centre. This, coupled with the wars and counter wars of the pre-medieval era, provided sufficient material for writers to write about. Exploring all the genres of literature, men and women of the period churned out many writings: essays, poetry, plays, novels, prayers, homilies and hymns that were both religious and secular in nature. However, a bulk of these writings was anonymous, that is, no names were ascribed to individual works. Two reasons may be given for this practice; many of these writings were retold versions, copied or embellished from original sources of Catholic clerics. In spite of the creativity involved in the re-telling, these authors ascribed the ownership to the original writers. Secondly, even in cases where the writings were original literary works, their authors saw themselves as channels of God’s wisdom. A popular Old England medieval work, *Beowulf*, had no name of any author ascribed to it. So also was an all-time favourite, *King Arthur*. Others included *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Pearl*. One of the most popular authors of this era, whose literary works are still been studied and analysed all over the world today is Geoffrey Chaucer. He was a prolific writer who produced many plays, among which are the *Legend of Good Women* and *The Canterbury Tales*. We shall talk more about him in Module II. Other popular authors whose writings made much impact on the peoples and their beliefs were Thomas Aquinas and Anselm of Canterbury.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. List 3 characteristics that are peculiar to the medieval era.
- ii. Why was the medieval period referred to as the ‘Dark Ages’?

3.2 The High Middle Ages (1066 – 1272)

With successive crises in England, William Duke of Normandy invaded in 1066 and defeated Harold in the famous battle of Hastings and occupied the Southern part of England. As a result of the occupation of England, revolts followed and Norman control of York was established, with the Norman lords taking the confused opportunity in the region to attack and occupy South and North Wales. When William Normandy died in 1087, England became the largest part of Anglo-Norman territory, maintaining a stronghold frontier of Wales and other Normandy’s conquered areas of England.

However, established Norman Conquest of England gave way to the scramble for the throne, leading to violent conflicts between those who claimed inheritance to the throne and other noble supporters. For instance, William II, who inherited the throne, died in 1100 in the process of the conflict of assertion and precedence with his cousins, Stephen and Aumale. Also, in spite of Robert's claims to the throne, his younger brother, Henry I, took over the reign of power, leading to the life imprisonment of Robert after his defeat at Tinchebrai. The subsequent revolt that followed was masterminded by Robert's son, Clito, until he died in 1128, a date that coincided with the white ship disaster that claimed the life of Henry's legitimate son.

The succession crisis to the English throne continued when Stephen of Blois, Henry's nephew, seized the throne in 1135 but in the immediate disputation that followed by Matilda, Henry's daughter, civil war broke out. In the flaming violence that ensued, Henry, Matilda's son, appealed for peaceful settlement at Winchester and was enthroned as king in 1154.

Henry of Anjou was the son of Geoffrey of Anjou and Matilda. He started the Plantagenet rule of England, that is, he was the first Plantagenet monarch of England, and he took up the title of Henry II. The Plantagenet ruled England for 250 years, from 1154 to 1377, the last king being Edward III. Henry II was a powerful king, well-loved but also known for his ferocious temper. The royal authority under Henry improved the economy of England and fortified England's borders in Scotland and Wales, but also used the country's acquired wealth to embattle its rivals in France. One of the highlights of his reign was his quest to maintain stronger control over the Church, which the latter resisted. He made one of his closest friends, Thomas Becket, a priest, in 1162, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in order that through him, the English monarch would gain total control of the Church of England. But Thomas Becket resisted this agenda of Henry II. This made the two friends bitter enemies and Becket had to run to France on exile, for fear of being killed by his monarch friend. He was eventually murdered by four knights of King Henry II when he was on the altar steps of Canterbury Cathedral. The king's time and resources were also engaged in crushing succession revolts in Ireland and France. Henry's son, Richard I, was enthroned as King of England in 1189, after, in connivance with Phillip II of France, they forced Henry II to declare him as the next king of England. Nicknamed *Coeur de Lion*, a French term meaning, the Lionheart, he was popular for his bravery and skill in military expeditions. He ruled England for ten years, but was only present for about seven months, as he spent most of his time and England's resources in fighting wars and crusades. He died in 1199 while involved in one of the battles against France.

Richard's brother, John, ruled England from 1199 and set out to reclaim and annex Normandy and parts of Aquitaine. With the support of his English baron friends, a powerful political group of noblemen in Medieval England, who could make or mar the monarchy, he launched an aggressive and expensive campaign of repossession in 1215. One of the highlights of his reign was the Children's Crusade of 1212, which saw many French and German children going on a

pilgrimage to the Holy Lands. However, this ended in disaster as many of the children were turned back, captured, or sold by the Turks. Strong willed and given to uncontrollable fits of temper, King John murdered his nephew, Arthur, in 1203, who was a strong contender to the throne. This action displeased many of his subjects and political supporters, especially his English baron friends. To make matters worse, he not only imposed heavy taxes on the feudal lords, many of whom were his baron friends, he also seized all the lands and most of the properties belonging to the Church. In retaliation, Pope Innocent III suspended church services in England and in 1213, publicly announced that King John was no longer fit to rule England. Moreover, the English barons were already dissatisfied with the king's style of governance, and decided to withdraw their allegiances to him. To forestall the move to dispose of him, John agreed to a meeting with the barons in June 1215. At the meeting, the barons presented to him a document listing their rights as feudal lords and specifying particular actions to curb royal power. This document is called the Magna Carta, or the Great Charter. The king approved of this document by placing his seal on it, thereby proclaiming the Charter into law. However, King John upheld the Magna Carta for a few weeks and was able to convince the Pope to nullify it. This led to the First Barons War in 1216 in which King John was killed.

Henry III was the eldest son of King John, and he was only nine years old when his father died. Because he was still young to govern a country certain noblemen ruled England, chief among whom were William Marshal, the Earl of Pembroke, and Hubert de Burgh. In 1234, when he came of age, he started to rule England. His rule was marked by dissatisfaction from the citizenry and the English barons who resented his spendthriftness, rule of favouritism, and his preference for foreign men at the English Court. This led to the Second Barons War in May 14, 1264, led by its French leader, the Simon de Montfort, where the English king was defeated and captured. De Montfort started to rule England and started a parliamentary system of government that not only gave the barons greater power in government but also included other classes from the social hierarchy to be part of government. The English people liked de Montfort's revolutionary ideas and addressed him as Good Sir Simon.

By 1263, many parts of England had been captured by de Montfort's forces, and in 1264, another war ensued, the Battle of Lewes, where Henry III and the eldest son of Henry I, Edward, were among those captured and made prisoners of war by the forces of de Montfort. However, during Simon de Montfort's rule of England, the economy dwindled as her fame waned considerably. Edward, nicknamed Longshanks, because of his long arms and legs, carried out a counter offensive in the Battle of Evesham in 1265, where the rebel forces were defeated and de Montfort was killed. England then enjoyed relative peace under Henry III until his death in 1272.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. What led to the dissolution of friendship between Henry II and Thomas Becket?

- ii. What do you think was responsible for the English Barons' strong political stance?

3.3 A Century of Crusades

Before England formed into an entity called a country, there had been series of crusades carried out by the Anglo-Norman knights against Muslim 'infidels'. Crusades were religious wars; Christian nations and peoples in the medieval era waged military expeditions against the Arabs who had taken over the Holy Lands, where the Christian faith started. Between 1095 and 1270, eight crusades were waged, with no outright successful results.

This period also witnessed many pilgrimages, holy journeys made to the Holy Lands, Jerusalem and other parts of the Palestine, where it was believed Jesus lived. The ruling Arab monarchy, who had invaded the Holy Lands from the 7th century, merely tolerated these pilgrimages, but this changed when Muslim Turks attacked and invaded the region.

In 1095, Pope Urban II appealed to Christians in Europe to liberate the Holy Lands from the shackles of their Muslims overlords, the Turks. More than 25,000 people, including French and English Knights and Dukes, travelled to Constantinople to wage a war against the Turks and wrestle Jerusalem from their grip in 1099. This action is termed the First Crusade.

Crusades were also launched against the Muslims in Spain, pagan tribes of northeastern Europe, the Greeks, and the Mongols. Many kingdoms in Europe were ruled by the French, and the English monarchy itself took up the call of Pope Urban II with all seriousness – they saw the crusades as opportunities for them to contribute to the growth of God's kingdom here on earth. The crusades also offered a platform to show the bravery and strength of their army. However, in 1187, Jerusalem was recaptured by the Muslims under the able leadership of its charismatic leader, Saladin. Another crusade, known as the Third Crusade, was called in 1189 and this one had many English knights and kings as participants. Richard 1 of England was among those who responded to the Pope's appeal for another crusade to be launched against the Muslims. He could not take back Jerusalem from the Muslims, but he managed to enter a 5-year agreement with Saladin, which allowed Christian pilgrims to visit the Holy Lands without fear of being molested.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Identify 2 characteristics each of the First and the Third Crusades.
- ii. Who was the military leader called Saladin?

3.4 The Late Middle Ages

When Edward I became King in 1272 at the age of thirty three, he improved the English economy, and overhauled royal finances. The first English king to adopt the Parliament to run his government, he enacted many laws that he became nicknamed, the Lawgiver. He introduced new taxes and investigated the abuses of local governance. He also re-established royal power. His main thorn in the flesh was Scotland, which waged many wars in order to become independent of England's rule. Edward II, the next king of England and the fourth son of Edward I, was murdered in 1327, and a new monarch, not related to the late king, became the new king of England. Edward III, using the Exchequer and the nobility, restored order to England and employed a more sophisticated approach to the treatment of governance. His government advanced the nation's economy better than that of his predecessors. Legislation, taxation and general government administration was made the exclusive preserve of the Parliament in the 14th century. Royal initiatives were supported by taxation. He also threw elaborate parties to unite his supporters.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. "Edward III brought stability to England". Discuss.

3.5 The Hundred Years War

The Hundred Years War was actually more than a hundred years, as it occurred between 1337 and ended in 1453; that is about one hundred and sixteen years. The major contenders in The Hundred Years War were England and France. The war consisted of many wars and long truces. Edward III started this war in 1337. He wanted to annex France fully to England when the king of the former, Charles IV, died without having any heir to take over the throne. Edward II felt the French throne was his because he was partly French – his mother, Isabella, was French. But a French man, Philip of Valois, was made the French king, and he wanted to reclaim Gascony, an English territory situated within France. These interests from either side were one of the major reasons for the war that dragged on for over a hundred years. Edward III felt he could also use the conquest of France to also win over the English barons who had started to ferment trouble.

Another factor responsible for the conflict was the interference of France in England's attempt to control Scotland. England tried to control Scotland, and this made the latter to put forth a claim to the French throne and to invade France. The wool trade in England was another cause of the war. One of the major professions in medieval England was weaving, and the weavers were located in Flanders, carrying out the trade that was their major source of income. But their leaders, the rich gentry, had sympathies towards the French, and so prevented the production and sale of the English wool. Edward III exploited the situation by winning the aggrieved Flemish weavers to his side through a treaty of understanding he reached with them in 1338, to further empower him to capture the French city of Gascony.

During the war, English soldiers were made up of longbowmen and pikemen, while the French soldiers fought on horseback. The 1346 victories of the English at Crecy and Poitiers in 1356 increased English patriotism. The suspicion that the acrimony generated led to a long period of ill-feelings, though with long periods of interrupted truce up to the reign of Henry V in England, even with the victory at Agincourt in 1415. The conflicts and struggles hindered the growth of trade and economy. The success against Agincourt in 1415 which England enjoyed in the reign of Henry V was short-lived, however. The time that was spent fighting in the battlefield was too long, and this provoked a feeling of animosity in the minds of the English. French, the language of the enemy country, was in use in England then. The Hundred Years War was partly responsible for the downward trend experienced in the use of the French language in England.

Apart from the major conflicts that occurred across generations in the medieval era, warfare was endemic. The era was filled with conflicts and warfare, as noblemen formed the nucleus of the armies. The 9th century could boast of a large army, as even at a short notice, 20,000 men could be drawn up for military campaign, apart from the 28,000 men that were on reserve. The trained men were rich in weapons of war such as swords and spears that were used by wealthier nobles among Anglo-Saxons who were trained to fight from horseback. The use of shield walls in battle was a common war strategy popularised among the Vikings in the England of the 9th century.

In the 13th century, Edward I increased the axis of the army called *Familia Regis* and upgraded it to a standing army, part of the large regiment of 28,700, in addition to the foot soldiers who were normally drawn up for military campaigns in France and Scotland. Conversely, Edward III reduced the population of the army who were better equipped, even with long bow and canons, which was first used in 1346 by the English at the Battle of Crecy. Their fashionable uniform upgraded their social status in warfare. But by the late 15th century, English armies suffered a setback, leaving the War of the Roses in the hands of amateur soldiers.

By 1435, the invincibility of England had been stripped off through the heroic exploits of a French woman, Joan of Arc. After her capture by English forces and her death through burning at the stakes, the French king, Charles, reorganised his men and perfected the late Joan of Arc's strategy, surprise attacks, to confound the English forces. This way, many English fortresses were attacked and the English forces were finally chased out of France. And the Hundred Years War came to an end.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Highlight 3 major reasons that led to the Hundred Years War.
- ii. Discuss the role of 3 characters in the Hundred Years War.

3.6 Black Death

Black Death was the name given to the plague that ravaged the whole of Europe. In just twenty years, it had killed over 250 million people, about 30 percent of the total populace of Europe. The victims showed symptoms of black boil-like blood shot shapes around parts of the body, especially groins, armpits and other sensitive parts of the body. The afflicted experienced severe pain and died shortly after; victims often coughed, sweated profusely with terrible odour all over. As the bubonic was accompanied by diarrhea, it infected the victims' blood stream, spread quickly over the body by physical contacts, coughing, sneezing and breathing. Physicians too were not exempted from the plague.

The plague was caused by black rats that had the bubonic plague in their bloodstream. The fleas on their bodies then transmitted the disease to human beings. These black rats were usually found in merchant ships. When these ships berthed in a new country, they ran out into the streets of Europe. These European streets were very dirty with rubbish and human wastes. Open sewers were also a common feature of medieval Europe.

The geographical spread of the plague revealed that it showed its first symptom in Messina-Cecily in October 1347 and by January 1348, it had spread into France through Marseilles and engulfed North Africa through Tunisia, spread westward through Spain to central France. It arrived England shores in 1348 during the reign of Edward III. The Black Death was so called because of the black spots of blood that appeared under the skin of its victims. In a short while, the whole of England, including Wales and Scotland, was battling with the disease. Physicians washed victims with vinegar, and treated them with bloodletting purgative laxatives. They were also given rose water and bland diets. Even with that, Christians and non-Christians died in thousands and those who survived owed that to luck than any care given by a physician.

Indeed, the contagious nature of the plague exceeded anything previously known. It reached its height in 1349 extending into the beginning of 1350. Once it afflicted its victim, the illness increased in rapidity such that within two or three days, the victim either recovered, showed signs of recovery or died, but mostly, it ended in death. There was no form of remedy as it spread unhindered through communities with alarming mortality. Episcopal registers showed that 40 percent of the clergy died of the plague. As in most epidemics, the rich suffered less than the poor during the plague years and the result was a great shortage of labour, as a result of which there was a rise in wages. The disease lasted for about 150 years.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Discuss the economic impact of the Black Death plague on medieval England.
- ii. In what way(s) did medieval England contribute to the spread of the plague?
- iii. Write a 5-minute drama sketch of a family that survived the disease.

3.7 The Peasants' Revolt

The Peasants' Revolt may be described as the result of the Black Death, the deadly plague that spread through the whole of Europe killing more than 30 percent of the entire populace. The plague led to a great shortage of labour that was evident in the immediate 50% rise in wages for craft workers and agricultural farm hands. Employers had no choice but to pay the exorbitant sums. England did not immediately overcome the problem, if one may judge from the thirteen re-enactments of the statutes in the next hundred years. One of these statutes was the Statute of Labourers, enacted in 1351, which prescribed the price of labour the same as it was before the Black Death plague. This was vehemently opposed by the English labourers. Many of these left England for other climes, looking for better welfare packages. There was a general spirit of discontent, and it was this state of discomfort and dissatisfaction that led to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

The immediate cause of the revolt was the introduction of a poll tax of one shilling per person. Led by Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, more than 20,000 peasant labourers from Kent and Essex marched to Canterbury, where they killed the Archbishop, and burnt down a palace. Do this revolt and its immediate cause – the imposition of tax – remind you of the Aba Women's Riot of 1929? The king of England, Richard II, who was only 14 years old, had to come out to pacify them with the words: "*You shall have from me all you seek*". But this was only a ploy, as Tyler was invited over to the king's palace and murdered by one of the king's men, William Walworth, the Lord Mayor of London.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Enumerate 3 similarities between the Peasants' Revolt of medieval England and the Aba Women's Riot of Nigeria.
- ii. In your own estimation, how did the Peasants' Revolt come to an end?

3.8 Wars of the Roses

The Wars of the Roses was fought between rival factions, the House of York and the House of Lancaster, within the English nobility, in 1455. It was called the Wars of the Roses because the warring houses each designed an emblem, like a coat of arms: the House of York had a white rose, while the House of Lancaster had a red rose. However, in 1485, when the war ended, and Henry Tudor, or Henry VII, a Lancastrian, became the king of England, he merged the white and red roses' emblems together to form the Tudor rose, which became the royal emblem.

The Wars of the Roses was sparked off mostly by the contests or common disagreements that stemmed from successions to the throne and often led to deaths that involved claimants and noble supporters. For instance, when William II inherited the English throne, he was attacked by the contestants to the throne

including his older brother, Robert and Stephen Aumale, his cousin, but William II died in the process of the contest while he went out on hunting. In the same vein, Henry I, Robert's younger brother, took over power violently, leading to the eventual defeat and imprisonment of Robert at Tinchebrai. The death of Henry's legitimate son, William, in the White Ship disaster of November 25, 1120, fuelled succession crisis as Henry's nephew, Stephen of Blois, claimed the throne in 1135. Eventually, the inability of the various contestants to the throne to maintain lasting peace led to a prolonged Civil War later dubbed The Anarchy.

The War of the Roses was brutal, savage and violent in nature between the noble leadership and the rivaled parties. Enemies captured were reduced to prisoners of war and had their lands seized.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Identify and explain the reason(s) that led to the Wars of Roses.
- ii. What was referred to as 'The Anarchy'?

3.9 Cultural and Intellectual Revival

Medieval England was dominated by Anglo-Saxon language; the Old English ended with the invasion of Norman in 1066. It was the Old English that developed into the Middle English variety kind of English. Traditionally, old English speakers do not distinguish between /f/ and /v/ like the speakers of modern German, old English speakers used both sounds, /f/ and /v/, for the "letter Aefre" was pronounced (ever). But, after the conquest, English people had to distinguish between, for instance, *veal* and *feel*. This means that syntax and new words contributed to the change in the language and literature of the people/period.

However, most of the early writings were done in vernacular. Marie de France, who wrote in Anglo-Norman, was an accomplished vernacular writer. She was credited with writing the stories of King Arthur and the Round Table. In France, Chretien de Troyers wrote Arthurian romances for Marie Champagne, with the cross cultural interactions, conflicts, and wars and social economic experiences. There was shared cultural and intellectual admixture in the medieval cultural and intellectual experience. Works of Pope Innocent IV, an Oxford Professor, Robert Grosseteste, King John, Aristotle, and other Greeks were translated into Latin, and gradually there was a growing sense of nationalism and cultural awareness and separation between France and England.

For instance, some of the poetry produced in old English in the early century was written in the 10th and 11th century. *Beowulf*, one of such poems, had 650 and 750 lines. The poem discusses the end of a protagonist in the hands of a dragon. There were also poetries written in French after the Norman Conquest in the 12th century; most of such poems were romantic in nature. Poems were written in Latin and French much as in English. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tables*

was written in an English style. Thomas Malory's book, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, is a compilation of a number of popular English stories, particularly about the legendary King Arthur.

England was famous for music and singing in the period. The 13th century was filled with music produced from pipe organs, guitars and other instruments, and songs were sponsored by Henry IV who was known to have popularised French cultural influences like carols and ballads, especially *Ballad of Chery Chase* which described the activities of Robin Hood. Miracle and mystery plays were also common during this period.

Science and technology improved in the middle ages. Clocks were first built in England in the late 13th century. Mechanical clocks were installed in abbeys and cathedrals in the 1320's. Watermills, windmills, and water-powered filling mills, as well as the printing press were invented and used between the 13th and 15th centuries in England. Palm reading, astrology and magical philosophies were considered vital forms of knowledge in medieval England.

The period exhibited some influential English scholars and philosophers like Roger Bacon, William Ockham, Franciscan Friar, Johannes de Sacrobosco and Gilbertus Anglicus. Some of the ground breaking ventures of the period are the fusion of Latin, Greek and Islamic writings into a general theory of logic by William Ockham. The theoretical basis for future experiments in natural science was produced by a Franciscan Friar; Johannes de Sacrobosco estimated the circumference of the Earth in the 13th century, while the longest medical work ever written in Latin, *Compedium Medicinae*, was published by Gilbertus Anglicus. Prominent historical and science texts began to be translated into English for the first time in the second half of the 14th century, some of which were *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* and *Polychronicon*. Oxford University and Cambridge were established in the 11th and 12th centuries.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. In what ways was the Church instrumental to the origin of crusades in medieval England?
- ii. What led to The War of Roses?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the early Middle Ages, High Middle Ages, late Middle Ages, medieval crusades, wars, investiture disagreements, Black Death, the Peasants' Revolt, as well as cultural and intellectual revival in Medieval Europe. In the next unit, you will be introduced to the rise of Literature in Medieval England.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that events differentiate the early Middle Ages and High Middle Ages from the late Middle Ages. We have also learnt the nature of

crusades that spanned a century in England, the Hundred Years War, reasons for the Black Death, the Peasants' Revolt and the Wars of the Roses. We have also unveiled the cultural and intellectual angles to Medieval England.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Write short notes on:
 - (i) The Peasants' Revolt
 - (ii) Black Death
- ii. Write briefly on the late Middle Ages.
- iii. Highlight the major issues that led to The Hundred Years War.
- iv. Discuss the outcomes of The Peasants' Revolt
- v. In spite of the chains of wars, Medieval England could boast of cultural and intellectual revival. Discuss.

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UNIT 2 THE RISE OF LITERATURE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

One of the aims of this unit is to explain the strength and social connectivity of Medieval Literature to the English society of the period. This unit delineates the rise in literary activities and the support given to the Arts by the Church and royalty. This unit will broaden your knowledge, especially from the perspective that writers of medieval England were not solely English; some were Latin writers and the literatures of the period could be categorised into religious and secular; women too were notable writers in the age. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss how the Church impacted favourably on the medieval government;
- differentiate between religious and secular writings;
- identify some of the writings of the women writers of the age;

- be conversant with the themes of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* and Nigel's *Speculum Stultorum*;
- outline the main points in the arguments of the poem, *The Owl and the Nightingale*.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Church as Government

The medieval age had witnessed the fall of the Roman Empire. The populace of the period, especially the lower classes, were not so educated, but were well 'schooled' in church activities and doctrine. If people were uneducated about anything, it is certainly not about church activities. The Church was at the centre of societal decisions.

The Church was both the legal and social order of the period. The dictates of the Church controlled the life and general activities of the people. The Church was quite powerful, even sometimes more powerful than the kings of the time. However, the English monarchy had at various times been at loggerheads with some of the principles and stance of the Church, and this had led to strained relations between the two. A classic example is the rivalry between the English king, Henry II (1154 – 1189), who had made one of his priest friends, Thomas a Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury as a means of limiting the powers of the Church. But he was greatly disappointed as his friend's loyalty was with the Church. Henry II was so frustrated with his inability to limit the powers of the Church through his friend that he had him murdered on December 29, 1170.

3.1.1 English Literature as Instructive Medium

From the beginning, England struggled under foreign influences. In the first seven hundred years of its existence, her contact with the language of the Celts, the Romans and Scandinavians, no doubt led to the exchange of some elements, including the mixture of their languages. The contact of England with the Romans, who spoke Latin, a more civilised culture, earned medieval England commercial, military and later religious and intellectual advantages. The relationships extended over many centuries, long before the Anglo-Saxon came to England and continued throughout the old English period. About a century and half later, a new cultural influence thrived, with the introduction of Christian missionaries by the Romans. This influence paved greater way to the adoption of Latin elements into the English Language. The characters and borrowings greatly influenced the emerging Literature of the English, which served as instructive medium of the entire medieval period and through the Renaissance. Literary medium became a major avenue through which the teachings of the bible were expressed and the doctrines of the early Church made available to converts. The English literary tradition continued overtime, with great and traceable impacts in every aspect of the English national life.

Indeed, as time passed, so much of the words and borrowings that had occurred frequently in early texts of old and Middle English had been lost. In the flourishing state of the Church, in the reign of Alfred the Great, learned men were encouraged to express ideas that have moral basis. Their works reflect theological and pedagogical classical tastes, with quite a number of works relating to the everyday characteristics of the religious teachings concerns of the period of English Literature. The main purpose of the inclusion of such words like *Baptist*, *baptizer*, *baptismal*, *vow*, *Christian name*, *baptistery*, and *baptism time*, amongst others, in the writings of the old and middle English Literature was to emphasise the religious commitment and moral focus of the Christian religion. English Literature became a tool for the expression of the moral concern of the Church. Geoffrey Chaucer reflects the moral concern of English Literature in his dramatic but instructive *The Canterbury Tales*, his over twenty stories written in Middle English – Vernacular English.

English Literature may be described as a form of religious instruction, considering the various moral themes expressed in such literary works as *Caedmon's Hymn*. The work discusses praise as a Christian virtue. Caedman, a shepherd in North Umbria, in the North of England, heard the voice of God which inspired him to sing, praise and worship God.

Also, most middle English plays and the liturgical have been used to reflect major teachings of the Old and New Testaments, such as the story of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, the temptations of Jesus Christ by Satan, the dialogue between the Angel and Mary, as well as the lives of Christian Saints, the fall of Lucifer, creation of the world, the Noanic flood, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Abraham and Isaac, as well as the day of judgment.

3.1.2 English Literature as History and Diary of Events

As early as the 9th century, there was a compendium of English history, now known as *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. This document contained the different parts or elements of English history or important events of England variously documented by different peoples, monks, church clerks, etc. over the centuries. Some parts of the document were written as poetry, some prose, some in the form of diary, or a document of the writer's travel experience, catalogue of libraries, while some records the oral tradition of some aspects of English history. Some of the writers of *The Chronicle* collated the experiences of others, edited, recorded and provided the observable gaps and irregularities or errors of dates and judgment. Some of its parts merely serve as a continuity of a previous document; while some of the writers wrote as eyewitnesses, giving the real life experience of England. It could be about wars, victories and losses, influences, and other relationships with friends and foes. Some writers translated existing documents of English history, while writers compared the documents.

Latin and Norman historians wrote major parts of *The Chronicle*. For instance, the earliest manuscript, *The Winchester Chronicle*, was written by a scribe up to the year 891, but subsequent ones were written by scribes in the years 892, 893,

up to the years of Alfred the Great, 871 – 899. The original chronicle birthed the *Winchester Chronicle*, copies of which were distributed to the centres of learning. The major languages of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle were the languages of instruction of the age, Old English and Latin languages; (seven were written in old English).

Different versions of the history were named uniquely, as follows: *The Bilingual Canterbury Epitome* (1100); *The Peterborough Chronicle*; *The Winchester Chronicle* (1001); and *The Parker Chronicle* (named after Mathew Parker, an Archbishop of Canterbury).

In addition, a number of the English vernacular literary writers of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, including the Renaissance, used literature to tell the stories of kings and express literary talents of the period. For instance, an English woman, Marie de France, was a strong force behind the story of King Arthur and the Round Table. Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower and William Langland used the English language to make French language, the language of education and literature, less popular in medieval England.

English Literature fuelled the Renaissance era and comparative learning in the various forms. Science and Arts was made possible through literature, as this became widely acknowledged among the nobles and commoners. It was an avenue through which literatures and learning of other cultures like Latin flourished. For instance, Latin Literature flourished in 12th century England; English Literature helped the English language to become the language of the government. The novel inventions of the period in Europe were popularised and advertised through the English literary medium for information, awareness and distribution and possible comparability. The printing revolution of Guttenberg influenced William Caxton in England, who printed many literary texts and books, romances and tales of Kings.

The nature of the social cultural and religious connectivity of the English Literature as a tool for the dissemination of learning caused its adoption by church clerics and universities, even beyond England. Some of the early universities that took advantage of the use of literature were Oxford, Cambridge, Bologna, Padua and Paris. Science and Logic were also part of the intellectual focus of the universities.

3.1.3 Religious Writings in Medieval England

In the middle Ages, the Catholic clerics were at the centre of learning in the society, hence theology and theological related literatures were written in the period. It was easy to come by individual perceptions of the order of Mass and hymns. Also, Europe in the middle ages had records of a number of theological writers, some of whom were the Spanish Maimonides, France-born Troyes, among other Jewish authors, and Francis of Assisi, a Franciscan poet. *Stabat Mater* and *Dies Irae* are Latin poems on religious themes; *The Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine reportedly had readership population than the Bible.

Famous theological scholars such as Thomas Aquinas, Anselm of Canterbury and Pierre Abelard are famous for their theological and philosophical treatises. Mystery plays also express Biblical subjects.

In addition, more than half of the Anglo-Saxon poetry is concerned with Christian themes and legend of saints, as in the New and Old Testaments. Examples of such poetry originated from Mercia and Northumbria in the seventh and eight centuries. Other examples of similar English medieval Christian poets were Caedmon, a lay brother in the monastery at Whitby. He revealed how he received the gift of songs in a dream and how verses of the scripture were reduced to song forms, as in one of his popular poems, *Adam Bede*. Other poems, such as, *Juliana and Elene*, were legends of saints. His other poem, *Andreas and Guthlac*, reveals the Apocalypse. There are a number of similar poems that reveal the temptation of Jesus Christ and the expulsion of Satan from paradise, as well as the harrowing experience of Hell.

All of these poems have their counterparts in the other literatures of the Middle Ages. They are evidence of the cultural contact of England with Rome, and the evolving English cosmopolitan culture.

The different influences that characterised the English Literature of the middle ages are seen in the various themes discussed. Some of them are personal, but the religious themes were popular with the activities of the Christian monks in the monasteries. They could read and write and for centuries, guarded culture and learning. Although only a few of the writings of the monks were available, their works embody heroic Christian cultures and values. Many of the texts are anonymous, but a few had names attached to them. For instance, *Caedmon's Hymn* is a legend about a shepherd in North Umbria in the far North of England. He heard the voice of God, and his hymn became the first song of praise in English Literature. The monks are credited to have written the Vercelli Book preserved texts from the Dark Ages. They also wrote long poems that had religious themes that celebrated the lives of saints, amongst other vital issues in Christian religion. Some of such poems are preserved in the *Exeter Book*. Some of the anonymous religious texts of the period that are categorised as the best are *The Dream of the Rood*; the word, 'Rood' means, 'cross'. The poem uses rich images, allusions and metaphor to describe the Cross of Jesus Christ. The poem can also be found in the *Vercelli Book*.

3.1.4 Secular Writings in Medieval England

The language of a people is generally expressed in their literature. It is in the literature of the people that a language displays its full potential. The Middle English Literature is of two types; some were brought to England by Germanic conquerors from their continental homes. Such forms of literature were preserved in the peoples' pagan and Christian origins, which were both not quite distinct. The pagan poetries that overlap with Christian sentiments both contained or had traces of earlier philosophy, or the native traditions of the race. An example of the works of English Literature we may describe as the folk epic (embodies

materials from the oral pool of expression) is *Beowulf*, which has about 3000 lines. It is a heroic epic, a narrative adventure of a young warrior, Beowulf, who fought and killed the monster, Grendel, which threatened the land of King Hrothgar. Beowulf died years later while trying to get rid of a similar creature, a fire breathing dragon, in his country.

The heroism of the epic reflects in the words of the hero, Beowulf, before his encounter with Grendel:

Sorrow not... Better is it for every man that he avenge his friend than that he mourn greatly. Each of us must abide the end of this world's life; let him who may work mighty deeds ere he die, for afterwards, when he lies lifeless, that is best for the warrior.

The medieval sense of heroism was not an easy life, but of physical endurance, a loyal sense of duty, honour and courage. Apart from Beowulf, Anglo-Saxon poets were fascinated by the sea, minstrel life and ruined cities. The Teutonic tradition had a short poem, *Widsith*. In the poem, a minstrel gives the accounts of his wanderings and how he exercised his craft before great kings and princess. Another poem, 'Deor', recalls the tragic experiences of a wanderer, a man who had enjoyed high respectability, lost his lord to death, friends and relations abandoned him, and he became a lone wanderer. 'The Ruin' reflects a once great and prosperous city reduced to rubble by war.

Prior to and in the reign of the Anglo-Saxon King, Alfred the Great, 871 – 99, England had been most popular in verse, relying greatly on oral borrowings largely from residual pagan and renditions of imported cultures of the Germanic conquerors, Rome and Latin. King Alfred encouraged the learning and teaching of Latin by translating books written in Latin to English. For instance, as a guide for the clergy of his time, he translated Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care* for the people to know more about their past. He also ensured that Adam Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 731, was translated. Alfred undertook the translation of a fourth book to English, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, written by Boethius, one of the popular books of that age. He also encouraged a book to be written and compiled on the important events of English history. He authored two books of homilies, one of which was a plea for moral and political reform.

Many of the writings of the period were histories and books on information and not strictly imaginative, as we had in the Renaissance or now. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells the history of England from the beginning of the Christian era, at about AD 600 to 1154; it combined free expression with poetry. Aelfric, a monk from Winchester in Southern England, a writer and translator, was a leading figure in the translation. Although King Arthur was central to the writing of English history, by encouraging the writing of such works by authors like Layamon, the latter incorporated classical Greek and Roman sources into British history, combined themes and other important issues worth preserving. Geoffrey

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is both secular and religious. It is his best known and first major work in English Literature, and contains series of stories told by a group of people returning from an Inn in Southwark to the Cathedral of Saint Thomas Becket in Canterbury. The tales used different European versions, as in his earlier poems, the dream poem in old English mode, *Troilus and Criseyde* (about 1385), and *The House of Fame* (1370's).

Secular literatures were not as many as religious writings. There were courtly love poems written in Roman languages in the 11th century. Others were written in Spanish, Greek, French, Galician-Portuguese and Catalan languages. The troubadours travel singers earned a living through their nostalgic songs; they made great impacts. The goliardic form of political poems, with subjects dealing with matters of state, also made great and noticeable impacts during the period.

3.1.5 Women's Writing in Medieval England

Women in the middle ages were not given any freedom that in anyway could be equated to that of their male counterparts. Some women were accorded their rights under some sects like the Cathars. Few of the saints who wrote took advantage of the Church to exercise their literary expression. Some of these saints published their prayers, reflections and revelations: Clare of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Bridget of Sweden, Julian of Norwich, Marie de France, and Christine de Pizan. Despite the restrictions on women in the period, they still voiced their thoughts. Though largely described to be unorthodox by those in power, yet such works were a novel perspective to medieval experience, as their works transcended religious and the secular boundaries.

3.1.5.1 Latin Writers of England

The introduction of Christianity and the building of churches in England led to the establishment of monasteries. Then Latin, the language of the services and ecclesiastical learning, became famous. Schools were set up in monasteries under trained teachers. When in 669, a Greek bishop, Theodore of Tarsus, became the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was accompanied by the Greek and Latin scholar of repute, Hadrian. Disciples were made and the teaching and learning of Latin and Greek were greatly encouraged. Poetry, ecclesiastical arithmetic, arithmetic, and astronomy were also taught.

Aldhelm, a remarkable Latin literary scholar, wrote verses in Latin. Another remarkable writer was John Gower, who wrote both in Latin and French, and was famous for his *Confession Amantis*, where the protagonist lover confesses that he will give up love because he is getting too old. William Langland's *Piers Plowman* uses the dream vision model to write series of dream stories, satirising and reviling Medieval England and its old values of religious idealism and overriding ambition. Wynken de Worde, the 1470 printer in England, wrote and printed literary works, the first of which was a story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table called *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

There is also the impressive debate between the *Owl and the Nightingale* (1195), a long poem in which two birds exchange recriminations in sociable fashion. These were some of the popular ballads of the time.

3.1.5.2 John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*

John of Salisbury (1115 – 1176) was born at Old Sarum near Salisbury, England. In 1136, he studied under great scholars of the twelfth century like Peter Abelard and Gilbert of Poitiers, William of Conches, Adam du Petit Pont and Thierry of Chartres. Perhaps, for the inability to finance his studies and reason of persecution, he abandoned school at Paris. He attended the Church Council of Rheims in 1148 and while in search of employment, he witnessed the condemnation of Gilbert, which he chronicled in his *Historia Pontificalis*. He was a secretary to Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. John, an intellectual, politician and diplomat, apart from his voluminous treatise on political theory and human happiness, wrote *Metalogicon*, the latter philosophical work that laments the sense of loss at the death of Pope Hadrian IV, the English Pope who ruled between (1154 -1159). It was in the years of his involvement as friend to Becket that John wrote *Historia Pontificalis*; an extent of relationship that was disputed by historians. He was not in exile with Becket but led the delegation that was charged with preparing for the return of Becket to England in 1170. Legend revealed that John sustained injury on December 29, 1170 when Becket was killed by King Henry's Knights. But John's own account of the murder of Becket did not show he was present at the scene. Some other literary output of John is *Entheticus Minor*, a collection of poems that address philosophical themes. The *Historia* is his controversial theological perspective of the council that summoned him to defend himself on some of the controversial issues that are linked to him during this period.

However, *Policraticus*, John's eighth book, reveals the political and ethical aspects of life. It includes whether it is right and correct to kill a tyrant or permissible to tell off colour jokes at dinner parties. He draws inspiration from classical philosophy in his argument. He is careful not to pass dogmatic judgment on any doubtful issues of life but identifies the opinion of the wise and claim that the rest of us should agree and be led to similar probable conclusions. His style has been linked with that of Peter Abelard in *Sic et Non*. He is more committed to authority rather than novel arguments.

5.1.5.3 Nigel Wireker's *Spelculum Stultorum*

Nigellus Wireker, known also as Nigel de Long champs (1190 -1200), was an English satirist poet, monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, of the late 12th century. He was a Latin writer of *Spelculum Stultorum* (A Mirror of Fools). The elegiac verse, which satirises the clergy and society, revolves around the many foolish adventures of the central character, Burnellus or Burnellus. Also known under

the title, *Daun Burnel the Asse*, the poem was popular for centuries and well cited in Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Nun's Priest's Tale', a part of *The Canterbury Tales*. The poem is a satire on the role of William Longchamp as Bishop of Ely, who attempted to combine church issues with state affairs.

Little is known about the life of Nigellus Wireker, except that he lived during the reigns of Henry II and Richard I of England in the second half of the 12th century. He was part of the movement for the Latin reform, a group that included John of Salisbury. Wireker criticised the vanity of the ambition of the clergy, particularly their quest for worldly materials. His *speculum* has been so named so that others can learn and correct their follies or foolishness. His work influenced Gower and Chaucer.

3.1.5.4 The Literary Debate Form

Medieval literary debate is a genre made popular in England and France during the late medieval period. A debate poem, for example, reflects a dialogue between two natural opposites - e.g. sun versus moon, winter versus summer. Such debates can be emotionally charged, emphasizing the contrasting values and personalities of the participants and revealing their areas of opposites. In reality, debate poems appear didactic, and there usually ensues a real dialogue between two paired opponents.

Forms of debates were common in Islamic Persian Literature and Mesopotamian Sumerian-language literature in the first half of the third millennium BC. But the European debate poem appeared for the first time in literary form in the 8th and 9th centuries during the Carolingian Renaissance. Debate poems were first composed in Latin by European clergy men. The first example of this form is *Conflictus Veriset Hiemis (Contention of Spring and Winter)* written by Alcuin in the late 8th century. Based on the belief in dichotomies, debates were usually informed by the notion that everything in nature, abstract or concrete, inanimate or alive had an opposite. Common examples include New and Old Testaments; vice and virtue; good and evil; God and Satan; sins of the spirit, sins of the flesh; night and day; Adam and Eve; male and female. This belief was enhanced by the religious language used in the period.

3.1.5.5 *The Owl and the Nightingale*

This is a 12th or 13th century poem of no specific authorial or date of composition. It is in the debate form, which was popular in the medieval era.

However, *The Owl and the Nightingale* is unique for its use of conversational technique that probes the vital aspects of the medieval era. The poem is thorough and investigative about human nature, and specific about the socio-economic, political as well as the Church activities of the medieval age.

The nightingale, perched on a covered branch, engaged in an argument with the owl, which was on a bough overgrown with ivy. The exchange started with the nightingale who probes and derides the owl's physique, using invective words in its pattern of probe, addressing the owl as dirty and ugly. But the owl proceeds into the argument in a cautious manner. The nightingale suggests that they invite Nicholas of Guildford into the debate, as a most qualified umpire and judge for such a serious discourse.

The nightingale condemns the owl for the shrieks and screeches she produces and described her active night activities as vices. The owl condemns the excessive and boring howling of the nightingale. The latter replies that the owl's boring songs is gloomy but the nightingale's is beautiful and brings happiness to all in the world. The owl says the nightingale sings only in summer when people are depressed and emotionally unstable. The nightingale is blessed with the ability to sing while the owl is skillful at using her songs to get rid of the Church rats. The nightingale insists she is also helpful to the Church because her songs are capable of encouraging Christians to curry the favour of God. The owl says people must confess their sins as a condition to reaching Heaven. Her songs, though mournful, makes people remorseful and repentant. She adds that the nightingale's beautiful melodies encourage women into promiscuity.

At last, the nightingale heats up the debate by telling the owl that she is only useful in death, as her corpse is often used as scarecrow by farmers. She then invites other birds to humiliate the owl while the latter threatens to assemble her predatory friends into the verbal scene. The wren descends to quieten the conflict but they all agreed to wait until Nicholas Guildford of Portesham in Dorset arrives to deliver judgment. The owl assures the assembly that she has a fine memory that will recall her view of the debate so far accurately when the judge arrives. The nightingale agrees to find the intelligent Nicholas, who is said to be overworked but underpaid by wealthy men and bishops. The debate ends with the birds flying off in search of the learned Nicholas.

The allegorical poem reflects the intrigues, personalities and issues that the Church and the State were engaged in during the medieval age. The nightingale represents King Henry II and the owl, Bishop Thomas Becket of Canterbury. The birds symbolise conflicting parties who turned to the court of law to resolve their disagreements; however, as at the end of the poem, the issue was yet to be resolved. With the unresolved disagreement, the parties had to wait for Nicholas, a learned judge, probably the handicapped but learned legal system of the medieval era. In other words, the learned jury who never arrived at the end of the poem may be a prediction of the second coming of Jesus Christ, whose arrival will end all conflicts and the order of things.

3.1.5.6 Disputation between the Body and the Soul

The final adaptation of *The Body and Soul* in Middle English Literature occurred in *A Disputacione Betwyx the Body and the Worms*, one of the accounts of the *Parliament of Three Ages* and the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. *The Body and the Soul* deviates from the previous poems in the Body and the Soul tradition. Its aim

is to instill understanding and not fear. The manuscript is part of the early 15th century collection of pieces of instruction meditation meant for clerical audience. The disputation says the torments inflicted on the soul are taken over by the suffering of the body but the didactic intention is not to induce repentance but to popularise the humble acceptance of the realities of death. The dissolution of the body in the grave is less gruesomely realistic than similar disputations found in many 13th century death lyrics. The poem's form of attack of worms that consume the body as it dissolves in the grave is fascinating, but some readers may find it terrifying, while others may find it amusing. The poem reveals the psychological problems in the mind of a lady that made her confront the worms. Thus, she thinks of and developed nostalgic feeling for her past pleasures, regrets the corruption of her body and acceptance of the reality of death. The poem is about death and life in its broad thematic focus, as it emphasises St. Paul's deviance of death:

Oh death, where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the Church as government, while English Literature may be said to be an instructive modem. We have also discussed religious, secular, Latin and women's writing in Medieval England; while some Latin writers and popular literary debates of the period were examined.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- the Church exerted much influence in medieval England, which extended over the State;
- English Literature played a significant role as an instructive modem;
- religious writings differ from the secular in some respects;
- despite the restrictions placed on the women of the age, a few of them excelled in their writings;
- the works of some Latin writers of England influenced the age;
- the literary debates of the period expressed moral themes that bothered on Church doctrines.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Outline the various ways in which the Church exerted power over the medieval government and society.
2. Differentiate between religious and secular writings.
3. Discuss the themes of the debate between the owl and the nightingale.
4. Summarise the major concerns of the poem, *The Body and the Soul*

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UNIT 3 LIFE AS A STAGE: THE PROLIFERATION OF STAGED PLAYS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Evolvement of Drama: From Greeks and Romans to the English
 - 3.1.1 Medieval Religious Plays
 - 3.1.2 Mystery Plays
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 - 3.1.5 Medieval Secular Plays
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 - 3.1.8 The Transformation of Drama
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have designed this unit to introduce you to how drama evolved in medieval England. We have attempted a chronological perspective of the subject matter, beginning with its evolvement from Greece and Rome up to England. Drama and theatre were well received in England, particularly in the Church, and after a while, these moved into the street. Other concepts that relate to drama and theatre are also discussed in this Unit. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss how drama evolved from Greece, Rome to England in the medieval period;
- explain how the doctrinal view of the early church was used as a platform to evict drama and theatre from the church;
- differentiate between mystery and morality plays;
- identify the differences between Farces and Masques;
- write briefly on the transformation of drama.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Evolvement of Drama: From Greeks and Romans to the English

It is generally believed that drama evolved from certain religious ceremonies. Greek tragedy for instance, emerged from Dionysian rites of life and death.

Tragedy is concerned with the problems of death while comedy is from certain Dionysian rites of fertility. Drama was popular with the Greeks and Romans until their influence diminished. But drama assumed a new life in the Church as it was used by priests to explain some aspects of the scripture like the birth and death of Jesus Christ, the temptations of Jesus Christ by the devil. Later, play production moved from the four walls of the Church into the immediate society ministering to the social needs of a much larger audience. This marked the beginning of medieval drama, and vernacular took the place of Latin as the language of rendition.

Afterwards, mystery plays gradually gave in to another type: morality plays. These new ones focused on familiar biblical themes to dramatise important but abstract moral values like meekness, virtue, disobedience, and sin. Morality plays led to another type of drama, the interlude, which is a short court entertainment. From the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D. throughout a thousand year period, drama (liturgical, mystery and morality plays, farces and masques) flourished considerably. During this time, many of the themes were moralistic in nature. Apart from tragedies and comedies, dances and other social forms of entertainments also dominated the stage.

However, in Rome, between 500 – 900 A.D., drama and staged plays/theatre were considered diabolical and as such a threat to the growth and spread of Christian ethics and philosophy. The Church fathers of the period like Augustine and Tertullian believed that the stage promoted immorality because its practices through acting were sinful and anti-Christian, especially in its mockery of God's creation, Christ and Christology. Every effort was made not only to convert Muslims, pagans and Jews, but to also destroy every existing pre-Christian institutions and non-Christian gods and religions that were considered satanic. In line with this, theatres like the Platonic Academy were shut, Olympic Games were banned, and Greek and Roman Literatures were burnt.

The ban on theatre and dramatic performances by the Church was strengthened with the laws that prohibited Roman actors from having contact with Christian women, slaves or wear gold. Throughout Europe, actors were viewed as vagabonds, lazy and uncouth fellows who should not be allowed to perform in any ideal society. With the 'legislated' persecution against drama/actors by the Church in Rome, there was chaos in Western Europe in the 5th century in the midst of the confusion and condemnation that enveloped drama and actors throughout the period.

In what looks like an effort to reverse the trend, Hrosvitha, an aristocratic canoness and historian in northern Germany, wrote six plays using religious subjects in the 10th century A.D. Hrosvitha's plays modeled on Terence's comedies which were used in schools to discuss common human pursuits like love, sex and marriage. Hrosvitha's preface argued that the moral purpose of the plays was to replay/revisit the possible guilt Christians must feel when reading Classical Literature. The six postclassical plays also promoted the cause of women emancipation. Hosvitha's works of 1510 that influenced religious and didactic plays of the sixteenth century was followed by Hildegard of Bingen (1179), a Benedictine Abbes, who wrote a Latin musical drama, *Ordo Virtutum* (1155).

The negativity drama was shrouded in did not mean that it was totally abolished from the Church. Liturgical dramas like mystery and morality plays were still a means of the propagation of the Christian faith. However, only a few churches in Europe performed these plays as many were not enthusiastic about it. *The Feast of Fools* that reflected the routine of the church life was an important comedy of the period. The plays were translated into vernacular and performed outside the Church in the 12th century for easy accessibility. The use of vernacular made people to understand and enjoy drama. Some popular plays of the period were *La Sente Resurrection* (Norman), *The Mystery of Adam*, *The Play of the Magi Kings* (Spanish) and *Sponsus* (French).

3.1.1. MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS PLAYS

These are plays that evolved within the medieval Christian cycle, when it became imperative that activities of the missionaries and clergies needed a boost to achieve the church's conversion objective.

In Medieval England, the church clergy decided to convert pagans and atheists, as well as replace the existing plays with liturgical ones, as the former were viewed as immoral, especially when the background of such plays were considered far from the doctrinal view of the early Church. This informed the decision of the clergy to reject some plays and performance within the church, while a few others were approved to strengthen missionary activities of the period.

3.1.2 MYSTERY PLAYS

Mystery plays became popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They explored biblical stories, using religious themes in its rendition. They were popular in the medieval period, especially during the *Corpus Christi* festival, though they eventually became obsolete when there was a shift of interest from liturgical drama to secular ones. With the spirit of the Renaissance, mystery plays diminished in popularity. Characters of mystery plays are mostly unreal or

shadowy but 'reflective' types. The plays are often a comprehensive study of low life.

3.1.3 MIRACLE PLAYS

This is a theatrical drama that displays biblical stories, the lives of saints, particularly the 4th century bishop, St. Nicholas, and the life of the Virgin Mary. Miracle Plays were also called Saints Plays and were quite popular between the 10th and 11th centuries in medieval Europe.

3.1.4 MORALITY PLAYS

As the name suggests, these plays teach moral lessons and promote moral values generally. Mostly, the dramatic plot encourages the audience to be good Christians and live morally conscious and fulfilled lives. The overall purpose of morality plays is to teach the principles of Christian living through the exploration of Biblical themes/stories of mysteries. A morality play can be defined as a dramatised moral allegory. Usually, God is placed at the centre of stories with a satanic figure playing the villain. It reflects how people easily give in to temptations and live lives of sin and recklessness, and how they eventually repent, confess their sins and obtain God's mercy and pardon. By this, they are assured of God's salvation and the hope of Heaven.

A popular morality play is the late 15th century allegorical Dutch play, *Everyman*, whose author remains unknown, typical of many writings of the medieval era. In the play, many of the characters have allegorical names like Everyman, God, Death, Fate, Messenger, Goods, Fellowship, Kindred, Good Deeds, Beauty, Confession, Angel, Strength, Discussion, and Doctor. In the play, the central character, Everyman, receives Death's summons to die. He tried to escape but at last resigned to Fate. In the struggle to escape with his life, his Kindred, Goods and Fellowship deserted him, leaving only Good Deeds with him to the grave.

3.1.5 MEDIEVAL SECULAR PLAYS

There were also a number of secular plays that were staged in the Middle Ages. The earliest of them is *The Play of the Greenwood* by Adam de la Halk staged in 1276. It was in the usual satire of that age: the depiction of folk materials, using faeries and supernatural elements experiences/discourses.

3.1.6 FARCES

Farces began in the 13th century. It has its origin in France and Germany, its emphasis was mostly on sex and bodily excretions. Farces are similar in tone and form. A well-known Fascist playwright of the period was Hans Sachs who wrote 1,981 plays. His counterpart in England, John Heywood was an early fascist in

England, well known plays are *The Second Shepherds* and play of the Wakefield Cycle. The independent appearance of farce in England began in the 16th century with the work of John Heywood.

3.1.7 MASQUES

This is a type of play with poetry, music, dance and songs and was popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. Masques were also popular during the reign of Henry VIII who established an office of revels in 1545.

3.1.8 THE TRANSFORMATION OF DRAMA

The Greco-Roman genesis of drama primarily evolved from religious rites/ceremonies with Dionysian ritual, symbolising tragedy (death) and comedy, which both flourished in Greek and Roman Empires until their superpowers collapse. Then drama travelled into other parts of Europe, re-evolving and getting transformed in the process, though still modelled on the Greek tragedies, which featured ghosts, tyrants and sensational themes of bloody murder, with revenge as a common motive.

In addition, from the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., theatrical history from the Byzantine Empire was based on Greek texts and information through Greek's information web or archive called the *suda*. With subsequent mingling and cross-cultural interactions, drama became part of the church, but when it was labeled 'sinful', it moved out of the four walls of the church into the street. New plays were written but they were influenced by classical style, leading to the creation of Renaissance plays and theatres.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Outline how Drama evolved from the Greeks and Romans before moving to England.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed how drama started from the Greeks through Rome to England. We have also talked about medieval religious and secular plays as well as how drama transformed in Medieval England. You may wish to go over your work again.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- how drama evolved from the Greeks to Rome and to England;
- about medieval religious plays like mystery plays, miracle plays, and morality plays;
- the types of medieval secular plays there are;

- the various transformations that drama passed through.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- (1) *Drama began as a form of ceremony and will end with the world performing.* Discuss.
- (2) Write short notes on:
 - (i) Mystery Plays
 - (ii) Miracle Plays
 - (iii) Morality Plays
- (3) Briefly differentiate between Farces and Masques.
- (4) Explain your understanding of the transformation of drama.

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UNIT 4 MORALITY ESSAYS AND TRAVEL LITERATURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 History of Travel Literature
 - 3.2 Fictional Travelogues
 - 3.3 Pilgrimage Travels
 - 3.4 The Seven Types of Travellers
 - 3.5 Imperialist Travelogues
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 - 3.7 The Writings of Thomas Aquinas
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is written, not just to ‘provoke’ your thought about the reading of English or any other type of literature, but to further educate you about some forms of essays and literatures that you may have read in the past, but ignorant of the class of essay or the literary genre such works belong. Our idea is to let you know that apart from the traditionally known literary genres - drama, prose and poetry - there are other forms of literature in a class of their own. One of these is Travel Literature. We trace its history and explain the various types; we also give examples of the existing types of travel literature there are.

Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the history of Travel Literature;
- state the similarities in the extracts from the travellers’ experiences given;
- explain fictional travelogues with relevant examples;
- differentiate between pilgrimage and imperialist travelogues;
- outline the types of travellers;
- summarise your idea of moralist essay;
- identify the moral philosophy of Thomas Aquinas;
- list the types of travellers you know.

3.1 THE HISTORY OF TRAVEL LITERATURE

Travel Literature comprises the literary genre in its broad sense and application. It includes written literature, adventure literature, exploration, nature writing, mountain literature, guide books, diaries of traveller's experiences and accounts of visits to foreign countries, planets and remote places.

Travel literature gained currency during the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279) of medieval China. The genre was described as travel record or travel writing. It was commonly written as essay, diary and prose forms. The places and experiences of each traveller writer often dictated the type of material compositions that make up such travel texts. For instance, the travel literature authors, Fan Chengda (1126 – 1193) and Xu Xiake (1587 – 1641), used geographical and topographical information/material comprehensively in their writing.

Early examples of travel writing popular in Britain includes the 14th century travel experiences of Sir John Mandeville; the account of Marco Polo's journey to China; Queen Elizabeth I (who reigned between 1558 to 1603) encouraged her nationals to travel wide and discover new worlds and terrains. She sponsored the trips and travel missions of many English explorers, notably Sir Francis Drake. Her reign is widely called the Age of Exploration. The exploits of famous English explorers like Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh in the discovery of Americas and West Indies are widely read and have continued to inspire poets, novelists and general writers, especially in the 17th century Romantic period. Other examples of travel literature are Thomas Coryat's accounts of his travels through Europe and to India; other travel literature texts include those written by Daniel Defoe, David Livingstone, a missionary explorer, Mary Kingsley, Jan Morris, Eric Newby, Bill Bryson, who explored England, Redmond Hanlen, who travelled up the Congo and the Amazon, the Australian, Robin Davidson, who traveled the Australian desert on a camel's back. Poets like Pausania gave a vivid description of Greece in his travel memoir, *Description of Greece*, in the 2nd century; so also are Ibn Jubayr (1145 – 1214) and Ibn Batutta (1304 – 1377), who wrote travel journals. Such experience was common in medieval Arabic literature.

Sometimes, a travel writer may engage in travel and travel writing for the sake of mere interest and pleasure of seeing the unknown. Such was the case of Petrarch (1304 – 1374) who wrote about his exploration of Mount Venloux in 1336. He explained that he traveled to the top of the mountain for sheer pleasure of seeing the top of the mountain's famous height. His companions, who waited below the mountain, he labelled, *frigida incuriositas*, "a cold lack of curiosity". The writer then described his climb experience, comparing his moral experience in life with climbing the mountain as well as the allegory of his climb. His travel experience was similar to that of Michault Taillevent, a poet and Duke of Wellington, who in 1430 travelled through the Jura Mountains, leaving his readers with the frightening reflections of the rock and flaming mountain streams. The emotional

tremor created by the climb to the crater of a volcano in the Lipari Islands in 1407 is described vividly in his travel memoirs. There is also the 15th century travel memoir of the French writer, Antoine de la Sale (1386 – 1460), *Petit Jehan de Saintre*, where he ascribed the reason for his travel adventure to “Councils of Mad Youths”, that is, youthful madness. In the same vein, Gilles le Bouvier in his *Livre de la Description Des Pays* expressed his reason for travel:

Because many people of diverse nations and countries delight and take pleasure, as I have done past, in seeing the world and things therein and also because many wish to know without going there, and others wish to see, go and travel. I have begun this little book.

Other examples of travel writings or book of travel, as it is commonly called, include the experiences of clergies and aristocrats. Some, driven by pleasure, leisurely travelled to Europe to learn about architecture and the Arts; some were driven by tourism; a ready example of this was Robert Louis Stevenson (1879) who wrote about his travels in the Cevenne (France). Other popular travel narratives also explored colonial and postcolonial experiences. Examples include Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, as well as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Even though these examples are fictional narratives, the experiences of the travelers/writers show the adventure, risks and new knowledge they gained from their trips.

Some travellers document their experiences in the form of a diary, which is later edited and published. Such works are usually based on the actual experience and observation of the writer on an hourly, daily, weekly or monthly basis, depending on the nature of the travel and convenience. Examples of such works are *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, published in 1786 by James Boswell. The interesting travel diary of Che Guevara – *The Motorcycle Diaries* – documents the places visited by the traveller. The observatory description of Greece, a travel narrative of the same title written by Pausania in the 2nd century AD, belongs to this category. Some other travel literature serves as a form of observation on a people, culture and their nation. For instance, the Trinidadian, V.S. Naipaul’s *India: A Wounded Civilization*. The writer settled in an area for a period where he observed the peoples’ culture, tradition, religion and daily interactions, and documented these experiences for posterity. Other examples of this type of travel literature include Deborah Tall’s *The Island of the White Cow*, Peter Mayle’s *A Year in Provence*, Johnson Braid’s *A Walk Up the Town of the Red People*.

In most cases, travels and nature intermingle in writings and observations, as seen in the works of Sally Carigher and Ivan T. Sanderson, Terry Hat, Louis Bright, Gerald Durrell as well as Ball Braide, Crane Edith, Anderson Thurber and Horgan Porter. Then we have naturalist writers who write about the adventures they experienced in the line of duty. Examples are Charles Darwin, who wrote an account of the journey of HMS Beagle at the fusion of science, natural history and travels; Charles Dickens’ *American Notes* (1842); D. H. Lawrence’s *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays* (1916) and *Morning in Mexico and Other Essays*

(1927); John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*; Hilaire Belloc's *The Path to Rome* (1902); and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796).

Some other adventurous writings are compositions coloured with nostalgia, as the feeling of departure from relations and loved ones combined with fear of the unknown characterised their writings. This is evident in the works of the following travel writers in the extracts seen below:

Fig. 1

Ben Hillary
*First Travel to
France 1982*

*A departure
described*

The will fell on me to embark on a journey that I had contemplated over the years. The strong will to go engaged my desire and reluctance to part with my love ones back home in England. More difficult was how to say a good bye to my wife, children and friends. But, how will I receive the friendly palms that will wave me off the shores of England at least for the brief separation? How will I look back to return a wave of the hand to the land that nursed me? But, the will to leave killed other wills in me and I said good bye to England and left for the inviting nobility, succumbed to the allure of Paris.

Fig. 2

Joshua Slocum's
Sail from
Boston, *Sailing
Alone Around the
World*

*A departure
described (1898)*

I had resolved on a voyage around the world, and as the wind of the morning of April 24, 1895 was fair, at noon I weighed anchor, set sail... A thrilling pulse beat high in me. My step was light on deck in the crisp air. I felt there could be no turning back, and that I was engaging in adventure the meaning of which I thoroughly understood.

Fig. 3

Thomas West's
Sail from
London to India
Mountain

*A departure
described
(1964)*

I was set for a journey, an adventure I had long contemplated, and now this minute, this hour, this day, the time has come for me to take a ride, in the wing of time, time that will dictate my pace, that determines man's wills, the very adventure that is his entire life. Time, I welcome you time, the arbiter, the sole determinant of the thought that conceived the journey I had long thought of a need to embark upon. Yes, I dare not look back at those I left behind with love, or else, I may be set

back, I also dare not look back in anger, otherwise, it may be difficult for me to roll off the stone of vengeance locked up in me. And, now, I am good to go to that mountain, the mountain that had haunted my dream, good to go, I go...

In recent times, travel literature has emerged as a field of study with its distinct platforms, having journals, monographs, anthologies, organisations and conferences. Examples include Paul Fussel's *Abroad* (1980); Marianna Torgovnick's *Gone Primitive: Modern Intellectuals, Savage Minds* (1990); and Dennis Porter's *Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*.

3.2 FICTIONAL TRAVELOGUES

Travel literature or writings also exist in the form of fiction, which is termed, fictionalised travels. This also exists in its generic form as non-fiction-fictionalised travel, the latter, though in some cases may not be easily differentiated from the fictionalised travel writings. Fictional travelogues are often based on real life or actual travels either of the writer or a real life account of another which the travel writer has described or fictionalised. Examples of travel literature based on actual journeys are Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The novel is based on the actual journey of the author up to the River Congo. Another real life travel which was reduced to a work of fiction was Kira Salak's *The White Mary*. This was a journey between Papua New Guinea and the Congo. In the United States, Jack Kerouac wrote *On the Road* (1957) and *Theharma Bums* (1958) to record his travels around the United States of America in the 1940's and early 1950's. The travel journey of Marco Polo or John Mandeville which is classifiably fictional and non-fictional travel writing is also important to our category of fictional travelogues.

3.3 PILGRIMAGE TRAVELS

This form of travel writing is not very different from the other popular types like the fiction and non-fictionalised travel literature criticism, adventure literature, guide travel books, imaginary voyages, among others. Although there are often common experiences in travel literatures around the world, pilgrimage travel is not exempted from such connectivity. Pilgrimage travels are forms of travel writings that discuss the experience of the traveller who has travelled to a place designated for religious purposes like Jerusalem or Mecca. Examples of pilgrimage travels are John Stephen Ken's *Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, Ibrahim Ibn Jabar's *A Travel Round the Kabar* (1980), and the American tourist Mathew Johnson's *Jerusalem* (1967), a travel memoir that gave a descriptive account of the city of Jerusalem, focusing especially on its spirituality and what makes the city pilgrimage worthy.

3.4 THE SEVEN TYPES OF TRAVELLERS

There are many types of travellers, but seven of them are explained below:

The Cultural Explorers: These types of travellers are interested in the discovery and study of the culture of people. They study historic sites, monuments, engravings, designs history, language and whatever constitutes the cultural expression of the people.

Personal History Explorers: For these explorers, the main objective for travelling is to have a deeper understanding of their ancestry and heritage. They make tours to important land mark areas in style and comfort in familiar hotels, but they are conscious of their security.

The Virtual Travellers prefer the comfort of their homes to the uncertainties of unknown cultures and places. They are satisfied with the exploration within their localities, and trips are often within short distances and family-centred.

Free Spirit Travellers get excitement and satisfaction by traveling for the fun of it. This type gets thrilled seeking the best of everything, always emotionally engineered, and emotionally charged to seek fun away from the comfort of the home.

The Cultural History Buff goes beyond his/her own familiar terrain or roots to understand the culture and history of other people, mostly out of personal interest or hobby, making the experience a more rewarding venture. In the process of travelling, one observes and learns.

The Gentle Explorers visit and enjoy the security and experience of familiar environment. They visit historical sites and are usually led by a Tour Guide who narrates the history of the place or artifact.

No Hassle Travelers go away on brief visits, often unplanned and pre-meditated. They prefer to take short holidays away from familiar environments to visit their loved ones living in places they have not visited before. Such travels are usually worry-free and pleasurable.

3.5 IMPERIALIST TRAVELOGUES

These are the kinds of travel writings that concern the actions of a powerful country that tries to gain control or dominion over other countries or influence other countries socially, economically and politically. Examples of such imperialist travelogues are Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* (1992). *Heart of Darkness* is about imperial exploration of Congo while *Imperial Eyes* is a form of cultural inquiry into the intersection of gender and colonialism.

3.6 MORALITY ESSAYS

What is Morality?

Morality is the principle of right or wrong behaviour, a system that tells people how they should behave or act according to certain cultural or organised and acceptable conventional codes or ethics. Over the ages, there have been certain special or classic reactions in writing against some forms of behaviours considered uncultured, uncouth and immoral in societies. Such essays have been written to correct existing behaviours that are contrary or opposed to the right behaviours that are expected of every individual in the society.

These types of essays are termed moralistic, and their writers have been described as moralists, to reflect how much they have been identified with their moral ideals, morally conscious ideologies, principles or philosophies that are corrective in nature.

Morality Essays

Morality essays are ethical essays, which may also appear in the form of poems or any of the genres, the earliest example being Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man: Moral Essays and Satires* in 1731. They come in form of four epistles addressed to a Lord Bolingbroke, Dr. Swift and a few others. Epistle I, addressed to Sir Richard Temple, Lord Cobham, deals with the knowledge and characters of people and sets forth the difficulties in judging people. Epistle II, which was addressed to Martha Blount, discusses the character of women. Epistle III, addressed to Allen, Lord Bathurst, deals with the use of riches. Epistle IV, addressed to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington deals with the similar subject of Epistle III, citing instances of the vanity of wealth, and a call to humanity to appreciate nature. It ends with the strong advice on the moral use of wealth.

In the modern period, it is the doggedness or commitment of moralists to their moral ideas in their essays that makes the society to often refer to them as ideological voices, moral activists or social activists. We can quickly mention a number of moralists and their essays around the world, some of whom are Frederick Watkin's *The Age of Ideology*, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nation*, Robert Nozick's *A Libertarian Conception of Distributive Justice*, Russell Kirk's *The Problem of Social Justice*, Mikhail Bakunin's *Letter to La Liberte*, Martin Luther King's *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, John Rawl's *A Kantian Conception of Equality*, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and William Godwin's *Love of Justice*. The sound moral basis of the numerous essays of Thomas Aquinas has left a lasting impression about his life and ideology up to date. The next section will give a cursory look at the writings of Thomas Aquinas.

3.7 THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS AQUINAS

Thomas Aquinas, a professor of Sacred Theology, moral philosopher and a Catholic teacher, was a critique and moralist who was popular for his ability to sieve the philosophy of the pagan Greek philosopher, Aristotle, and decided its level or measure of relevance to Catholicism and theology. He wrote classics that covered the entire doctrine of Catholicism and trinity to morality before he died in 1274.

Theology gained more strength in the 2nd or 3rd centuries as more people became Christians and church fathers as well as bishops and theologians issued their comments and views on the Bible; and such views were held in great esteem, except the perspectives of pagan philosophers that were not respected because the church of the time did not see them as Christians. Christian philosophers and theologians of the time experimented with the philosophy of inquiry, the search for the truth, in relation to the stance of the scripture, which was regarded as the undeniable truth. Thomas Aquinas' greatest achievement was the proof that God exists, using the logic of Aristotle as the basis of his argument.

Thomas Aquinas studied and applied Aristotelian model to his entire reasoning. Aquinas' theory of knowledge is not a vision of the divine truth, but of how people may know the world. People are rational animals thus the world can only be understood by human reasoning. God has endowed people with reasoning ability so that they can understand the universe, and as higher animals, people can only know that which they can experience with the senses. In his total Aristotelian applicability, Aquinas argues "whatever is known is known in the manner in which man can know it". This is a fundamental principle of all knowledge that could lead people to two directions, observed Aquinas.

Aquinas, it appears, was not satisfied with knowing things as they are, but was also interested in knowing the why of things, an idea that binds him to the logic of Aristotle. Aquinas believed in and found truth in logical argument, and was of the view that if one could argue back and forth successfully, one could find the first cause or first principle. The first cause, who is the prime mover, is God. He adopted Aristotelian philosophy in the analysis of the intellectual history of Europe, and at the same time fused theological and philosophical analysis. He argued that faith and reason are different but lead to a single truth, but both are interwoven or interconnected. The truth is God's will and His knowledge – the basis of scholasticism, the divinity and Christian truth based on logical and rigorous argument.

Thomas Aquinas was certainly the new Aristotle of the 13th century. It was Dante Alighieri (1265 – 1321), the poet, who was most critically damaging to Christianity. In his work, *The Divine Comedy*, written after 1302, Dante was

quite critical of the Church of Rome. His criticisms were about the failure of Popes and the clergy to live up to the requirements of their offices. And, while he described the Church as a harlot, he never though disputed church doctrine or orthodoxy. For Dante, the message was clear – the church was not serving the spiritual needs of the flock.

Abelard, Aquinas and Dante helped to construct worldview which placed reason and faith at the centre of people’s quest for truth. The truth was God and God’s will. But over the course of the next several centuries, reason and faith would be slowly drawn apart. The European mind awakened itself from centuries old slumber and began to justify itself according to the principle of a new synthesis.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the history of travel literature, its types, morality essays, and taken a cursory look into the works of Thomas Aquinas.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- travel literature has an interesting history;
- there are different types of travel literature;
- the moral and theological philosophy of Thomas Aquinas;
- the nature of fictional, pilgrimage and imperialist travelogues.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Discuss the history of Travel Literature.
- 2) What is fictional travel literature?
- 3) Write briefly on:
 - (i) Pilgrimage travel
 - (ii) Imperialist travelogues
- 4) What do you find interesting in the moral philosophy of Thomas Aquinas?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 THE GROWTH OF HUMANISM

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
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 - 3.3 Christian Humanism
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- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we introduce you to Humanism and the various types of humanism, as well as how humanism developed across the ages. It is important that you have a comprehensive knowledge of the Humanist aspect of English Literature as it operated in the Medieval and Renaissance, so that it won't appear as if you have learnt the course without this vital aspect. A sure way to be a successful student of the course is to know what constitutes Humanism, the conditions that drive the humanists into their various philosophies, how the English society accepted or viewed them, as well as how they fared over the ages. The definition of the concept of Humanism, types like Christian Humanism, Classical Humanism, and how the term developed overtime, the examination of the activities of some Humanists of the period, will sharpen your comprehension about humanism and the course generally. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define Humanism;
- discuss the origin of Humanism;
- explain Christian Humanism;
- choose and differentiate between two of the Humanists of the period;
- outline what you find common/similar with the Humanists of the period.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE DEFINITION OF HUMANISM

We may define Humanism as the rejection of a religion in favour of a belief in the advancement of humanity by its own efforts, a cultural movement of the Renaissance based on Classical studies. It is the belief that people can live using their intelligence and reason, rather than depending on a god or religion. Someone who believes in humanism is called a Humanist (see *Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus*, 2006 and *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, 2007).

In addition, in view of the dynamic nature of our world, and how the concept of humanism evolved to cater for the various emerging spheres across human disciplines, we may attempt to give a wider/broadened definition to cater for the newly evolving aspects not mentioned in the definitions already given above.

Based on the above, we may define humanism from a more general perspective - as a renewed system of rational learning that propagates human ability in a self-confident manner, for the evolving dictates/demands of the present, in order to achieve socio-economic, cultural and religious worldview.

3.2 TYPES OF HUMANISM

Our definition of the concept of Humanism justifies the existence of many varieties, some of which are briefly explained below.

Secular Humanism emerged from 18th century rationalism. Scientists, historians and philosophers of the 19th century embraced its growth under the umbrella of humanistic organisations like the American Rationalist Federation, and the Council of Democratic and Secular Humanism.

Literary Humanism belongs to the humanities and literary culture.

Cultural Humanism originated from Greece and Rome and evolved through European history but now make up a good part of European law, ethics, science, politics, theory and history.

Naturalistic (Modern) Humanism, which is of secular and religious origin, is also called Ethical Humanism or Democratic Humanism.

Scientific Humanism has been described by one of its proponents, Cerliss Lamont, as a naturalistic philosophy that relies primarily on reason, science, human passion and democracy, thus anti-supernaturalism in nature.

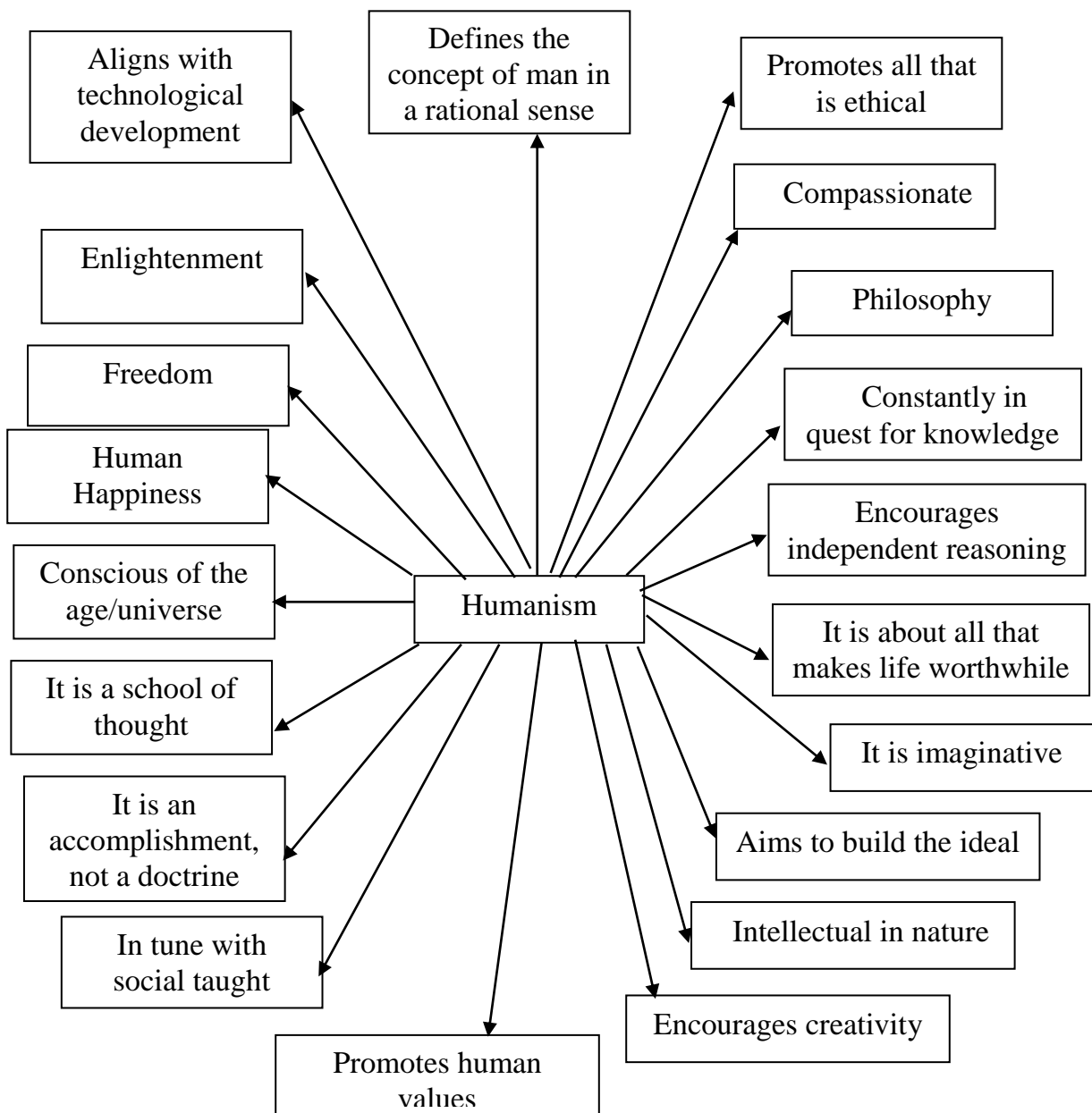
Philosophical Humanism (which includes part of Modern and Christian Humanism) focuses on human needs and interests.

Renaissance Humanism is premised in the philosophy that people are capable of differentiating between truth and falsehood. It developed at the end of the Middle Ages.

Religious Humanism evolved out of universalism and Unitarianism, based on ethical culture and practices.

The figure below explains the general features (strands) of Humanism:

Fig. 4 Features of Humanism



3.3 CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

Christian Humanism is formed based on Christian ethics, codes or philosophy. It is a large part of the humanism framework of the Renaissance period; it is an ideological affirmation of Biblical contexts and doctrines based on God's moral standard.

Christian humanism began with the traditional teaching and belief that people are created in the image of God, a process known in Latin as *Imago Dei*, the material worth of the individual. Education was controlled by Christian clerics, as monasteries were upgraded to centres of educational learning from which universities grew in the 12th century. Classical Greek and Roman authors were studied - Homer's *Iliad*, Plato's *Dialogues*, Aristotle's categories and speeches of Galen, Strabo, Dioscurides, amongst others - the same way in which the Bible was read in homes.

Human logic began as an aspect of Greek philosophy (syllogistic reasoning) and informed the process of theology in the 11th century, but was later declared illegal in the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081 – 1118) as thinkers were imprisoned. But primitive humanism began when Catholic papacy rose in favour of academic and religious elements. Humanists then gained popularity in the Renaissance with the effort of Petrarch, who wrote in *Oration on the Dignity of Man* that a person has the free will to travel up and down a moral scale with God and Angels at the top and Satan located at the bottom. With time, Christian humanism developed a strong footing in England and spread beyond it.

3.4 CLASSICAL HUMANISM

This is a type of Humanism patterned after the characteristics of ancient Greek and Roman civilization. It was influenced by their art, culture and religion, and architecture, intellectualism, musical composition, restraint, standard, painting, education and conservatism.

3.5 HUMANISM AND THE GROWTH OF THE ARTS

Humanism, which has been traced to the writings of Justin Matyr in the 2nd century, an early theological figure of the early Christian church, had its roots from classical culture and philosophy. The principles of letters written by Basil of Caesar and Gregory of Nyssa who were Cappadocian fathers were early records of the use of secular knowledge and experience. The fall of the Roman Empire and decline of her civilization facilitated the need for a more entrenched principle of Christ and Christological view of society. Although the education of the medieval period was under the control and powerful influence of the Church, as the monasteries were the seat of learning, Charlemagne, in the 12th century, suggested that scholars should set up designated places of higher learning that could be christened 'universities'.

The form of Christian education in the period was reduced to the rudiments of letters of Basil or the homilies of Gregory Nazianzus, as well as learning the Bible from one's parents. The aspects of the Greek philosophy did not start until the 11th century when it emerged to push up the process of theology in the Byzantine Empire and Western European circles. We should remember that Medieval Europe had interest in and maintained the activity of a number of scholars who were active in impressive scientific disciplines most of which were inherited or carried over from the Greek, Latin and Arabic speaking cultures and tradition. The mental attitudes and scholarly interest of the people were scientific in nature, as early as the Mesopotamian civilization before 3000BC. There were early records of the invention of printing technology on cloth under the influence of Buddhism in China, printed by the use of the oldest wood-block called the Diamond Sutra in 11 May 868.

The scientific revolution of the period reformed the masses and harassed the power of political and religious authorities. There was a sharp increase in literacy and this broke the monopoly of the literate elites. European vernacular languages flowered to gradual displacement of Latin as the lingua franca. With the establishment of Western universities like Bologna, Padua, Paris and Oxford which emanated from the Gregorian Reform, Cathedral Schools, initially meant to train clerics, became a training school for talented young men who were not only interested in studying Medicine, but Law and Liberal Arts.

Gradually, the dawn of the Renaissance experienced an explosion of the Arts – humanism, with the efforts of the early humanistic figure, Petrarch, who contributed generously to language and literature, promoted the development of the humanities, which strengthened and prioritised ancient languages including Greek and Latin as well as classical writers and rhetoric. Within this framework, the existing development merged with Christian humanists who practised scriptural teachings, patristic writings, ecclesiastical reform, Hebrew and clerical education.

There was renewed confidence in Christian humanism in the Renaissance with more Christians studying philological sources of the Greek New Testament and Hebrew Bible. With the reformation movement in full swing, new editions of the Bible were published: Erasmus of Rotterdam (A Catholic) and Martin Luther (an Augustan Priest) translated the Bible into German language; John Calvin, a Sorbonne theologian, wrote texts on the old and new testaments scripture, excluding the book of Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs of Songs, Second Epistle of John, Third Epistle of John and the Book of Revelation. He was respected for leading the vanguard for church proliferation in France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and parts of Germany. Thus the tradition of Christian humanism, enlightenment and progress in the Arts continued throughout and beyond the Renaissance. The enlightenment christened humanism as a form of secular liberal philosophy, and marked the beginning of what became known as Arts.

3.6 MAJOR HUMANISTS OF THE PERIOD

Prominent writers were distinguished by their contributions to the humanism of the Medieval Europe. They were not just noticed and read in the medieval and Renaissance, their works are still being studied up to the present, with special consideration to the various disciplines where they functioned. Some of the major humanists of the period are Plato (427BC-347BC); Petrarch (1304-1374); Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375); Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406); Gasparino Barzizza (1360-1430); Aristotle (384-322BC); Guarino Veronese (1374-1460); and Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527).

3.7 PLATO (427 – 347BC)

He was a Greek philosopher born in Athens. He was a friend of Socrates. He was on exile after the death of Socrates, returned to Athens in the 380s and began a school called the Academy. His works existed as dialogue. Some of his works are *The Lion*, *Euthyphro*, *Protagoras* and *Georgia*. The second part of his work includes *The Crito*, *Apology*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*. The third collection of his works are *Theaetetus*, *Parmenides*, *Timaeus*, *Sophistes*, *Philebus*, as well as *The Republic* and *The Laws*. The latter are his two monumental treatises that have provided lasting appeal to philosophers across the ages. On his views on poetry and poets, whom he addressed as “creators of noble actions”, he has this to say:

Let their poems be song even though they may not be very musical... Nor shall anyone dare to sing a song which has not been approved by the judgment of the guardians of the laws, not even if his strain be sweeter than the songs of Thamyras and Orpheus, but only such poems as have been judged sacred and dedicated to the gods and such are the works of good men.

Above all, Plato approves poets for the state, but they must not be less than fifty years old. Such a poet must be talented and of great nobility, recognised in deeds and morals by the state.

3.8 ARISTOTLE (384-322BC)

He was born at Stagira in Macedon, Greece. He spent 20 years studying under Plato. Aristotle was widely traveled, and was later appointed a tutor under Philip of Macedon. He began a school in the Lyceum when he returned to Athens where students were taught logic, ethics, metaphysics, zoology, physics, rhetoric, politics and poetics. His works gave a new shape to Medieval Literature and was regarded as the source of knowledge in the Arab World and Latin West. In the 12th century, his excellence in knowledge and novel curriculum won a central place. His works influenced Spenser, Sidney, Dryden, Dr. Johnson, Donne and Sir Browne at the end of the 17th century. He was revered for his *Poetics* which

contributed immensely to the rise of neo-classicism and general literary theory and practice.

Aristotle's *Poetics* appears like an attempt to answer the critical questions raised by his teacher, Plato, who was concerned about the social, political and moral problems of Athens and how to transform the society to a disciplined one. *Poetics* traced the origin of poetry to the natural urge in man to imitate and the sense of pleasure he derives from imitation. Painful human experiences may also be pleasurable when watched on stage or read in the works of literature. He states that there is distinction between tragedy, comedy, poetry, dithyrambic, poetry and music and comedy. He insists that it is natural to imitate and that apart from music, all others imitate using language in metrics or metrical pattern. Only the poet imitates men in action, unlike the philosopher or historian who even when s/he writes in verse still does not qualify to be called a poet.

The focus of his *Poetics* is tragedy. He defines tragedy as the "*imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of certain magnitude, in language embellished with each kind existing in separate parts of the play or in the form of action, not of narrative, through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation (Catharsis) of these emotions*". He disagrees with the view of Plato that poetry does not make one emotionally fat and intellectually lean, but drains one's emotions to brighten one's insight.

Aristotle argues that poetry does not imitate the inferior ideal, and that it does not concern itself with what has happened, but that which may happen; the possibility based on the law of probability. He also offers a comparison between poetry and history or philosophy. He explains:

...the difference between the historian and the poet is not in their utterances being in verse or prose. The difference lies in the fact that the historian speaks of what has happened, the poet of the kind of thing that can happen. Hence, also poetry is more philosophical serious business than history, for poetry speaks more of the universals, history of particulars.

Aristotle introduced and popularised the theory of form in literature, indicating the difference between a tragedy and comedy. Comparing life to a tragedy, the latter, according to him, has a beginning, middle and an end but with each part relating to the other. The tragic hero has a flaw (hamartia) that may not be his own making; hence as a mortal, his fall from fortune to misfortune may not be surprising. Aristotle further identified six elements of tragedy as plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle; out of which plot occupies a central place, for it is the soul of tragedy. Tragic plot thus contains two elements: "peripeteia" (a reversal of fortunes), and "anagnorisis" (discovery or exposition).

Aristotle's *Poetics* indicates the philosopher's attempt to answer doubts raised by Plato to justify the existence of poets in any ideal Republic.

3.9 ZENO OF ELEA (490-430BC)

Zeno of Elea was an Italian pre-Socratic philosopher, inventor of the dialectic, famous for his paradoxes and a member of the Eleatic School. His rare philosophy earned him a citation in Aristotle's *Physics*. Zeno was reputed to be skillful in arguments. Taking on arguments from both sides, he produced about forty arguments, as recorded by Proclus in his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*. Zeno gave the first examples of a method of proof called *reductio ad absurdum*, which means to reduce to the absurd. He was the first philosopher to deal with the earliest attestable accounts of mathematical infinity. Apart from his argument against motion, described in Aristotle's *Physics*, his paradoxes challenged and inspired physicists, mathematicians and philosophers for centuries.

3.10 ST. AUGUSTINE (354 – 430BC)

Elected Bishop of Hippo, one of the intellectual centres of North Africa in 399, Augustine spent over thirty years writing and interpreting Christian theology and combating heresy. He wrote *The Confession*, the leading autobiography in Western history. Perhaps influenced by the nature of Hippo, the focus of lively debates on numerous theological issues, he authored *The City of God*, a voluminous treatise published in 413 and 426. He wrote *City of God* to explain that it was God's plan that Rome should decline and fall and that humanity may realize that Christianity was the salvation of mankind. He insists that there is divine relationship between history and Christianity, as both expose God's plan about the individual and the world. He cites Plato, Cicero, Herodotus, Tacitus, Aristotle and New and Old Testaments, combined with the interpretations and comments of the Church fathers of his time. *The City of God*, for instance, juxtaposes two cities, that of God and man. The latter reflects the city of Rome, with its abundant evils, which merit a decline and fall. St. Augustine wrote his experience, combined with a prediction into the future, while not ignoring history which he used to express his present. To him, *The City of God* is in the divine, which should be the main focus and desire of every Christian. The earth, therefore, should not be taken so seriously, because of its temporal characteristics and the inevitably transient nature of the individual.

Augustine studied ancient classics; hence he fused the idea of Plato and Christianity, the classical humanist's idea of form. He believed in the wisdom contained in classical philosophy and literature for the moral development of the individual. He was of the opinion that the classical virtue and philosophical-based beliefs of the Greeks will help prepare Christians for Christ.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the major theological points addressed in St. Augustine's *The City of God*.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have defined the concept of humanism, identified and discussed the types of humanism. We have also explained humanism and the growth of the Arts. A comprehensive discussion of the humanistic efforts of Plato and Aristotle, Zeno of Elea and St. Augustine were also given.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about:

- the definition of Humanism;
- humanism and its various types;
- the features that are common to Humanism;
- the relationship between Humanism and the Arts;
- the humanistic values of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno of Elea and St. Augustine.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) What is Humanism?
- 2) Based on the definitions provided, define Humanism in your own words.
- 3) Outline the features that are common to all definitions of Humanism.
- 4) Choose and outline the achievements of one of the humanists treated in this unit.
- 5) Write briefly on the following types of Humanism:
 - (i) Classical humanism
 - (ii) Christian humanism

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MODULE 2 MAJOR AUTHORS AND AN ANALYSIS OF THEIR SELECTED WRITINGS

UNIT 1 LIFE IS A JOURNEY: GEOFFREY CHAUCER AND HIS CANTERBURY TALES

Unit 1	Life is a Journey: Geoffrey Chaucer and His <i>Canterbury Tales</i>
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have designed this unit to recreate the literary efforts of Geoffrey Chaucer, so that you will appreciate why and how his Canterbury tales became so famous in literary circles since Middle English across ages. Attempt has been made to resolve some of the age long controversies that characterised the *Canterbury Tales*. If you can take time to read through it, you will not only find yourself garnering further useful facts/details about the beautiful *Canterbury Tales* but will also find yourself travelling down memory lane to Geoffrey Chaucer's

fictive Canterbury. Our discussion of the tales will educate you on the extent to which the English writer used literature to probe the English society of his time, particularly the moral decline of medieval England. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the relationships between History and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*;
- mention and explain the themes in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*;
- explain the style of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*;
- identify the literary forms of relativities to Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*;
- give a brief statement on the language of Geoffrey Chaucer.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 HISTORY AND *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

The publication of *The Canterbury Tales* coincided with the time of serial conflicts in the history of England. The Catholic Church, which was the vanguard of Christian authority in European history, was also deeply in controversy, especially as Lollardy, an early English religious movement led by John Wycliffe, got involved with pardoners (who gathered money in exchange for absolution from sin) who said they were acting on the orders of St. Mary Rouncival Hospital in England. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* became popular during the medieval political clashes, particularly the 1381 Peasant's Revolt and the controversy that led to the dethronement of King Richard II. The setting of the tale was also around the period that many of Chaucer's friends were executed as a result of their actions which were considered disparaging to the government of medieval England. This made him to leave London for Kent.

Considering the events that enveloped the medieval England of Chaucer and his tales, literary analysts seemed constrained to interpret Geoffrey Chaucer's characters as historical figures, while some described them in terms of their literary relevance, especially when his work is viewed as a satirical reflection of medieval England. In character creation, Chaucer's literary personae were formed with the writers' consciousness of English society of his time.

3.2 NATURE OF *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* was crafted in such a way that another story unveils as the previous one ends. The linear structure of the story is helped by the prologue that reveals the identity of the story tellers, making the story to lean on the characters, rather than on other formalities like moral or theme.

The themes of such stories are quickly revealed as characters emerge to tell their stories, as in when Miller, for instance, cuts in to tell his tale after the knight has completed his own version. Indication that all characters will tell their stories using the open/free exchange system as the individual character gets involved to tell his/her story unfolds itself naturally.

3.3 THEMES IN *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

Religion

Geoffrey Chaucer's tales reflect the English church of the medieval time. The dilemma that followed the Black Death brought the Church under attacks by the society, and some dissenters started fragmented movements that revealed the high spate of abuses and corruption in the Church, precisely among the clergy. Many of the characters in the Tales represent religious personalities of the time. The setting of the pilgrimage is religious and marked the inculcation of religious themes in the play. For instance, two notable characters, Pardoner and Summoner, are portrayed as uncouth, deeply corrupt and lawless. The Pardoner admits he is corrupt. The Summoner, whose duty in the church days was to bring sinners into the court for penalties including excommunication, is also evil. As seen in *The Friar's Tale*, a character (Summoner) is shown to be the devil's messenger and advocate.

The questionable characters that dominated the church of Chaucer's time were represented as the Monk, Prioress, the Nun's Priests and the Second Nun. Monastic orders had mixed with worldly concerns. They have also corrupted church responsibility of managing peasant employees on the land they manage. The Prioress lived a colourful life that was far from her religious calling and duties.

The Prioress Tales reveal the common murderous impulse among Jews, as seen in the murder of an innocent Christian boy, the subsequent blood Libel Suit filed against the Jew. These reminiscences of the actual event of 14th century England soon became part of English literary tradition.

Pilgrimage

This was common with medieval society. People go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem while Canterbury was the destination for English pilgrims. Pilgrims often go to seek miracles in the relics of Saints which they preserved. Saint Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral by knights of Henry II during a disagreement between Church and Crown.

The story of his death became divinised by the people, capable of bringing back life and miracles, and people frequent the Cathedral in search of miracles, turning it into a kind of Jerusalem. The illustration may be said to represent Christians' continuous search for heaven, while overlooking weaknesses and conflicts, no matter how serious.

Social Class

The upper class or nobles in the age of Chaucer were represented by the Knight and his Squire. Nobles were expected to be valiant warriors and ruthless, especially in the battle field, well behaved in the king's court, and christianly in attitude. Chaucer's *The Knights Tale* reflects how the brotherly love of two fellow Knights degenerated into a deadly conflict before a woman they both idealised, with both Knights willing to fight to death so as to win her. This aspect of Chaucer's Tale shows the stupidity or vanity of such a practice, though such practice was less common in the days of Chaucer.

Chivalry was given a prominent place in the reign of King Edward III; Chaucer's *The Tale of Sir Topas* and *The Tale of Melibee* featured Chaucer travelling with the pilgrims in the tales. Both plays condemn class conflicts and emphasise morals; the first considers the idiocy that was attached to chivalry while the second condemns violence. In *The Three Estates*, characters were divided into three classes: "those who pray" (the clergy); "those who fight" (the nobility); and "those who work" (the Commoners and Peasantry). Common themes form the links and reduced the entire play into an indivisible whole, with its close mirroring of the English society, and its retaliatory urge. Convention followed when the Knight begins the tale game, with a tale as a reflection of the highest social class in the social group, but when he is preceded by Millen, a reflection of the lower class, the tale (stage) is set for a disregard for upper class rules.

Reality and Relativity

Geoffrey Chaucer's characters discuss diverse views of reality, creating an atmosphere that presents the world in different versions: the *fabliau* hardly recognises the existence of God, the saint's life concerns the physical reality,

tracts and sermons support moral orthodoxy. The plays replay human life and existence in its various forms, such that truth and reality seemed unattainable.

3.4 STYLE IN *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

Geoffrey Chaucer experimented with language in his work based on the practices of the English medieval schools of rhetoric thought that described the literary patterning of the period along high, middle and low styles. But St. Augustine was more interested in the classification he described: audience response with less emphasis on subject matter. He divided literature into three phrasal categories: “majestic persuades”, “temperate pleases”, and subdued teaches. He encouraged writers to write with a view that is centred on the speaker, subject, audience, purpose and manner. Chaucer’s style revolves around all these, with his reader as his audience. The general assessment of Chaucer’s work qualifies it as a ‘house of theory’, thus greater than any theory yet unknown.

Geoffrey Chaucer’s creative skilfulness and intellectual vibrancy reflect in his lexical duplication in his stories. His similar use of words was used to mean different things in classes, different contexts and situation in his plays. Woman is referred to as “lady”, but “wenche” among lower classes. “Pitee” is a noble context among upper classes but in the Merchant’s Tale, lower classes show simplicity, a stylistic overtone that exists throughout the play.

3.5 CHAUCER AND HIS LANGUAGE

Geoffrey Chaucer took after his medieval English way of speaking; and this reflected greatly in his manuscripts. His generation of English usage pronounced /e/ at the end of words, it then means that the word, /care/, was pronounced /kæðr/ as pronounced in modern English. This was inconsistent in their copying of final /-e/, what later became a point of reference to post Chaucerian scholars who have argued that Chaucer was himself inconsistent in its usage. There are clear evidence that Chaucer’s language had not passed through the Great Vowel Shift, that would have enabled Chaucer to pronounce English words the way modern English users would have such words pronounced if Geoffrey Chaucer were to be alive today.

Geoffrey Chaucer existed in the medieval English era, a period that interacted with Latin, Greek, Romans and other imported cultures. The varieties of dialects that existed in his time had influences on each other. His language of literary craft was the culture of his medieval England.

3.6 The Incompleteness and Expansion of *The Canterbury Tales*

There is no definite consensus among scholars and literary critics on the particular order of arrangement that Geoffrey Chaucer's numerous tales should follow. We are aware that there exists 83 manuscripts of Chaucer covering the late medieval and early Renaissance era, yet the question of the completeness of the story has not been resolved. 50 of his manuscripts were said to be complete while 28 were said to be fragmentary. The tales vary as minor and major in manuscripts, with minor variations arising from copyists' error, though defence from some quarters argued that the errors were as a result of the revision and recopying or rewriting embarked upon by Chaucer. It was also largely disputed that the original surviving manuscripts of the Tales were not Geoffrey Chaucer's original, but the oldest was compiled by a Scribe after the author's death. The *Ellesmere Manuscript* was considered most beautiful among the tales, and many editors from medieval to our contemporary age regard it with all seriousness.

William Caxton's (1478) edition was the first known celebrated publisher of *Canterbury Tales*, a derivative of the original (now misplaced) manuscripts, though still part of the 83 manuscripts.

Two modern methods of ordering the tales have been given. Its division was made into ten fragments "based on order of presentation (one character speaks and leaves the stage for another)". There are no visible connectivity between fragments (the other is the numbered Ellesmere ordering).

3.7 Relativities/Borrowings in *The Canterbury Tales*

Geoffrey Chaucer was a medieval English writer in a period when writers leaned on classical cultures and practices in carrying out their crafts. But readers of Chaucer's tales are still reading and waiting, perhaps there might be evidence of a similar set of collection of pilgrims on a pilgrimage within the set standard of Chaucer's. This is not to say that the medieval writer was never influenced at all. He had relativities with the world in which he existed, the world of oral literature of his time. His period was generously influenced by the art of storytelling that had been in practice prior to Chaucer's time and was also imbibed in medieval England. Such art of storytelling became a form of entertainment even within the English church; prizes and awards were given to best performers or winners, sometimes in the form of a crown or free dinner. It was usually a colourful event in medieval England, with an appointed Master of Ceremonies, under the watchful eyes of a judge. The medieval staging of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* took the form similar to the above.

The Chaucer's work in question was said to be original but inspired by Dante and Virgil in *The Divine Comedy*. Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* feature narrators that recount the stories of a pilgrimage or journey they have undertaken to flee from problems and confusion, an instance being the Black Death in England. Also, some tales in *Canterbury Tales* are similar to some in the *Decameron*. Many of such tales too were like a 'different' copy of similar stories that have existed. This is why suspicion is high among scholars over the similarity in the tales of Geoffrey Chaucer to existing stories, particularly Boccaccio's *Decameron*, which scholars believed the former may have read in his life time.

In spite of the suspicion and controversies relating to the possible borrowings that most of these plays may be guilty of, one cannot completely rule out that plays of the period had their diverse sources, just like there are different versions of the Bible and poetry of Ovid. Storytelling and pilgrimages were the popular focus of most writers of the age of Geoffrey Chaucer. Still, Chaucer was the first to use the works of the Italians, Petrarch and Dante, the same way the work of the 6th century philosopher, Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, appeared in many tales. Geoffrey Chaucer borrowed generously from liturgical writings and encyclopaedia, with some scholars suggesting that he may have met and interacted with Petrarch and Boccaccio.

3.8 ADAPTATIONS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER'S *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* has impressed and puzzled readers and established scholars across the ages. The doubts, confusion, dilemma and other forms of challenges in which the medieval tales were wrapped have also provoked varieties of heightened interests in the tale such that the English tale is now being adapted in various forms. The most popular forms taken to further immortalise Geoffrey Chaucer and his manuscripts were not just adapted into television and radio, but also works of literature.

Across ages, the work of Geoffrey Chaucer has been adapted in fiction and non-fiction, using the characters, plot, theme, structure and the language of Chaucer. Many instances abound, some of which are highlighted below.

Using the frame and characters of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, the historical mystery novelist, P.C. Doherty, fictionalised *The Tale*. The science fiction writer, Dan Simmons, wrote his novel, *Hyperion*, using the pilgrim pattern. Also, the social scientist, Richard Dawkins, adapted *The Canterbury Tales* as the structure of his evolutionary discourse, *The Ancestors Tale: A*

Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution, the award winning 2014 allegorical fable, to probe common ancestry, with each telling a tale about evolution. Henry Dudeney's 1907 book, *The Canterbury Puzzles and Other Curious Problems*, uses the characters in *The Canterbury's Tales* in its plot. *The Canterbury Trail* is Angie Abdou's translated version of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. It tells of the adventures of some ski enthusiasts in a remote place in British Columbia.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Of all the tales in *The Canterbury Tales*, which do you prefer and why?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the aspects, nature, themes, and the writer's style in *The Canterbury Tales*. We have also tried to answer the puzzling questions of the incompleteness or otherwise of Chaucer's manuscripts.

We also explained the literary adaptations of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Try and read over your work again to see how much you have become familiar with all we have discussed in this unit.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is related to Medieval English history.

- Chaucer's beautiful Tales reflect a distinct nature that makes them different from all other known tales of contemporary literature, even in England;
- manuscripts of the *The Canterbury Tales* are incomplete;
- Geoffrey Chaucer borrowed some of the tales from the English medieval arts as well as other manuscripts that have predated or have existed long before his own tales;
- there exist a number of literary adaptations of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Discuss the nature of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.
- 2) Discuss at least two themes of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.
- 3) Outline convincing facts that indicate any relationship between *The Canterbury Tales* and English medieval arts.
- 4) Explain the style of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.
- 5) Give evidence of the literary adaptations of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

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UNIT 2 THE LOVE OF PEOPLE: EDMUND SPENSER'S POETRY

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 - 3.3 Interpreting Poetry (III): '*Amoretti LXXV: One Day I Wrote Her Name*'
 - 3.4 Interpreting Poetry (IV): '*An Hymn in Honour of Beauty*'
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the thematic preoccupation and general conceptual and critical view of life in the select poetry of Edmund Spenser. At the end of this unit, it is hoped that you will be more interested in the poet's philosophy of life, which formed the basis of his poetic discourse.

We have tried to discuss the poet and his poetry in a simple way so that you will generally come to like the poetry genre.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- outline the recurring themes in the select poems of Edmund Spenser;
- explain the themes of Spenser's poems that we have discussed in this unit;
- discuss the style of any of the chosen poems of Edmund Spenser treated in this unit;
- state and give examples of the figures of speech used in Edmund Spenser's poem of your choice in this unit;
- write a poem on any subject that appeals to you or you are very passionate about.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 INTERPRETING THE POEM, A *DITTY*

The poet eulogises Queen Elizabeth of England, paying every attention to, not just her glamorous beauty, but her gracefulness and motherly status to all her

English subjects – “Queen of the Shepherds”. Even her throne of glory is fertile, “grassie greene”. Spenser merges the beauty of the subject of the poem with the beauty and reproductive capacity of the natural environment, “the flowery Daffadillies”, “primroses greene”, Damask roses” and “sweetie violet”. Her flawless beauty upgrades her stately appearance to that of “a maiden Queen”. Edmund Spenser further unveils the excellence and dazzling beauty of the English Queen by directing his searchlight to the celestial, comparing her to heavenly angels, “angelic face”. He also admires her regal masculinity: “her princely grace”. According to the poet, Queen Elizabeth combines both human and angelic qualities, such that hardly is any comparison good enough to measure up to her rare genial beauty and modesty:

Her modest eye,
Her majestic,
Where have you seen the like but there?

The beauty of this majestic Queen attracts musicians and admirers including gods, who scramble to witness her “Goddesse” sing and play in melodious tones that are alien to the human world. Even the instruments used to “grace” the earthly Queen have no equal in the world, particularly in terms of their “soote”ness or soothing, and such is expected in a swelling “merriment”. Edmund concludes that when the Queen is accorded such a grand attention here on earth, such that she is satisfied, she will surely reign gloriously in Heaven in company of the trail blazers of heavenly grace. Our poet ordered that we roll out our musical instruments, “the Pincke and Cullambine, with Gellifowres”, performed with “paramours”, and “sops-in-wine”, not just to elevate the Queen’s gracefulness, but also in preparation for her heavenly “coronations” among most divinely honoured Queens. Spenser advises that in readiness for the great event, flowers of distinctions, fragrance per excellent, fit for stately events, should be brought in: “Daffadowndillies”, “Cowslips”, “loved Lillies”, “Pretice Pawnce” matched with the “fayre flower Delice”.

A good number of themes can be pointed out quickly in the praise poetry. They are beauty, gracefulness, merriment, transient beauty, fertility and sensuousness.

Edmund Spenser uses some exaggerative expressions in the poem, perhaps due to the eulogizing nature of the poem: “her angelic face”, “to full the fourth place and reigne with the rest in heaven”, “where my Goddesse shines”, “so sweetly they play”, “And sing all the way”, “That it a heaven is to heare”, “Her heavenly haveour, her princely grace”. He also uses explicit or direct comparison, indicating likeness or similarity between some qualities found in the subject of the poem. For instance, “Ydad in Scarlot, like a mayden Queene”, “Tell me, have ye seene her angelick face like Phoebe fayre”? There are also some metaphorical expressions in the poem: “... her angelic face”, “...”, “her princely grace”. Spenser graced the poem with a few apostrophes, thus, “See were she sits upon the grassie greene, o seemely sight”, “Now ryse up Elisa, decked as thou art in royal a ray”. The combination of natural imagery with sensuous celestial images complements the poetic eulogy “...sits upon the grassie greene”, “...Damaske

Roses and Daffadillies”, primroses greene”, “...Gelliflowres”, “...loved Lillies”, “...fayre flower”.

3.2 INTERPRETING THE POEM, *AMORETTI LXVII: LIKE AS A HUNTSMAN*

This is a poem about a wild chase - the poet, probably the hunter, found himself chasing a deer blindly. The more the animal pranced away, determined to get away with its life, the more the poet engaged her in a ferocious chase in the jungle. Apparently tired, the deer had a brief rest “in some shady place”. In the tireless and foolish pursuit, “after long pursuit and vain assay”, the poet became tired, dull, slow and awkward, forsook the “gentle deer” which returned by the path through which the poet had engaged her in an endless chase so as “to quench her thirst at the next brook”. In turn, the deer stared at the hunter, probably the poet, fearlessly:

There she beholding me with milder look,
Sought not to fly, but fearless still did bide:
Till I in hand her yet half trembling took,
And with her own goodwill her firmly tied.

In what looked like a determination of the deer to resign to fate, it was no longer interested in running away from the poet. Now vanquished, it acknowledged the superiority of the huntsman in the race for life.

Apparently, the female deer in the poem is a lady (woman) or lover of the poet whom he had engaged in an overbearing chase. She had escaped the poet’s overweening or submerging invitation for love, but had to return the poet’s love, seeking the path of love from which she had fled. Now that she needs the poet’s comfort, she owned up voluntarily, so the poet does not need to engage her in any chase anymore. The themes of the poem are love, deception, escape, submission and fear.

3.3 THE POEM, *AMORETTI LXXV: ONE DAY I WROTE HER NAME*

This is an unusual poem of love; its novelty lies on the lover’s unique approach to his female lover. The young lover in the poem is determined to immortalise his lover and by extension, their love affair, but surprisingly, every attempt to get his lover’s name immortalised ended in vanity. The poet insists:

One day I wrote her name upon the sand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.

Deeply obsessed by her love, he attempts to subdue mortality by every means but discovered that it was impossible for him to conquer mortality, which he thought if he had conquered, he would have a long and enduring relationship with his

lover. Against his determination, nature played the destructive agent to his desire to attain eternal or an endless love affair; "...the waves washed it away", "...but came the tide and made my pains his prey".

The poet is a practical man, a romantic, who believes that in the face of a burning biological drive, a true love desire can be satisfied and maintained when humanity attains a godly or god-like status, in which he becomes superior to his transient nature. The poet's fruitlessness in his quest for an endless love relationship is apparent in the poem.

We, however, know from the response of the man's lover in this poem that he is bargaining for the impossible when she interrupts and obstructs the man's intention to attain immortality so that they could have a prolonged affair. She describes her man as a "vain man" who pursues vanity "that dost in vain assay". The position of the woman in the poem is quite different from that of her lover whom she sees as an idealist or a myopic fool who gropes after selfishness and the ephemerals of life. To the woman, her lover need not worry about all these because she, the reason for which he embarks on an endless struggle, will also die. She explains:

For I myself shall like to this decay
And eke my name be wiped out likewise.

The search for immortality for any reason at all is nothing but a bizarre exercise - "A mortal thing so to immortalize". The lady does not see any reason a mere "thing", article or material thing that is by the law of nature subject to death and decomposition should conceive permanency in longevity. Does this mean that there is no way man can ever attain immortality? The poet answers our question through the lady's response. She says human virtue, greatness and the arts are capable of eternalising a person, and can even inscribe one's name in glory in the heavens. But death, according to our speaker, has been given the unquestionable willpower to "subdue" humanity.

Finally, she advises her lover to show rare virtue, love her genuinely, and by that, both lovers will be sure of renewing their life and love till eternity. She preaches that a rare, disciplined and selfless display of virtue will transport one to heaven:

To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse, your virtues rare shall eternize
And in the heavens write your glorious name
Where when as death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.

The poem's aesthetic value is based on its various themes such as the vanity of life, the transient nature of life, love, vanity, search for immortality, selfish desire, human conflict with the unchanging will of nature, persistence, the value of or indestructibility of virtue, as well as the overriding influence of death over man.

3.4 INTERPRETING THE POEM, *AN HYMN IN HONOUR OF BEAUTY*

In this poem, the poet attempts to re-canonise metaphysical poetry by revealing the various complexities and popular imprisonments by which love or beauty dominate man across the ages. In what looks like the poet's attempt to define love, the poem tries to simplify the subject of love by addressing it in human terms. Deliberately humanizing the subject of love, the poet begins on a note of question, asking the location where love desires to ferry him, with her "wontless fury" that is coloured with inspiring rage. The human body houses the hot rage of love, yet it is capable of transporting man to anywhere with her "raging fire". It is that living but venomous fire of love that resides in the heart ("feeble breast") that gives the poet the strength to investigate the nature of love. According to him, it is difficult to understand the nature or personality of love, nor of the mother of love.

The poem begins:

AH whither, love, wilt thou now carry me?
What wontless fury dost thus now inspire
Into my feeble breast, too full of thee?
Whilst seeking to as lake thy raging fire
Thou in me kindlest much more great desire
And up alift above my strength dost raise
The wondrous matter of my fire to praise

It appears there is a magnetic pull and fury in love, but such strong fury is so powerful that it makes everyone to hunt for or desire love, irrespective of one's social, economic status, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Human vulnerability combined with the mystery and complexity love is coded in compel the poet to force out a song for love: "An honourable hymn I eke should frame". Perhaps, our poet's song may be a healing balm for men whose hearts have been hurt by love. Spenser does not leave us in doubt as to the gender of love as he states categorically... "And with the brightness of *her* beauty clear". It then means that love is a *female* and not a male, but resides in the heart of everyone with all her angelic and beastly personified existence.

Love, the ubiquitous invisible, searches the souls of men, and uses her "might" to befog. The poet does not understand how love got her possessive power of "such soul-enchanting might". Spenser seems to tell us that love is the mother of love, so everything that applies to daughter love, is applicable to mother love, so, the poet moves literarily between mother and daughter, as implied in the poem.

The third stanza of the poem unfolds love as an embodiment of beauty and a goddess per excellence "...thou great goddess, queen of beauty" delighted by all. The poet moves ahead, stating other qualities of love, such as her capacity to illuminate dullness, "light" rekindling, "T illuminate my dim and dulled eyne". "Love immortal beam", gives life to "withered heart", it is perfect, fashionable, "goodly pattern". Everyone is free to request that love lays bare her secret store

here on earth, or else, one may not have access to it in heaven if forfeited here on earth. Man's sinful eyes are not granted access to love's graceful "secret store", so powerful is love that she influences everything on earth "...every earthly thing partakes" in the affairs of love as divinely willed, so love is "fair, accordingly", it is capable of reforming the soul, infuses "...celestial power", very pleasant and pleasing, has "...sovereign might", to give "pleasant grace". The poet compares love to the "lively fire", "...light of the lamp which shining in the face". Love is strong, amorous desire, so strong that it "robs the hearts of those whose it admire", "...poisoned arrow", "that wounds the life and wastes the inmost marrow". It is also described as a "mixture" of colours, "fair and goodly temperament".

In all its graceful state and magnanimity, love "quickly fade", "And pass away". The parts of love are measured, hence its ephemerality is made of many colours, including "white and red", and in such colours are its powers that "pierce through the eyes unto the heart", and in rage makes her victim or any heart she possesses "restless". Only death limits the length of death's arrow on her victims. In whichever heart she penetrates, she captures, dominates and "rub both sense and reason blind".

Spenser wondered why love does not "blossom" like the field. In this sense, the attractiveness of love is like a plague that endangers and reduces everyone to a victim. The enormity of love, the poet insists, is much more than any man can imagine "wonders in the minds of men"; it's a "fair lamp", "a celestial ray." The fire of love dies and when such happens, the spirit behind love returns to her "native planet". It appears love is a total stranger to the human world; it also does not have a specific home or nativity and it is immortal, and only roams the sky: "...nor is it heavenly born and cannot die".

Still tracing the possible origin of love, Spenser says it is a derivative of the soul; the seat of love, the soul itself is from "purest heaven's height", but the soul only uses light as a protective covering. As a result of her divine connection, love has the willpower to "impress", as "graced" by the heavens, and her fitting house too must be adorned with spoil and "heavenly riches". Her beauty and bravery are divine gifts to complement her fleshy being. Love is temperamental but deserves to be accorded a queenly status in a palace.

In as much as the body is formed from the soul, what the soul is encased in is a "comely corpse" a dead pattern; only the soul that is formed from heavenly light is the living matter from which purity and love sprout, thus, "many a gentle mind dwells in deformed tabernacle (the body) with some foul imperfection".

Our poet seems to be more definite here as he says that "goodly beauty is heavenly born" every man now desires her and falls into sin through love, especially as she adorns the world with her dazzling beauty. Spenser exonerates love from any blame, but insists that those who abuse love are guilty of her misuse because her admirers seek to "deprave it". To our poet, the soul is fair and beautiful, but the flesh is filthy, and subject to being abused and corrupted, but

immortalities are above the corruptions of the flesh. “Flesh(e) fault it filthy make”, “...for things immortal no corruption take”.

In what sounds like a cautious warning or advice to love, Spenser salutes love, asking that she be conscious of her graceful status, eulogizing it as the world’s “dame and ornaments” and “image of heavens light”, she should not give into “disparagements”.

She is advised to be mindful of her divine grace and stay off men’s conscious abuses “mindful still of your first country’s sight”, “...preserve your first informed grace”, which shadow reflects in her beautiful face.

The poet then names the vices that fair love should beware of in her first country of sight. They are “loathe foul blot”, “disloyal lust”, “...fair beauty’s foulest blame”, “that base affections, why our ears would bland”, “commend to you by loves abused name”.

But is indeed the bond slave of defame
Which will the garland of your glory mar;
And quench the light of your bright shining star.

Our poet did not deny love’s apparent beauty and gracefulness that is divine in nature, but advised her strongly to beware of men, as they are ready to beguile so that they could debase her, “quench the light” of her, “shinning star”, or glory. Love has also been warned to be gentle and loyal and truthful so that her glory may not be marred.

In his theory of love and beauty, Edmund Spenser’s poetry, we may say, ‘moralises’ love, courtship and marriage, though there are a number of verses in the poem that really ‘problematise’ love, considering the lengthy qualities of *do*’s and *don*’ts spread across the poem, some of which are far reaching and apparently unattainable, except by super humans, though daughter love seen in the poem is as abstract as her nature. The poet points out the themes of love and beauty, desire, sovereignty, immortality, celestial strength, power, deception, transience, the search for the origin of love, definition of love and beauty, self-preservation, vain impression, deceitful love, fantasy, chaste pleasure, and conquering beauty.

We see a generous use of figurative language in the poem. In the first verse of the poem, the poet begins with lines that are both apostrophic and rhetorical in nature:

AH whither, love, wilt thou now carry me?
What wontless fury dost thou now inspire
Into my feeble breast, too full of thee?
Whilst seeking to as lake they raging fire

The last line of the eleventh verse of the poem is also rhetorical: “more such affection in the inward mind/That it can rub both sense and reason blind?”As it is

also in the twelfth verse of the poem: “Work like impression in the looker’s view? Or why do not fair pictures like power show”. The use of rhetoric by the poet is to infuse life into the poem and probe the reader’s mind on the subject of love discussed in the 300 lines poetry. The poem is replete with personification. Spenser deliberately personifies love in the poem to lift his subject from obscurity to reality, to give life to the controversial issue of love. Again, love is addressed as a female. For instance, in verse 2, love is humanised:

That as I erst in praise of thine own name,
So now in honour of thy mother clear...
And with the brightness of /her/ beauty clear

Also in verse 4, the subject of love’s humanity continues:

“It may so please, that she at length will stream”,
“...According as the heaven’s have her graced”...
Tempers fit for such a virgin queen...”
“...which doth the world with her delight adora...”

The poet’s deliberate personification of the subject of love in the poem reflects her relevance and inseparability from humanity.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How is the poet’s assessment of love in *Amoretti LXVII: Like as a Huntsman* different from *Amoretti LXXV: One Day I Wrote Her Name*?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed Edmund Spenser’s *A Ditty, Amoretti LXVII: Like as a Huntsman* and *Amoretti LXXV: One Day I Wrote Her Name*. We have also discussed *An Hymn in Honour of Beauty*. You may wish to read over your work again.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- The themes in Edmund Spenser’s *A Ditty*;
- The themes in Spenser’s *Amoretti LXVII: Like as a Huntsman*;
- The various themes in Spenser’s *Amoretti LXXV: One Day I Wrote Her Name*;
- The poet’s impression of and advice on love in *An Hymn in Honour of Beauty*.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Explain how the divine merges with the actual in Edmund Spenser's praise poem of Queen Elizabeth in *A Ditty*.
- 2) Identify the number of themes raised in Spenser's poem, *Amoretti LXVII: Like as a Huntsman*.
- 3) Explain the contrast between divine love and carnal love in *Amoretti LXXV: One Day I Wrote Her Name*.
- 4) Discuss Spenser's theory of love in *An Hymn in Honour of Beauty*.

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UNIT 3 **SOBER REFLECTIONS: JOHN MILTON'S *PARADISE LOST***

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have designed this unit to introduce you to the selected poems of John Milton in order to reveal the poet's critical view of life. Your understanding of the poems of Milton is required to further advance you in the knowledge of English Literature and writers of the Medieval and Renaissance generally. Knowing some individual poems/poets will make you more practical in your discussion and critical view of poetry. When you become grounded in the discussion of poetry, you will no longer view it with trepidation. Invariably, your reading, writing and general ability to analyse and criticise works of literature across the genre will be improved. At first, such process of poetic analysis may appear difficult but the more you read, analyse poems, answer the allotted questions as best as you can, and get yourself acquainted with this unit, the more you will become skillful at it. Below are some of the objectives of this unit:

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss John Milton's *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, William Shakespeare*;
- outline the themes in John Milton's *At a Vatican Exercise*;
- state your impression of John Milton's *The Marchioness of Winchester*;
- explain what you find interesting in John Milton's *Arcades*.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 INTERPRETING AN EPITAPH ON THE ADMIRABLE DRAMATIC POET, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The poem discusses the themes of death, immortality and excellence in honour of the English poet and playwright, William Shakespeare. In his reminiscence, John Milton begins his epitaph for Shakespeare by dismissing the ephemeral honour accorded the famous English poet and dramatist, an honour enclosed in mere tomb. To Milton, though this honour is good, it is unnecessary. He is of the opinion that honouring the bones of the departed by enclosing it in a tomb, 'house' of stories which, in itself is subject to destructibility is benevolent, but his numerous plays, poems and general contributions to the humanities has honoured him even more in death. It is therefore not pleasing for a man who has attained a recognisable glorious height, and provided enviable platform while alive such that these can speak for him in death, and not his "honoured bones" or the needless labour of "hallowed reliques" "hidden under" "...a star of pointing pyramid?"

John Milton deliberately ridicules man's wasteful efforts in constructing expensive edifice for the remains of a deceased, for the contributions one makes to the Arts are of greater value to humanity. In this poem, Milton addresses Shakespeare as a "great heir of fame", revealing that the honour he is given in death is a weak witness of his name because Shakespeare has built "for himself" a lifelong monument". His art, literary contributions and memorable poetic lines have left "deep impression" on people's hearts.

John Milton argues that the works of Shakespeare are genuine marble that he has made for himself, and that even kings of this world prefer such forms of marble, and will be ready to die if they are able to achieve such a great feat ("kings for such a tomb would wish to die").

3.2 INTERPRETING AT A VATICAN EXERCISE

John Milton, in this humorous poem, recalls the language and cultural transformation of his age. He reminds readers that at a point in English history, Latin was the domineering language of communication, "The Latin speeches ended, the English thus began". The poet reveals his experience at returning to his native English tongue, "Dist more my first endearing tongue to speak". The difficulties encountered in the otherwise complex linguistic process are carefully recorded by the poet: the "mad'st imperfect words", "half unpronounce'd" that slid through his "infant lips" and driven into muteness. John Milton glorifies the English language, his mother tongue, and now embraces and uses it as a mode of communication freely in his creative work, "I use thee in my latter task". The years of the Latin tongue or of desertion at the expense of the poet's English tongue are to the poet years of "small loss", yet he is happy that he could use both Latin and the English tongues. The poet has fallen in love with his culture, so the English language need not compete with other recipient cultures like Latin, "Thou needst not be ambitious to be first".

Like a prodigal, Milton made a very special appeal to his culture to accept him into the fold of the English culture unconditionally by overlooking the moment of separation his/love for the Latin language and culture had caused. He pleads:

I pray thee then deny me not thy aid
For this same small neglect that I have made

The poet yearns for the return of the pleasure he enjoyed in using his native English tongue. He preaches a total return and acceptability to the English culture, eagerly waiting to take a full advantage of his culture, "...fantastic delight", "pleasure", "choicest wits". He apologises for the ignorance and late embrace of his native tongue; he described this as "...late fantastics".

He is also eager to express the roving thoughts in him in his native English tongue, the language with which such burning thoughts can be better expressed. He is desperate and impatient as the thoughts too "knock loudly to have their passage out".

John Milton confesses that if he were to choose a language of expression, it will be in no other than the English language, the best for the expression of service in "graver subject use". The poet insists he feels at home and more protected when he uses his English tongue, "...clothe my fancy" and his willing mind transported to the celestial, hence the ability to express knowledge in sublime tone and converse in language far from the ordinary man's, but "deity" personified; can hear when "Apollo sings" and "Hebe brings immortal nectar to her kingly sire", "Neptune raves", a glorified "lofty" heights of divine knowledge attainable. The poet can then hear directly from the gods, "Ulysses soul and all the rest", also, "sweet captivity", and "melodious harmony" are some of the advantages the poet hopes to get by a total return to the culture of his birth other than recipient cultures, mere exercises he never enjoyed.

3.3 INTERPRETING AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER

The epitaph of John Milton is dedicated to the Marchioness of Winchester, the "honoured wife of Winchester". The virtuousness "verlues fair" of the Marchioness is emphasised in the poem. The honoured lady, a "hein" apparent to the throne dies young "...After so short time of breath" and is buried in an expensive "rich marble". Milton observes:

...the number of her days... as was her praise, Nature
and fate had had no strife in giving limit to her life. Her
high birth, and her graces sweet

The Marchioness married early: "Quickly found a lover meet", and that was followed by a great "marriage feast", even with the populace and the God of marriage as witnesses at the lover's request:

The God that sits at marriage feast;
He at their invoking came
But with a scarce-well-lighted flame
And in his Garland as he stood.

Shortly after her marriage, our subject of discussion in this poem was delivered of a baby boy. Unfortunately, while the populace was waiting anxiously, and the matron waiting to undertake another delivery, the Marchioness died in the process of child labour, a condition that evades the poet's understanding, as the unborn child died in her womb: "The hapless Babe before his birth/Had burial yet not laid in earth/And the languish mother's womb was not long a living Tomb".

John Milton's descriptive epitaph is so comprehensive that one cannot help imagine the poet as an eyewitness of the life of his subject:

...Once had the early matrons run
To greet her of a lovely son
And now with second hope she goes.

Every line of the poem reflects the virtue and glory of the Marchioness, her gentle glamour and pain of childbirth did not evade the poet's prayer:

Gentle Lady may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have;
After this thy travail sore
Sweet rest cease thee evermore,
That to give the world encrease,
Shortened hast thy own lives lease

John Milton in this epitaph unveils death's veil, making death visible to all eyes, especially those of his readers by a fair juxtaposition of the pain and glory of his subject of discussion in the poem "...besides the sorrowing that they noble House doth bring", admirers wept for her in various locations, including Helicon, immortalizing her virtue as each deemed it fit "And some flowers, and some Bays... Devoted to thy virtuous name".

In what looks like an attempt by Milton to console his subject even in death, he advises that her death has now made history. The poet teaches that fate and the destructibility of death are universal. He consoled the deceased further by telling her that the "Syrian shepherdess" who had been barren for many years suffered a similar fate as hers. After the shepherdess gave birth to Joseph, and people were expecting her next child, she died:

...And at her next birth much like thee
Through pangs fled to felicity
Far within the bosom bright

of blazing majesty and Light
There with thee...

The poet concludes by advising the earlier deceased to welcome the new saint with her in heaven where both souls are united in fate and status: "her soul acquaint with thee there clad in radiant sheen".

3.4 INTERPRETING THE POEM, *ARCADES*

The poem commemorates Countess Dowager of Darby at Harefield. It recalls and commends the brilliance and radiance of the Countess, describing her comprehensively in rare majestic coloration, elevating her status to the divine: "Look nymphs and Shepherds look"... blaze of majesty" "... too divine". The poet emphasises her authority thus "This this is she". The repetitive use of "This" in the poem is introductory in nature and suggests her rare personage, "To whom our vows and wishes bend".

Milton praises the Countess to the high heavens, extolling her virtue in memorabilia, "fame that her high worth to raise". He again reintroduces the Countess by a repetitive use of "This this is she alone", to reflect her uniqueness, indicating that without her, there can be no other. She is described as a "goddess bright" "in the centre of her light" of fame.

She is mighty, towered above many, such that she could compete favourably with deities: "A deity so unparalel'd", valiant than gods", "mother of a hundred guds", a genius per excellence, most honourable, "honour sparkle through your eyes", "...famous Arcady". John Milton described the Countess in beautifully elevated style as a woman who equals the status of the gods: "Divine Alpheus", who, for instance, travelled under the seas to meet Arethusa. Milton's Countess Dowager of Darby at Harefield appears larger than life as she is capable of giving life, "breathing Roses to the wood", an honourable mistress of "princely shrine". The poet's adoration showered on the Countess continues, by his insistence that he dares not measure her fame with people of lesser honour, "shallow-searching fame". She is power personified.

The poet confessed that he knows too much about the Countess, her compassion, love, and care, even for the human environment: "wood", "life in oakn bowr", "...nurse the sampling tall, and curl the grove", "plants", "...heal the harms of the thawarting thunder blew", "...dire-looking... planet smites".

The poet ends the poem in honour of the Countess with what looks like a vote of thanks to those who graced the memorable occasion, requesting that the town, the rural grove where the seat of glory of the Countess is located, be open to all visitors, including those who may be willing to come on as permanent residents: "Bring your flocks and live with us", "Here ye shall have greater grace". And when the invitees finally decide to relocate to the "rural Queen", they are assured of peace, love, good health, abundance and longevity.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the themes in John Milton's poetic reflection in the poem, *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, William Shakespeare*.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed/interpreted the themes in the selected poems of John Milton: *An Epitaph on the Admirable Poet, William Shakespeare*; *At a Vatican Exercise*; *The Marchioness of Winchester*; and *Arcades*.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- The themes in John Milton's *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, William Shakespeare*;
- The poet's new found love in *At a Vatican Exercise*;
- John Milton's assessment of his most admired Countess in *Arcade*.

In the next unit, you will be introduced to the poems of Sir Philip Sidney.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Mention and discuss 3 adjectives the poet used to express his honour for the literary giant, William Shakespeare in *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, William Shakespeare*.
- 2) Do you share John Milton's view in his poem, *Arcades*?
- 3) What is the poet's reminiscence in *At a Vatican Exercise*?
- 4) Nature and the Divine juxtaposed in the character portrayal of the Marchioness in *An Epitaph on The Marchioness of Winchester*. Discuss.
- 5) Compare John Milton's *Epitaph on William Shakespeare* with *The Marchioness of Winchester*.

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UNIT 4 OTHER NOTABLE WRITERS: SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit has been designed to continue the discussion and interpretation of the select writings of the major poets of the periods under discussion. Beginning from Unit 1 of this Module 2, we discussed the selected poetry of Edmund Spenser, while in Unit 2, we discussed the selected poetry of John Milton. Apart from the stylistic comparisons that we intend to take you through in the last unit (5) of the Module, we wish to examine the selected poetry of Philip Sidney in our present Module. The main objective of all the discussions on key and notable poets of the medieval age is to help you have a better understanding of that age and the thematic concerns and beliefs. It is also to facilitate your sense of impression and judgment of poems generally, through clear understanding of the meaning and intentions, of styles and general criticism of poetry. In addition, it will also help your sense of creativity in your chosen discipline and of relevant situations in life. Below are the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- give your interpretation of *Astrophel and Stella LXXXIV: Highway*;
- explain the recurring themes in *Astrophel and Stella I*;
- identify and discuss what strikes you the most in the poem, *Astrophel and Stella LXIV*;
- compare *Astrophel and Stella: XXIII* with *Astrophel and Stella I*;
- outline all the related issues in all the poems we have interpreted in this unit.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE POEM, *ASTROPHEL AND STELLA LXXXIV: HIGHWAY*

Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella LXXXIV: Highway* is a poem of idealised love for Stella, even though we never get to know if the poet's expression of love was requited. The poem reads like the song of a heart pierced by Cupid's arrow, and trapped under the spell of the goddess of love. Philip Sidney begins the poem with an exaggerative view of his lover whom he compares to a Parnassus (which means a Chief Warrior dressed in ceremonial outfit). The Chief Warrior here is his lover who is the custodian of his happiness, "her words to trampling horses feet", "more oft than to a chamber melody", "my muse to some ears not unsweet".

Here is a poem that expresses the theme of love, hope, longing, desire and assurance. The poet invites his "blessed" lover to bless him. He woos Stella, further assuring her that he will not disappoint her: "To her, where I my heart, safe-left, shall meet". The poet insists it is his responsibility to keep the love he believes Stella entrusted to him, even as it is his duty to love her. The poet reassures himself of his undiluted love for Stella "with thanks and wishes, wishing thankfully". He confesses to still honour Stella, as she is treasured by the "public heed". He does not envy his lover... "you know I envy you no lot". He is very sure of wooing and winning Stella's love, even if it is in the next hundred years. Sidney concludes, "Hundreds of years you Stella's feet may kiss". Although it is not stated directly in the poem, we know through the poet's implied references that his object of love, Stella, does not have similar feelings for him. This may explain why the wooing exercise has been on for some time between him and his reluctant lover.

3.2 INTERPRETING THE POEM, *ASTROPHEL AND STELLA: I*

When it appears that the previous effort of the poet to win the love of Stella has failed, he decided to re-strategise his method of wooing her. He turned to the verse as the winning strategy, to enable Stella understand that he is truly in love with her. Perhaps, she might reconsider his good intention and probably take a compassionate view of his struggle and emotional pain. If a verse is composed and written to woo her, perhaps the pleasure of reading the love verse "might make her know", and through a fair amount of "knowledge", she may pity him and "gracewin". If appealing to poetry and grace would not fetch him his desired love of Stella, then he would think of a quick possibility and may have to study the sciences to overcome his failure to win Stella's love "wits to entertain". The poet confesses that he has since engaged his faculty in the probing art of the science of invention and for new ideas that could be enticing and entertaining enough to winning the wooing exercise.

It seems as if the poet's intention to go by way of invention to win Stella's heart does not yield the desired result, ... "Nature's child fled".. At last, the lover man received discordant tune from Stella who yelled, calling him a "fool", and advised him to "look in thy heart and write", so that he may have a clear understanding of himself and relationship with life, which is a necessary sequence that will enable him strive to know others, including herself, better.

3.3 INTERPRETING THE POEM, *ASTROPHEL AND STELLA: LXIV*

The poet addresses his lover in a more direct term: “dear”. He pleads with Stella to give him a trial, as he indicates that he is tired of the endless wooing process “...my dear, no more these counsels”. He requests that his passion, which the rejection of his love proposal by Stella has imprisoned, should now be freed to “run their race of love unhindered”. He listed how much indignities a rejected love proposal has made him to suffer, “...disgrace”. “...cry”. “the lost labour”, “the scorn”, that is evident before the world. He pleads with Stella to help actualise his love “not to will me from my love to fly”. He says he is serious about his feelings, and not trying to outwit the Greek poet, Aristotle, who tried to outwit Plato in the game of knowledge, whereas the latter was his teacher for twenty years. He says he does not seek Stella’s love to become famous for betrayal, as does Caesar. With this, he predicts, doubting if he will ever win his love advances, “Nor do I aspire to Caesar’s bleeding fame”; He is also less worried about those who may be more influential than he is and may similarly be competing for Stella’s love with him. This is another negative prediction by the poet, “Nor aught do care though some above me sit”, “Nor hope nor wish another course to frame”. The poet again summons courage by reassuring himself that he will win Stella’s heart, “which once may win thy cruel heart”. In the last line of the poem, he expresses a greater assurance of winning Stella’s heart, “Thou art my wit, and thou my virtue art”.

3.4 INTERPRETING THE POEM, *ASTROPHEL AND STELLA: XXIII*

The poet recalls how long he had been in the long race for the love of Stella, “the curious wits... dull pensiveness” that accompanies the race, including the “Beauray itself in my long settl’d eyes”, ...“same fumes of melancholy rise”, “with idle pains and missing arm do guess”. Apparently tired at the fruitlessness of his wooing, he asked himself if he has not made a mistake in the choice of his affection.

He describes his intention as enormous as... “state errors dress”, and if judges were to be invited to judge the scenario, they will judge his emotion and probably find him guilty of over ambitiousness. According to him, he should have channeled his youthful imagination to a more productive enterprise: “Hold my young brain captiv’d in golden cage”. He concludes that he is himself a self-driven “fool or over-wise!”

In spite of his obvious failure at winning the love of Stella, he still desires her and no one else: “But only Stella’s eyes and Stella’s heart”.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

If you were in the poet's shoes, how would you have reacted to Stella's rebuff of your love?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this Unit, we have analysed the theme of unrequited love in Sir Phillip Sydney's *Astrophel and Stella LXXXIV: Highway*; *Astrophel and Stella: I*; *Astrophel and Stella LXIV*; and *Astrophel and Stella XXIII*.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this Unit, you have learnt:

- The themes in *Astrophel and Stella LXXXIV: Highway*;
- The poet's impression of love in *Astrophel and Stella: LXIV*;
- The reactions of the object of love to the love advances from the poet in *Astrophel and Stella I*;
- The poet's final decision on his unrequited love for Stella in *Astrophel and Stella: XXIII*.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Discuss the themes in *Astrophel and Stella LXXXIV: Highway*.
- 2) In your own words, describe in three words the poet's type of love in *Astrophel and Stella LXIV*.
- 3) Imagine you are Stella; write a 100 words letter to the poet, stating reasons why you do not share the same sentiments with him. Use *Astrophel and Stella: I* as a guide.
- 4) Discuss the themes in Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella: XXIII*.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Bakhtan, Lens (2004). *Impression and Expression in the Selected Poetry of Philip Sidney*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

UNIT 5 A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STYLISTIC ELEMENTS IN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE WRITINGS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
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 - 3.4 Stylistic Elements in Poetry
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- 4.0 Conclusion
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have written this unit not just to introduce you to the comparative analysis of the stylistic elements in Medieval and Renaissance poetry; but also to take you through some fundamental elements in poetry, without which you may find it difficult to do a critical analysis of not just Renaissance poetry, but poems of other cultures as well i.e. Caribbean, West Indian, and of course, African poetry. Such fundamental elements will enable you view any poetry with the ‘third eye’, that is, you will be able to analyse poems beyond the immediate interactive thematic level; such as understanding the poet’s style, figures of speech and why the poet uses language in a particular way, and what effect that would have on you, the reader. You will also know that it is vital for you to learn Medieval and Renaissance poetry within the context of the cultures of the periods. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define stylistics;
- differentiate between style and literary style;
- explain the relationship between poetry and style;
- outline and discuss the stylistic elements in poetry;
- state what is meant by diction in poetry;
- state and explain some fundamental poetic elements;
- explain the differences between Medieval and Renaissance poetry;
- identify and discuss the similarities between Medieval and Renaissance poetry.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 WHAT IS STYLISTICS? WHAT IS STYLE?

The word, stylistics, has its roots in 'style'. Stylistics is the linguistic study of style; while style is the particular way a language is used in a particular context, period or age. That is why it is common to often refer to the medieval, 19th century, Victorian, 20th century styles. Style may also be related to an individual, group of writers, ideas or schools of thought. Style is a linguistic 'mark', 'thumb-print' or "identity". It can also be defined as a linguistic exercise that describes the use to which a language has been put. It is the responsibility of a Stylistician to identify such linguistic exercise and describe it comprehensively. Anyone, including you, the student, who is engaged in this practice, can also be addressed as a Stylistician.

3.2 WHAT IS LITERARY STYLE?

Literary style reveals the relationship between Language and Art. In discussing such relationship, with your selected poems, for example, we expect you to answer such questions as why and how a particular poet, for instance, Edmund Spenser, John Milton, Christine de Pisan or Philip Sidney chooses to express himself or herself in a particular way. By the use of certain literary concepts in any of their poems, you should be able to say if the views expressed therein reflect the values and beliefs of the period, or are contrary to it. When you are able to answer such questions in the process of analysing a poem, you are already interpreting or describing the poem.

3.3 POETRY AND STYLE

We may discuss poetry using brief and simple comparisons. Poetry relates to picture as both imitate nature/life. Poetry could mean the objective measurement of nature in imagination. It transforms human emotion into something experiential, soothing, and pictorial in nature. Poetry is a traveling emotion or emotion in operation, or a combination of reason and pleasure to arrive at 'poetic truths'

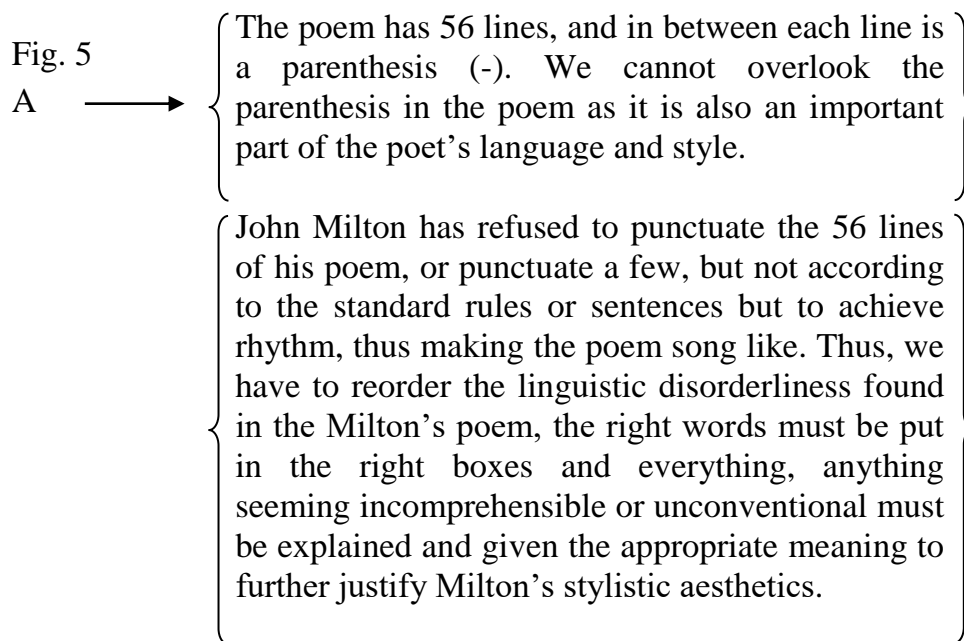
When a writer/poet combines the above indices to make up a poem, using language in a unique way, peculiar to him or her, in order to convey sense and beauty, we can say such a poet has used what may be described as style.

3.4 STYLISTIC ELEMENTS IN POETRY

Stylistic elements in poetry refer to a particular kind of language in use. Most times, the language of poetry differs from that of ordinary language. Poetry has its own unique and systematized use of language, as the standard rule of language is sometimes deliberately violated by the poet to create a world of reason and beauty within the poem.

3.5 LANGUAGE/DICTION

In poetry, the rules that govern language are exchanged for ill-formed sentences, code-mixing of languages, misplaced and ‘meaningless’ use of words. Poets deliberately violate the established rules of language to create their own unique style. For instance, we can study John Milton’s poem, ‘Sabrina Fair’ adapted from his masque, *Comus*, to justify our explanations above.



Example A

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph that liv’st unseen

—
Within thy airy shell

—
By show meander’s margent green,

—
And in the violent-imbroider’d vale

—
Where the love-lorn nightingale

—

Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:

—
Caust thou not tell me of a gentle pair

—
That likest thy Narcissus are?

—
O if thou have

—
Hid them in some flowry cave,

—
Tell me but where

—
Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere,

—
So mayst thou be translated to the skies,

—
And give resounding grace to all heav'ns harmonies

We observed the use of *coupling* in the poem above. Some lines have been structured such that naturally equivalent forms occur in equivalent positions. Linguistic items that share common semantic or phonological features are said to be equivalent.

For instance, let us look at a few verses from the above poem:

Fig. 6

A —————> Line (1) Sweet Echo, sweetest /nymph/ that lvs't /unseen/

B —————> Line (3) By /slow/ /meander's/ Margent seen

C —————> Line (6) Nightly to thee her /sad song/ /mourneth/ well

The words “nymph”, “unseen”, “slow”, “meander’s”, “sad song”, “mourneth” occur in equivalent positions and reflect instances of coupling.

In the same poem, we also see the use of semantic compounding in lines, in which some words achieve intratextual (within the texts) cohesion, as such words share similar semantic nature:

Sweet Echo + Sweetest

Slow + meander

Love + nightingale

Sad song + mourneth

Hid + care

Resounding grace + heav'ns harmonies

3.6 IMAGERY

Another stylistic feature found in the poem is the use of sensory experience and tactile imagery. Examples seen in the poem are “sweet echo”, “love-lorn nightingale”, “sad song mourneth”. The imagery merges the feelings of love and sadness of loss into one to reflect the poet’s love for the loved ones who have been “translated” to the “skies” as a result of which man and nature mourn the deceased whom the poet believes are dead,(though they are alive). The poet balanced the sense of love and loss, of colours, “violent-imbroider’d vale”, and of the divine, “resounding grace to all heaven’s harmonies”.

3.7 FUNDAMENTAL POETIC ELEMENTS

- (i) *Diction*: This refers to the poet’s choice of words. Two levels of meaning are often associated with diction in poetry. They are:

Denotative: This refers to the dictionary meaning attached to words in use in poetry. It is the surface or ordinary meaning of a word.

Connotation: This is the literary or secondary meaning of a word. This comprises literary and figurative and other colorations in poetry.

- (ii) *Imagery*: Poetic imagery may appeal to the eye, (visual), ear (auditory) or sensory experience, sound (auditory) or of touch (tactile imagery), perception of roughness, toughness/smoothness. It may also be of bodily sensations such as pain, odour or taste.
- (iii) *Rhythm*: The song like nature of most poetry makes this a common experience. It is based on series of recurrences, which affect one powerfully, like the rising and falling of waves.
- (iv) *Metre*: represents the skeletal rhythm of body of poetry. It is the mechanics of a line of poetry. Though part of the rhythm, the latter is a full and free expression of the entire lines of a poem. Poems of similar metric pattern may have different rhythms. It is also the pattern of stressed (/) and unstressed (-) syllable in a line of poetry. The stressed, syllable is also called accented or long syllable, while the unstressed (-) syllable is also called short syllable. To identify the metre in a poem, we must first determine the prevalent number of feet in the line of poem.
- (v) *Foot*: A foot is a unit of metre; a metric foot can have two syllables, one stressed, while the other is unstressed.
- (vi) *Types of Metric Feet in Poetry*: The following are the basic types of metrical feet determined by the arrangements of stressed and unstressed syllables:
- (a) Iambic foot

- (b) Trochaic foot
- (c) Anapestic foot
- (d) Dactylic foot
- (e) Spondaic foot
- (f) Pyrrhic foot

(a) IAMBIC FOOT: This is a two-syllable foot with the stress on the second syllable. The iambic is the most common foot in English. Examples of iambic feet are:

Come líve wíth mé and bé my lové

Be loŵ dē líght ā múse

Ā boók ofvēr sēs uń dēr nēath the boúgh

Ā júg of wíne, a loáf of bréad and thóu

Hów frēsh oh Lórd hów swéét and cléan

George Herbert

We can reduce the above poem into a skeletal structure of itself:

— / — / — / — / —
 / — / — /
 — / — / — / — / — / — /
 — / — / — / — / — / — /
 — / — / — / — / — / — /

(b) TROCHEE: The foot is made up of a stressed syllable followed by the unstressed syllable:

Dóu b lè, dóu blè, Lót ós barr én

(c) ANAPEST: The anapestic foot comprises of three syllables with the stress on the last syllable:

Fró̄m thē wáy ascértaín fróm thē wómb

- (d) DACTYL: The dactyl foot contains three syllables with the stress on the first syllable:

Happ̄iness, merrily m̄ur m̄urring

- (e) SPONDEE: The spondaic foot consists of two stressed syllables. They are mostly compound words:

far – off, wide – watered

- (f) PYRRHIC: This consists of two unstressed syllables. This type of foot is not common, it is often interspersed with other feet.

iñ ā tō thē

3.8 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE POETRY

Medieval poets were more concerned with issues of morality, as was the common practice in England, with the conflict between the church and the society of the period. The issue became a continuous tradition in the poems of George Herbert, John Gower, William Langland, and Shakespeare. These poets permeated their works with Christ and Christological themes that formed the social-religious basis of medieval England. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* was used to fight elements of a morally deficient society. In *The Friars Tale*, the corrupt Summoner who takes bribes from sinners was dragged to hell, an example of church corruption in medieval England.

On the contrary, most Renaissance poets were preoccupied with trivial themes of courtship and love, with either a desperate lover trying to woo or cajole a reluctant virgin, or desperately after an unyielding lover, as was the case in Spenser's 'Amoretti LXVII: Like as a Huntsman'. Sometimes the subject is about beauty and love; for example, Edmund Spenser's 'An Hymn in Honour of Beauty', a 300-line long poem, and 'Amoretti LXXV: One Day I Wrote Her Name' are entirely devoted to the subject of love. Milton ridicules the church of the medieval England, bringing the moral credibility of the church into serious questioning, though in metaphorical terms, especially in the poem, 'At a Vatican Exercise' (See Units 2 and 3 of this Module to know more about these poems).

This does not mean that medieval poets did not write on the subject of love at all. For instance, Geoffrey Chaucer's poem, 'Merciless Beauty', expresses how the beauty of a female admirer pierces and penetrates his heart, injuring his heart:

You yen two wol slee me sodenly
I may the beautee of them not sustene

So wondeth hit thourhout my herte kene.

Chaucer's poem of love is well arranged, soothingly directional, and purposeful and this makes it different from the desperate and reckless Renaissance lovers captured in poems of Edmund Spenser.

Most medieval poets were preoccupied with the value of life; hence John Skelton's 'Phyllyp Sparrow' uses a pet bird, the sparrow, to condemn human excesses like alcoholism. Many of the themes of the Middle English period such as sexual licentiousness, greed, bribery and corruption are expressed in his poem. Perhaps, after the sparrow has taken a keen look into and watched man's affair closely, it warns, asking God to quickly interfere in human affairs:

Vengeance I ask and cry
By way of exclamation
On whole creation
of cats wild and tame:
God send them sorrow and shame.

John Skelton asks God to rise in vengeance against people for their atrocities on animals as well as caution them against their inhumanity to one another; the poet's apparent reflection on medieval atrocities and injustices.

3.9 DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE/DIALOGUE IN POETRY

It was characteristic of medieval poets to combine dramatic monologue with dialogue in their poems. Such practice was part of the literary style inherited from the Classical Greeks, Latin and Rome. The verses of the early Greek and Rome were written for the stage until a few centuries ago when most poets and playwrights like Shakespeare and Moliere composed and presented their plays in verse, a concept wherein a play is written as a speech to be presented by a character (other than the author) at a particular moment. In this form of poetry, the speaker addresses other characters in the poem who remain silent (dramatic monologue). If the listener replies, the poem becomes conversational or a dialogue. Most of the verses of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* made apparent use of the dialogue or conversational versification. In the Tale, one speaker speaks and steps aside for another. It was also popular with works of the contemporaries of Geoffrey Chaucer or his influences like Petrarch, Dante and Virgil.

The dramatic monologue form of poetic idea was developed by the Victorian poet, Robert Browning, who was famous for his dramatic monologue in which he created a Renaissance Italian Duke in the poem, 'My Last Duchess', a poem which exposes more about himself than the Aristocratic speaker. The verse style has been used among non-English poets, some of whom are Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, Sylvia Plath and Randall Jarell.

Philip Sidney also uses the dramatic monologue technique in his poem, 'Astrophel and Stella LXXXIV: Highway' in which an imaginary male lover addresses another imaginary female character, Stella, in the poem. We also did not notice any authorial contribution throughout the entire fourteen line poem. Here is our example:

Fig. 7

Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be,
 And that my muse, to some ears not unsweet,
 Tempers her words to trampling horses' feet
 More oft than to a Chamber melody
 Now, blessed you bear onward blessed me
 To her, where I my heart, safe-left shall meet:
 My muse and I must you of duty greet
 Be you still fair, honour'd by public heed;
 By no encroachment wrong'd, nor time forgot,
 Nor blam'd for blood, nor sham'd for sinful deed;
 And that you know I envy you no lot
 of highest wish, I wish you so much bliss
 Hundreds of years you Stella's feet may kiss

Facts to note

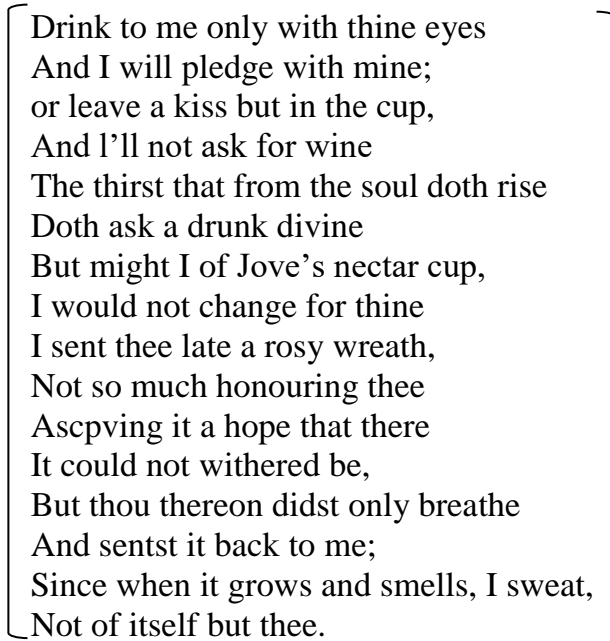
1. The speaker in the Philip Sidney poem addresses an imaginary character throughout the poem.
2. The imaginary character, obviously a lady, the poet's lover, did not make a response throughout the poem.
3. This action and inaction in poetry makes the poem a dramatic monologue.

Astrophel and Stella: XCII

Fig. 8	<p>Be your words made, good sir, of Indian ware, That you allow me them by so small rate? Or do you cutted Spartans imitate? Or do you mean my tender ears to spare, That to my questions you so total are? When I demand of Phoenix Stella's state, You say, forsooth, you left her well of late: O God, think you that satisfies my care? I would know whether she did sit or walk; How cloth'd, how waited on; sig'd she, or smil'd; Whereof, with whom, how often did she talk; With what pastime time's journey she beguiled; If her lops deign'd to sweeten my poor name. Say all; and all well said, still say the same.</p>	<p>Facts to Note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only an imaginary character speaks in this poem. - Despite the near invective use of language by the male speaker, such that could force out a retaliatory response, there was none forthcoming from the addressee
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We also have a similar example of Ben Johnson's dramatic poem, 'To Celia', presented here in sixteen lines:

Fig. 9



Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will pledge with mine;
or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drunk divine
But might I of Jove's nectar cup,
I would not change for thine
I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee
Ascpevng it a hope that there
It could not withered be,
But thou thereon didst only breathe
And sentst it back to me;
Since when it grows and smells, I sweat,
Not of itself but thee.

In this poem, only the speaker, a male lover, speaks throughout, while the addressee did not add a word to the lines. This qualifies the poem as a dramatic monologue.

Most Renaissance poets use dramatic monologues in their poems, as seen in the poems of Philip Sidney, Ben Johnson and this may be informed by the common themes of troubled-heroic lovers who insist on winning the love of their objects in persuasive love exercises.

3.10 RELIGIOUS IMAGERY AND CULTURAL AESTHETICS

Most medieval poetry mixes religious images with cultural aesthetics to achieve a general aesthetics of the poem.

John Milton's famous epic, 'Paradise Lost', displayed a good use of imagery to achieve a form rich in religious and cultural aesthetics. The explorative figurine in 'Paradise Lost' probes our origin, thus making the poem historical in perspective. Like the previous epics before it, *The Odyssey*, *Gilgamesh*, *Beowulf*, all epics tell stories, be it primary or secondary epics. Only that such stories are often woven around religious beliefs and ancestries.

Thus, Satan, talking to his nearest mate:

With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes
 That sparkling blaz'd his other parts besides
 Prone on the flood, extended long and large
 Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
 As whom the Fables name of monstrous size,
 Titanic or Earth-born, that warr'd on jove.
 By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
 Created hugest that swim th'Ocean stream:
 The Pilot of some small night-foundered skiff
 Deeming some Island, oft, as sea-men tell,
 With fixed Anchor in his scaly rind
 Moors by his side under the Lee, while Night
 In rests the sea, and wished Morn delays:
 So stretched out huge in Length the Archfiend lay
 Chain'd on the burning Lake.

Religious imagery mixed with cultural aesthetics also occurs frequently in George Herbert's 'Easter Wing'. The emblematic poem begins by addressing the Almighty God, and discussing the Edenic disobedience of the first man and woman and its consequences, and how Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden. The simple epic poem reflects humanity's sorrow and actual spiritual decay and the resurgence of the spiritual hope and growth of the poet. George Herbert's poem is reproduced here:

Lord, who createst man in health and store
 Through foolish he lost the same
 Decaying more and more
 Till he became
 Most poor
 With thee
 O let me rise
 As Larks, harmoniously
 And sung this day thy victories:
 Then shall the fall further the flight in me
 My tender age in sorrow did begin
 And still with sickness and shame
 Thou didst so punish sinne
 That I became
 Most thine
 With thee
 Let me combine
 And feel this day thy victory
 For if I my wing on thee
 Affliction shall advance the plight in me

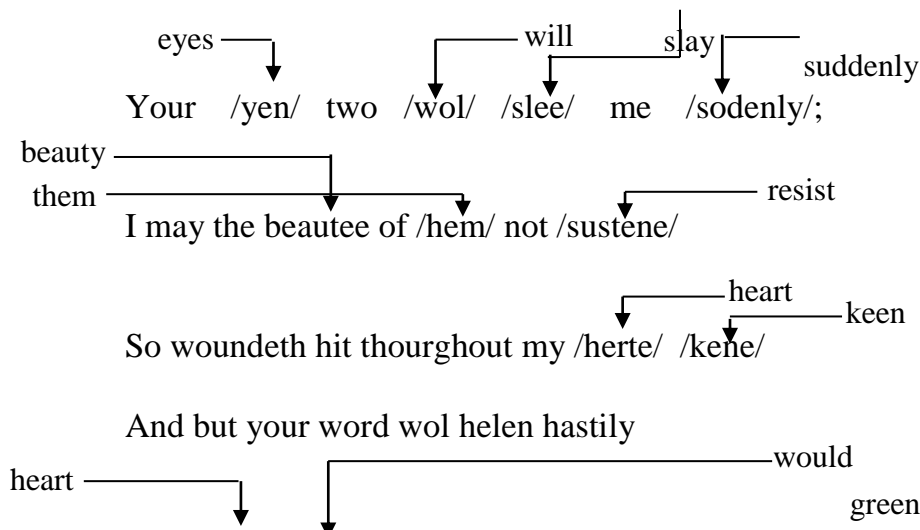
3.11 BORROWINGS AND POETIC TRANSPORTATION AS STYLE

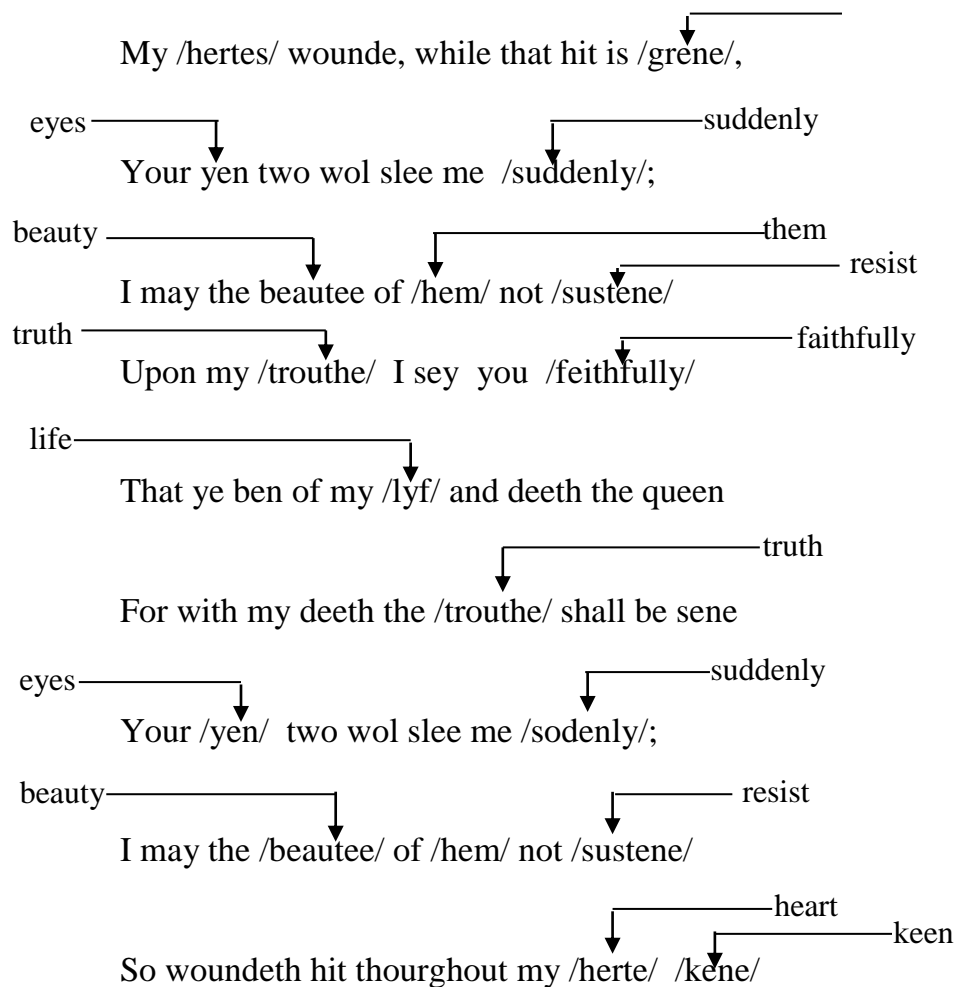
Generally, it is impossible for a poet to write in a given or preferable literary language without being fully alive to his/her commitment to traditional literature. Poets must write as part of a cultural and linguistic source, that is, poets must write as part of a people, and not/never as a ‘nobody’. That is why poets are often influenced by language and cultural borrowings, and sometimes discuss people’s history and myths in their poetry, reflecting their cultural and emotional attachment to the period or age. However, this does not mean that they do not borrow literary elements, devices and style from foreign cultures. For instance, Medieval English poets inherited the Latin, Greek and Roman expressions that had become part and parcel of Medieval English. It is, therefore, impossible for these medieval poets to completely ignore the foreign traditions that grew with Medieval English Literature and culture. This observation reflects greatly in their works and became part of the styles of medieval verses. For instance, major parts of Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* share similarities with Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, and had appeared in earlier tales of John Gower, John Bromyard’s *Summa Praedicatorum* and Jerome’s *Adversus Jovinianum*.

3.12 LANGUAGE/DICTION

English became a literary language at the end of the twelfth century; thus, new kinds of prose and poetry appeared on the literary scene. However, writers still composed their works in French or Latin, or in the English of the medieval period, but with influences of the recipient cultures in their verses. Chaucer’s generation of English speakers used medieval English, which is inconsistent with modern users of the English language, who had to cope with problems relating with pronunciation in their writing. For instance, the word /knight/ was pronounced by Chaucer as /knict/, not /nail/, the word /care/ was also pronounced by Chaucer as /kɑrd/ not /kε:ɑr/ as in modern English. Evidence of mispronunciation inconsistent in Chaucer’s verses can be further seen in his poem, ‘Merciless Beauty’:

Fig. 10





As seen in the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer above, the language used is inconsistent with the modern day English. The reason for the disparities can be traced to rhetorical and linguistic styles and the division of literature into high, middle and low styles measured by the density of vocabulary. It is also an attempt to follow St. Augustine's instruction that writers should write with the speaker, subject, audience, purpose, manner and occasion in mind.

Chaucer's style used the decasyllable, borrowed from French and Italian forms, with riding rhyme and Caesura in the middle of a line. His metre developed into the heroic metre of the 15th and 16th centuries.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Differentiate between Style and Literary Style.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed stylistics, style, literary style, poetry and style, stylistic elements in poetry as well as comparisons of medieval and Renaissance poetry.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about:

- The foregrounding of the term, stylistics, in style;
- The definitions and meaning of style;
- Poetry and style;
- Fundamental elements in poetry;
- Comparisons of medieval and Renaissance poetry.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Can stylistics be separated from style? Discuss.
- 2) Analyse the literary style of one of the poets discussed in this unit.
- 3) State the fundamental poetic elements.
- 4) What is style?

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MODULE 3 THE RENAISSANCE ERA AND ENGLAND'S CULTURAL REBIRTH

Unit 1	Historical Highlights of the Renaissance
Unit 2	The Printing Press and the Increase in Literary Works
Unit 3	From Humanism to Science
Unit 4 & 5	Prominent Literary Figures of the English Renaissance

UNIT 1 HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RENAISSANCE

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	The Renaissance – A Return to the Classics
3.2	A New Way of Living
3.2.1	Cultural Changes
3.2.2	Economic Changes
3.2.3	Political Changes
3.3	Martin Luther and the Reformation
3.4	Some Negative Events of the Period
3.4.1	Witch Hunts Against Catholics
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignments
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit has been written to introduce you to the literary, socio-economic, cultural and political experiences of the Renaissance era. We shall also discuss the reformation activities of Martin Luther, and some negative events that characterised the period such as Witch Hunts. At the end of this unit, you will understand that the Renaissance had its own form of development, quite different from the medieval era.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss what you understand by the Renaissance;
- explain the socio-cultural changes that took place during the Renaissance;

- outline the activities of Martin Luther in the course of the Reformation movement;
- identify the high points of the Witch Hunts of the period;
- state some of the negative events of the Renaissance period;
- summarise the return to the classics in the Renaissance era.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE RENAISSANCE – A RETURN TO THE CLASSICS

The term, ‘Renaissance’, which began in the late fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, refers to the period after the Middle Ages. It was a period in which the art of printing, literature, sculpture and architecture reached prominence. The development spread to England in the sixteenth century but reached its height during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. The Renaissance period produced philosophers, artists and scholars who borrowed ideas from the ancient cultures of Greeks and Romans, and this is essentially part of the reasons they are often described as humanists. With their interests in ancient classics of Greek and Romans, they improved their arts, but this was later empowered and enlarged by the invention of printing and other discoveries of the period.

Part of the important changes of the period was the 1492 crossing of the Atlantic by Christopher Columbus from Spain to ‘discover’ a new continent, America. There was also the discovery made by Copernicus in 1543 about the movement of heavenly bodies. His theory explained that the centre was not the earth but the sun which is surrounded by other planets that revolve around it. The Renaissance covers the early Tudor Age (1500 – 1557); Elizabethan Age (1558 – 1603); Jacobean Age (1603 – 1625); and the Carolina Age (1625 – 1642).

With the chains of developments in the Renaissance era, literature, particularly the novel genre, flourished greatly. Prior to this period, narratives of different types had existed in parts of Italy, France and Spain before the full-fledged modern novel classics as we know it today. Some of the popular narrative titles before the development of the real novel are: Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1605); Philip Sidney’s *The Arcadia* (1590); Thomas Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594); Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1688); and John Buyan’s *The Pilgrims Progress* (1678).

It is believed that Samuel Richardson was the first English novelist, but the beginning of the English novel can be traced to Daniel Defoe (1660 – 1771); Samuel Richardson (1689 – 1761); Henry Folding (1707 – 1754); and Tobias Smollet (1721 – 1771). The novel genre started with the publication of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1722); and Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). There was also Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). It was written in the form of letters from a servant girl who was fleeing from the love advances of her master. The letters report her resistance, but at last her master falls in love with her and decides to marry her. After this beautiful creative appearance, Richardson wrote *Clarissa*

Harlowe(1748) and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). Just like his novel, these two were also epistolary novels, that is, they were written in the form of letters. This form of writing enhanced the creativity of the novel genre. Henry Fielding emerged on the literary scene after Richardson with his *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tom Jones* (1749). Other novelists became visible too; there was Tobias Smollet, who wrote the novel, *The Adventures of Roderick Random*(1748) and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771).Other novelists include Lawrence Stern, who authored *Tristrom Shandy* (1759), a ‘mysterious’ novel in nine volumes; and Horace Walpole, the author of *The Castle of Otranto*, (1764).

3.2 A NEW WAY OF LIVING

The great discoveries of the Renaissance era transformed the way of life of the people. The economy, culture, politics, education and social status experienced new twists that re-patterned people’s style of living. The Renaissance spirit influenced England and her people in very many ways.

3.2.1 Cultural Changes

The great changes in the world that led to the birth of the Renaissance also led to the cultural rebirth of England. Italian, Latin and Greek architectural design was imported into the English cultural life. For instance, Inigo Jones,a Welsh architect, who introduced the Proscenium arch stage movable scenery into the English theatre, was the major English theatre structure designer in three centuries. The new theatre structure influence almost affected the William Shakespeare’s thrust theatre that could accommodate a larger audience.

The culture of drama replaced prose in many important ways; it promoted the culture of extended writing in the English language, with the presence of new words. For example, Thomas More introduced the word, ‘Utopian’, which in Greek means, no place, into the English Language. The invention of printing facilitated the proliferation of different kinds of writing, including essays, political pamphlets and travel documents as well as the authorised King James Version of the Holy Bible, and translations were done into Greek, Latin and English for use by English churches. Thus, the language of the Bible influenced every writer in the period, and with the Bible in every Church of England, it became an important part of British culture.

Apart from the Holy Bible, other pamphlets that reveal the social culture of corruption in the capital city of London were written and distributed in public parks and buses. Such writings were usually brief, concise and comic about social crimes and city life; because “cony-catching” pamphlets, as it was called were about the sub-culture of thieves and cheats.

3.2.2 Economic Changes

When Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic to discover the Americas in 1492, it opened the doors of England to varieties of foreign goods from the New World, leading to economic changes. The discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo did not just prove that the centre is not the earth but made England the central focus of businesses and business contacts around the world. Ferdinand Magellan's sail around the world also changed the economy of England for the better. Soon, London became the capital city of England. All sorts of businesses emerged, there was the growth in the production of pamphlets and short printed texts novels as well as other publications. Sales of weekly newspapers increased. For instance, Britain's famous newspaper, *The Times* began. Paperback publishing had its first major success in Britain with the beginning of Penguin Books.

Development in information technology with Gutenberg's CD-ROM revolutionized the English economy greatly. The Renaissance period also witnessed the presence of the first theatre, which was built in London in 1576; audience paid one penny to see the plays of William Shakespeare.

3.2.3 Political Changes

With the new general re-awakening in the Renaissance, there was an important change in the political and religious experiences of the period. When King Henry VIII separated from the Catholic Church and the Papal authority, he became the head of the Church of England. King Henry VIII's daughter, Queen Elizabeth, became the symbol of the Golden age of English political stability between 1558 and 1603. The government of King Henry VIII took over total control of foreign books, closed the monasteries and destroyed many valuable books.

The abuse of power and corruption by the State influenced playwrights of the period including Christopher Marlowe, Ben Johnson and William Shakespeare to conceive of some of the tyrannical and power-drunk characters in their writings. Niccolo Machiavelli writings, particularly the one titled *The Prince*, which criticised corrupt politicians, were disapproved of in England because his works were believed to disparage the government of the period.

In the 1620's the English society became violent and corrupt as citizens played host to various social vices. The Golden Age of Queen Elizabeth had long past, but the State faced serious socio-economic and political problems, the Puritans no longer see the theatre as a literary form, but as an avenue to promote the social ills of the past. In the 1630s and the 1640s, the political problems of the nation increased, as the Puritans became more powerful. With the overthrow and execution of King Charles 1 in 1649, the Renaissance period of intellectual experimentation and discovery came to an end.

3.3 MARTIN LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION

Martin Luther dedicated himself to the monastery early in life. His activities within the religious movement began when he became a member of the Augustinian friary in Germany in 1505. At a time that the Catholic Church had been overtaken by corruption, there was a need for a new religious movement within the church that would protest the growing corruption within it.

Martin Luther's spiritual self-examination began to lead him towards religious despair. He was ordained a priest in 1507, after he got a doctorate in the Theological Faculty of the University of Wittenberg. This gave him the chance to study the hydra headed problems of the church of his time. At Wittenberg, Martin Luther began to question the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. For instance, he noticed a change in his initial understanding of Penance, righteousness and salvation. This was the genesis of the formulation of his doctrine of justification, which opened the way and created a divide between him and the Roman Catholic Church. In the 16th century, excommunication was usually used as a threat to keep followers within the church and punish those who refused to conduct themselves within the laid down rules.

In the 15th century, Martin Luther questioned the primary authority of the Pope who was seen as Christ's personal representative on earth, who was addressed as the "Vicar of Christ". Luther was of the opinion that humanity cannot give salvation, which is a spiritual gift, from God to man; but by faith in Christ Jesus. Salvation was not obtainable by church membership or the works done on earth. He explained that the grace of God was procured for man by the blood and death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

Luther insists that the controversial issue of indulgences would only lead to spiritual crisis. The idea of sin, he argued, referred to man's violation of moral rules, the code of conduct decreed by God in his "holy scriptures". When sin occurred, a form of penance (a sign of repentance) is required to absolve oneself. He was of the opinion that it was the action of penance and the emerging corruption of indulgence that would throw the Catholic Church into protest and unimaginable crises. He condemned the buying and selling of indulgences by the church, as some Christians within the Catholic Church had reduced it to a form of business; kicking against such practice will hinder the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. And, with the appointment of the Dominican friar, John Tetzel, as commissioner for indulgences for Germany, he had the responsibility to raise money for the church through the sale of indulgences.

For urging people to pay for sins yet to be committed, Martin Luther preached in the public against the Commissioner for Indulgence and the Catholic Church. Luther's impressive and thought provoking articles against the sales of indulgences became a catalyst for emerging Protestant Reformation. One of such was the 'Disputation of Martin Luther and the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences' also known as the 'Ninety-five Theses', a protest document Luther wrote to Archbishop Albrecht in October 1517. Luther's thesis questioned the

power of the Pope or anyone to remit guilt of sin or “grant anyone the remission of all penalties”. In the second part of the letter, Luther described the payment for pardon as unnecessary, and urged that such money should be used to provide for the families of individual Christians.

The Ninety-five Theses became the contentious voice of the oppressed members of the Catholic Church of Luther’s time. Rome issued a Papal bull requesting all Christians to acknowledge the Pope’s authority to grant indulgence. In 1520, the Pope issued the *Exurge Domine* when Luther did not carry out the Pope’s order in the Papal Bull that ordered him to withdraw some 41 theological errors the Church found contentious in his Theses. However, Luther burnt the issued document publicly, with the Catholic Church’s ecclesiastical Canon Law. Apparently aggrieved, the Pope, Leo X, excommunicated Luther from the Catholic Church in 1521.

The Reformation spread to other parts of Europe, including Switzerland, freeing many people from the Papal authority and the Church. The Protestant Reformation led to a thirty years war in Europe from 1618. This religious war degenerated into a war of political power and will, but the 1648 Peace of Westphalia ended the religious war in Europe and enthroned religious freedom for Protestants.

3.4 SOME NEGATIVE EVENTS OF THE RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance era is famous for the intellectual and ideological changes that characterised the period, but it also had its own fair share of some negative changes. It is a clear historical fact that the medieval era dovetailed into the Renaissance, therefore it was possible that some of the negative events that were the features of the medieval became the inheritance of the Golden Age.

The sense of freedom enjoyed by all during the Renaissance period encouraged much violence, complex sexual feelings and activities, corruption, as well as elevated criticisms of every aspect of the Renaissance. For instance, the theatre was so criticised that it was closed by the Puritans in 1642. The criticism and generated conflicts also diminished the popularity of the theatre as a form of social entertainment.

Also, the political problems of England increased in the 1630s and 1640s as the Puritans became extremely powerful, and this deepened as the Cavalier group of Pro-Charles 1 moved against the Puritans (the Roundheads). The political conflict that ensued led to the execution of King Charles 1 in 1649.

The Renaissance gradually grounded to a halt from the high Middle Ages. Latin that had flourished greatly from the classical age and became the language of the church was overtaken by the improved English Language and other competing languages.

3.4.1 WITCH HUNTS AGAINST CATHOLICS

The serial developments of the Renaissance period opened the route for the oppression and witch hunts of Catholic priests. The religion and politics changed when King Henry VIII made himself the head of the Church of England, merging church and the State (1529 – 1539). The King or Queen was next to God in the political hierarchy of England. He revealed his hatred for Catholicism and the Pope in Rome by oppressing the Church's priests, who were viewed with hostility and treated with disdain in almost all areas of life, the English politics, culture and economy. This action elevated the social status of the Protestants.

For instance, the Protestant land owners compelled the Parliament to approve penal laws to keep the Catholics disorganised and disunited. This generated religious hatred between the Catholics and Protestants, though the motive behind the action was both economic and political. The Attainder Act passed by James 1 in the Irish Parliament in 1689 resettled Ireland in favour of Catholics. The penal laws suppressed the religious culture of the Catholics to hold crown offices or practice law; traders among them could only hire apprentices. They were also excluded from the guilds. They were forbidden to be land owners, nor allowed a lease for a period longer than thirty one years. Some of them who had estate could not have it inherited by their eldest son, except divide the land into small farms among their children. The status of Catholics had diminished considerably; for instance, they owed only 14 percent of the land compared to the 59 percent they had in 1641. The children of Catholics could not attend seminary (home or abroad) and their education was entrusted to the care of Protestant schools. They could not own a house worth five pounds nor owe a gun.

There were strict regulations against priesthood. All archbishops, bishops, vicars-general, deans were all banished from the country. Those who were left behind or returning were charged for treason and sentenced to death by hanging or subjected to quartering. The classless or inferior clergy could only conduct Mass after approval from the government. All unregistered Catholic Priests who were first offenders were branded on the cheek with a large "P", the penalty was further upgraded to castration of erring priests; though the latter penalty was replaced with branding before it was thrown out by the Lords, for technically involving Catholic leases, not for any humanitarian value.

Even as there are no records that the laws that threatened banishment or death on Catholic clergy were applied in the eighteenth century, the clergies were severely sanctioned. The policy of vengefulness against Catholic Priests reached a more ridiculous height in Ireland while under the political control of England.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

State some of the cultural and political changes that took place during the Renaissance era.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the cultural, economic and political changes that occurred in England during the Renaissance period. We have also identified and explained some of the negative effects of the Renaissance period. You are advised to read over your work again.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- The meaning of Renaissance;
- That the transforming changes that took place in Renaissance England were partly social-cultural and political;
- About some of the negative events of the period;
- The significant roles played by Martin Luther in the Reformation trial;
- Some of the forms of injustice and oppression Catholics experienced in Renaissance England.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Discuss the major developments of the Renaissance period.
- 2) Briefly discuss the negative effects of the Renaissance period.
- 3) What led to the enmity between the English monarchy and the Catholic Church? How was this eventually resolved?

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UNIT 2 THE PRINTING PRESS AND THE INCREASE IN LITERARY WORKS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Printing Press, Johannes Gutenberg
 - 3.2 The Spread of Secularism
 - 3.3 Manutius and the Pocket Books
 - 3.4 William Caxton and the Promotion of Popular Culture
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have designed this aspect of our module to introduce you to the printing press, a major invention of the Renaissance. This unit is important to your overall study of the literary and other developments of Renaissance Europe. The reason is, you will have a comprehensive idea not just on how the printing and publication of books began, but how printing encouraged entrepreneurial spirit in an emerging culture of capitalism, a revolutionizing factor behind the flowering of the Renaissance Classics and other creative writings. The objectives of this unit are highlighted below.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the printing press and its impact on the economy of Europe;
- explain the spread of secularism;
- appraise Manutius and his Pocket Books;
- review William Caxton's promotion of popular culture

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE PRINTING PRESS, JOHANNES GUTENBERG

The history of printing dates back to early times with the use of duplicated images by means of stamps. In early Mesopotamian civilization, before 300BC, round cylinder seals were used to roll an impress onto clay tablets to produce images. The use of small stamps had long existed in China and Egypt, while in Europe and India, the printing of cloth preceded the printing of paper (papyrus). Impression of prints was made on silk in the seventeenth century.

Block printing was used for printing textiles and texts, a development that started in East Asia. The method of printing on cloth with the block printing technology began in Christian Europe in 1300. In the period, block-books, wood cut books with texts and images, was an alternative to manuscripts and printed books in movable type. The *Arts Moriendi* and *Biblia Pauperum* were common.

However, in Mainz, Germany, Johannes Gutenberg developed the European movable type of printing technology in 1439, leading to the European age of printing technology. The movable type-setting was faster and durable, and the uniformity of letterings and impressive typographical fonts gave it an edge over the wood block printing. The low price of the Gutenberg Bible (1455) and high quality nature of the movable printing machine popularised it all over medieval and Renaissance Europe.

Gutenberg's movable type of printing formed the bedrock of all printing machines even in contemporary world. The creation of an oil-based ink compared to the earlier water-based ink became a beautiful complement to Gutenberg's printing machine invention. He had derived his technological idea from an earlier experience as a professional goldsmith and metallurgy; no wonder he was the first to make his type from an alloy of lead combined with antimony, used for the durable type that produced high-quality printed books more suitable than the clay mode.

The beautiful invention of printing in Germany boosted and revolutionised communication, leading to the advancement of knowledge. With Gutenberg's type, printing technology advanced and spread to other parts of Europe. Rev. Jose Glover would have been the first to bring the first printing press to England's American colonies in 1638, but his widow, Elizabeth Darris Glover, established a printing house which was run by Stephen Day; the printing house later became the popular Cambridge Press. In 1470, Johann Heynlin set up a printing press in Paris; in 1593, the Spanish started the first printing press in Southeast Asia in the Philippines. Subsequently, in the 15th century, Gutenberg's press had over 300 years post invention adaptability and used across cultures all over the world, largely for reason of durability, effectiveness and relevance.

3.2 THE SPREAD OF SECULARISM

Secularism is a tradition that dates back to the ancient Greece, though characteristically, it is part of humanistic developments. Secularism is based on reason, love and honour for human beings and things of nature with which we share the planet.

The art of humanism became popular with the conceptual view of Petrarch and his disciples such as Giovanni Boccaccio and Coluccio Salutati who propagated the humanist philosophy, an ideological concept that began in Greece and spread through Italy in the fifteenth century and formed part of the crystallizing experiences of the Renaissance. Some of its Renaissance proponents are Gasparino Barziza, a scholar of Cizero, who became a leader in Bologna, Venice,

and Padua, and later established a school in Mantua; as well as Guarino da Verona, who taught at Verona and began a school in Ferrara. The movement spread to Spain, France, Germany and Eastern Europe and England, Budapest and in Vienna in the fifteenth century.

Humanism had great influence over other disciplines such as the arts, philosophy, politics, law and mathematics, and merged into other intellectual movements after 1600. Essentially, the merger of Christian humanism in the 2nd century can be traced to the writers of the period; they are Justin Martyr, a theologian apologist of the early Christian church.

3.3 ALDUS MANUTIUS AND THE POCKET BOOKS

Aldus Pius Manutius, also known as Aldo Manuzio (1449 – 1515) was an Italian humanist, a printer, publisher and founder of the Aldine Press at Venice. Apart from being credited with the invention of the punctuations comma (,) and semi-colon (;), he also introduced the pocket, inexpensive books that were read like the modern paper backs of today. With the help of his friend, Giovanni Pico, and his nephews, Alberto and Lionello Pio, Manutius began a printing press at Venice. He started with different types of book designs, Italic type, small and handy pocket editions, as well as binding technique and design, such as slanted type (Italic). The main philosophy of Aldus Manutius for creating the Pocket Books was to have a handy book that could be easily taken around in one's pocket. Virgil's *Opera* in 1501 was his first example. He created the Italics type face to economise space and lower printing cost, even though the italics is now used for emphasis.

In 1501, Aldus creatively used the image of a dolphin woven around an anchor as his publisher's logo; a creative idea that was pirated for use by the French and Italian publishers as well as the nineteenth century firm of William Pickering in London and Doubleday.

In an attempt to preserve the cultures of the ancient Greeks, Aldus published the classical literatures of Greek and Latin in Pocket editions, for personal use. He also printed the *Musaeus Grammaticus*, and the *Galeomyomachia* editions of Hero and Leander and the Greek *Psalter*. He employed about thirty Greeks in his printing press and prefaced his editions in Greek language, read proofs and gave calligraphic samples casts of Greek type. His first volume of his edition of Aristotle was not published until 1495, followed by four other volumes between 1497 and 1498.

He is credited not just with editing but also correcting and re-printing Greek Classics originally published in Florence, Rome and Milan. He promoted Greek culture and civilization by establishing an academy of Hellenists in 1502 (New Academy) which rules were written in Greek, with Greek as the language of communication.

3.4 WILLIAM CAXTON AND THE PROMOTION OF POPULAR CULTURE

With the invention of a printing press from an old wine press in Europe by Johannes Gutenberg, the first book, Gutenberg's Bible, written in Latin, was printed in 1454. The popular culture of printing became established in Westminster, London in 1476 when William Caxton became the first English printer, using the press and movable type of printing.

William Caxton's press opened wide the gates of printing and publishing entrepreneurs and the reading populace too took advantage of the development to communicate knowledge and ideas freely more than ever before in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The popular press in England also helped improved people's attitudes to history, art and religion. The coming of printing into England diminished people's interest in oral culture, ballad singers and story tellers. The culture of literacy and the social order of the time improved considerably; chapbooks and pamphlets on diverse subjects were common. However, one of the favourite topics tells the tales of mythical heroes such as Robin Hood.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Review the various ways in which Johannes Gutenberg's printing press improved the art of reading.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the printing press and the part played by Johannes Gutenberg, the spread of secularism as well as the creation of Pocket Books by Manutius. We have also discussed the role of William Caxton in the promotion of popular culture.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- The printing press was of different types;
- Gutenberg's was an early and a most impressive breakthrough;
- Secularism is a distinct humanism with its philosophy;
- About Manutius and his Pocket Books;
- William Caxton's role in the easy access to information.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) With specific reference to Johannes Gutenberg, discuss the invention of the printing press.
- 2) Summarise the development of secularism.

- 3) Explain two ways in which Manutius' Pocket Books differ from other books.

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UNIT 3 FROM HUMANISM TO SCIENCE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Major Differences between Humanists and Scientists
 - 3.2 Some Scientists of the Period and their Works
 - 3.3 Roger Bacon
 - 3.4 Sir Isaac Newton
 - 3.5 Nicolaus Copernicus
 - 3.6 Christopher Columbus
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we wish to introduce you to what particularly differentiates the humanists from scientists of the period and their contributions, but marked out Roger Bacon, Isaac Newton, and Copernicus for more specific and comprehensive discussion. We have also added a discussion of the geographical discoveries of Christopher Columbus. You may find yourself someday being asked to discuss or make a scholarly contribution to issues revolving around the scientific revolution in Renaissance Europe. In this unit, we have prepared you adequately for such tasks, should they arise. Below are the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- differentiate between humanists and scientists;
- list some scientists of Renaissance Europe and some of their works;
- explain what you find interesting in Roger Bacon's life and times;
- discuss some of the challenges in the life of Isaac Newton;
- review Nicolaus Copernicus' contribution to the Renaissance period;
- outline the discovery made by Christopher Columbus.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUMANISTS AND SCIENTISTS

Humanists rely on reason, leading to the belief that there are no supernatural beings such as gods, angels, and God that determine and administer people's

will. Though humanists are not scientists, some of them, the secular humanists, lean on some aspects of science and/or scientific method to explain or answer questions about the evolution of human beings and the entire universe.

Humanists are intellectual and social philosophers in the application of the individual and societal pleasure for the expression of personal and individual propositions. They may not be agnostics, nor unchristian but their form of Christianity may be secularised.

Scientists do not believe in human self subjectivity to a god who inhabits a supposed space, reducing the individual to an atom or speck that could be driven at will under the hands of uncontrollable forces.

In contemporary human history, scientists thrive under the investigative and explorative philosophies of Physics, which at first was viewed suspiciously dogma, but with time regarded with ever increasing conviction from the time of Galileo. Scientists believe in the absolute uniformity of nature; and seeing the world as a system, a mechanism of every part, every movement and of a whole, as related to other parts for complete and definite functionality.

Scientists believe in the experimental studying of the existence of the connections between every phenomenon with the aim to unravel the connection between it and other phenomena, such is the attitude and spirit of the working hypothesis of modern scientists

Again, scientists adopt the practical method alien to the subjective philosophy of humanists. Humanists are preoccupied with viewing everything from the angle or axis of human interest, as it predominates their thinking. This is at variance with scientific investigative rationality. Humanists are fundamentally aesthetic in movement. Their ideal life is about human experience, aristocratic in perspective, alluring beauty; they work with humanist apparatus such as love, laws, ambition and reform.

Scientists have revolutionized the world; examples of great discoveries abound with men who had caught the scientific spirit of Galileo, notably among whom are Sir Isaac Newton and Benjamin Franklin. Their mind probing inventions have accelerated the development of the world.

We may conclude that while humanists rely on the exercise of the humanities and literary culture, scientists exercise the same faculties but in a much more delicate manner. Scientists expose every law to scientific verification intentionally and not by accident.

3.2 SOME SCIENTISTS OF THE PERIOD AND THEIR WORKS

A number of scientists existed in Medieval Europe; some of them and their works are:

Paul of Aegina (ca. 625 – ca. 690) was the greatest Byzantine Surgeon. He developed many novel surgical techniques in the Islamic world and authored the timeless medical encyclopedia, *Medical Compendium in Seven Books*.

The Venerable Bede (ca. 672 – 735) was a monk who made discoveries in medicine and computer. He authored many books including *The Reckoning of Time*, a book which discusses Mathematics, the nature of things and the astronomical subject of the cosmos.

Robert Grossteste (1168 – 1253). He was the Bishop of Lincoln who wrote texts on the science of optics, astronomy and geometry. He was the leading figure of the 13th century English intellectual movement. His work on optics and astronomy influenced many scientists of his time including Roger Bacon.

Roger Bacon (1214 – 1284) was a member of the Franciscan order. His works were on mechanics, astronomy and geography, including optics. His research in optics established optics as a discipline in Medieval universities.

Nicole Oresme (1323 – 1382) was a 14th century philosopher, a theologian and bishop of Lisieux who wrote influential treatises in Latin and French on Mathematics, Physics, Economics and astronomy.

Rabanus Maurus (780 – 856), a teacher, monk and archbishop of Mainz, he wrote works on computers and the encyclopedia *De Universo*. His teaching earned him the accolade of *Praeceptor Germamae* or the German teacher.

Anthemius of Tralles (474 – 534) was a Professor of geometry and architecture, who wrote extensively on Mathematics. He was one of the architects of the famous Hagia Sophia, the largest medieval building in Istanbul, Turkey. His works were intellectual sources throughout Western Europe and the Arab World.

Jordanus de Nemore (late 12th, early 13th century), a respected Mathematician of the Middle Ages, was well known for his treatise on mechanics (the science of weights), algebra, geometry, stereographic projection and arithmetic.

Thomas Aquinas (1227 – 1274) was an Italian theologian, a friar in the Dominican Order, a Catholic Saint and *Doctor Angelius* who wrote beautiful treatises for which he was more famous, and incorporated Aristotelian views into the scholastic tradition.

Jean Burdan (1300 – 1358) was a French philosopher and Priest of the Middle Age. He developed the theory of impetus that explained the movements of projectiles and objects of free-fall, a theory that gave way to the dynamics of Galileo and of Isaac Newton.

3.3 Roger Bacon

Roger Bacon (1214 – 1284) was the *Doctor Mirabilis*, which means a wonderful teacher. He was a respectable English philosopher who achieved a great feat in the study of nature. He was a respected 19th century advocate of modern scientific method, apparently inspired by Aristotle, Arabic teachers and scholars including Alhazen. A graduate of Oxford at the age of thirteen, his family had their properties seized and were exiled in the reign of Henry III of England. He was a friar in the Franciscan order.

He wrote on philosophy and advised on how to incorporate the philosophy of Aristotle and science into theology. His theories on alchemy and astrology are documented in his books, *Opus Majus*, *De Multiplicatione Specierum*, amongst others.

He suffered arrest and imprisonment from the medieval church due to his interest in certain astrological doctrines, and sympathies for radical Franciscans on prophecies of his time. Bacon was an advocate of modern experimental science, in an age that was hostile to modern scientific ideas.

A respected multilingualist of his time, he advocated a theological reform premised around a return to the study of the language in which the Bible was composed to avoid a corruption of works of Greek philosophers by misinterpretations and mistranslations. He advised theologians to study science instead of blindly following prior authorities. In the *Opus Majus*, he criticised Alexander of Italy and Albertus Magnus, his contemporaries, whom he said had not studied Aristotle, and had not acquired enough learning.

3.4 Sir Isaac Newton

Sir Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727) was born in Woolsthorpe, Lincolnshire, England. He was a natural philosopher, scientist, and theorist, who invented a new theory of light and colour, transformed the structure of physical science with his three laws of motion and of universal gravitation, combining the contributions of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes and others into a powerful whole. He revolutionised the 17th century with his power of observations and theories.

Newton was born prematurely in an era when England had not emerged from a bitter civil war. His father had died three months before he was born, and his mother had left him in the care of his grandmother to remarry. At age eighteen he was admitted into Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was exposed to Aristotle's teachings and other classical philosophies. At Cambridge, he was not particularly brilliant, but studied privately and mastered the works of Rene Descartes, Pierre Gassendi, Thomas Hobbes and other scientific figures of the age. In 1665, Newton got his bachelor's degree at Cambridge, and returned to Woolsthorpe after the school closed for two years because of the outbreak of the plague.

Newton developed unusual interest in mathematics and philosophy, conceived his method of infinitesimal calculus, began research into his theory of light and colour and gained insight into the problem of planetary motion, and this led to the publication of his *Principia* in 1687. After his Masters degree in Arts at Cambridge, in 1669, he was appointed a Senior Fellow and succeeded Isaac Barrow as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics.

He was admitted into the Royal Society, and he began his controversial study of the nature of colour, a development which degenerated into conflicts involving him and the society's respected curator of experiments, Robert Hooke, which continued till 1678. He suffered depression in 1678 when his mother died. After he got over it, he researched into alchemical and the hidden forces of nature. His alchemical studies opened theoretical avenues not found in mechanical philosophy. In 1666, he observed the fall of an apple in his garden at Woolsthorpe; this provoked his concept of universal gravitational pull, though the idea was said to have been birthed 20 years earlier, when the issue of planetary motion was discussed with Newton by Robert Hooke, Edmund Halley and Christopher Wren in 1684. Isaac Newton was acquainted with John Locke, a philosopher, and Nicolas Fatio de Duillier, a brilliant mathematician. He was elected President of the Royal Society of London. In 1704, his major work, *Opticks* was published.

3.5 Nicolaus Copernicus

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473 – 1543) was an accompanied administrator, politician, and statesman. A Polish, he was a Renaissance mathematician and astronomer who formulated a heliocentric model of the universe which placed the sun, rather than the Earth, at the centre. One of his most popular scientific publications is *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*. A respected physician, translator, doctor of Canon Law, classic scholar, economist, diplomat and governor, his theory of money remained a principal concept in Economics up to today. He was responsible for translating from Greek to Latin, some of the works of the 7th century Byzantine historian, Theophylact Simocatta.

He collaborated with some astronomers of his time to observe the eclipses of the sun between 1515 to 1530. He conducted over 60 astronomical observations in from 1513 to 1516 from his external curia using primitive instrument. He also observed planetary bodies like the Mars, Saturn and the sun in 1515. His observations of the sun made him discover the movement of the solar system in connection with the fixed stars. His theory of money in 1517 helped Prussia and Poland to stabilise their currency. He was also a physician who in his early days treated his brothers, uncle and other family members.

3.5 Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus (1451 – 1506), an Italian, was a skillful adventurer who had interest in discovering the unknown. His early experience of sea travels along the Mediterranean, northern Europe, including Spain and Portugal, and his love for map making and studying the voyages of men like Marco Polo preoccupied him with the thought of traveling to unknown places including Asia, which had only one route from Europe (eastward across the Mediterranean sea, through deserts, mountains and ancient routes). Even Europeans too wanted a better and alternative route for their trading activities but were afraid to risk travel into the unknown parts of the Atlantic. But Columbus' experience as one who studied maps, and the wisdom gained from experiences of previous sailors provided a novel insight that made him to conclude that India and Eastern were the ideal route to Asia, a route that was far better than going round Africa.

Determined still, he tried unsuccessfully for about ten years to make his travel plans acceptable to the European rulers of his time. There was a great reluctance to sponsor his proposed expedition because of the raging disagreement about the actual location of Asia and the distance. Some had said that Asia was towards the West, no one was sure, but Columbus put his estimated distance at about 2,500 miles (4000 kilometres west of the Canary Islands). It was much later that the world knew that his assumption was wrong, because his calculation reduced the earth.

In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of the Spanish kingdoms of Castile and Aragon agreed to put three ships together for Christopher Columbus for a voyage. They also promised to make him the Viceroy (governor) of any new land he acquired, and 10 percent from any wealth he brings into Spain. With ninety male crew members, the *Nina*, *Pinta* and *Santa Maria* sailed westward on August 3, 1492. Columbus documented his voyage in a diary. His three ships were manned by crew members who were mostly Spanish, except himself and a few others aboard. Columbus and his crew members sailed into the Atlantic until the morning of October 12, 1492, when they arrived at an Island of the Bahamas, which he named Sansalvador, but thinking he had reached the East Indies, he named the people that lived there Indians. For the next ten weeks he explored the Island of the Caribbean, and arrived at the thickly populated Island of the Hispaniola shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti. He also discovered Cuba which he thought of as the Asian mainland.

It was at the Hispaniola that one of the ships of Columbus, the flagship's *Santa Maria* got broken to pieces. He left many of his crews behind to establish a fort and continued a return journey to Spain in the *Nina*. In his diary, he wrote about the very hospitable people he had met in a fertile land thinking he had reached Asia. Although, he had accumulated a fair quantity of riches, mines, gold and metals, it was not in the great quantity he anticipated. He promised to give Ferdinand and Isabella slaves and as much gold they want if they would agree to finance another voyage; though he offered them some Indians he had enslaved. Christopher Columbus made three more trips to the Americas between 1493 and 1504, still in search of the Asia already described by Marco Polo. Unfortunately, all the men he left behind had been killed by the Indians who took advantage of

the conflicts and disunity among the Spanish. The latter had plundered the natives of their wealth and took advantage of women and stole goods.

At last, Christopher Columbus failed in his mission to Christianise the natives, and accumulate wealth for Spain. Isabella and Ferdinand were displeased by the chaotic reports from their colonies, thus in 1500, Columbus was recalled and removed as the governor of the Indies. Apparently distressed and disillusioned, he died in Spain in 1506.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the difference between humanists and scientists, mentioned some of the scientists of the period and their works. We have also explained the life, challenges and theories propounded by Roger Bacon, Isaac Newton, Nicolaus Copernicus, as well as some geographical discoveries of Christopher Columbus.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- There are some major differences between humanists and scientists;
- About the work-filled life and challenges of Roger Bacon;
- The scientific experiences of Isaac Newton;
- About Nicolaus Copernicus' contribution to Science;
- The spirit of adventure in the life of the popular voyager, Christopher Columbus.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) List and explain two differences between humanists and scientists.
- 2) Identify at least five scientists of the Renaissance and their works.
- 3) Explain what you consider most interesting in the life of Roger Bacon.
- 4) Discuss the success of Isaac Newton as a 17th century scientist.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 A FLOURISHING OF THE ARTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have designed this unit to introduce you to another interesting aspect of English Literature in the Renaissance, specifically highlighting the roles of some of those who were not scientists or inventors but whose contributions to the promotion of Arts of the period were indispensable, especially Queen Elizabeth 1.

In this unit, we have also accommodated the nature of the growth and development of the English theatres/performances. We have also introduced you to the literary activities of Christopher Marlowe and some major female literary figures of the English Renaissance, so as to provide another view of Renaissance literature. With such addition, when you discuss English Renaissance Literature, you will no longer see women as non-participants in the literary world, but as active contributors to the English Renaissance civilisation. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- outline the roles played by Queen Elizabeth 1 in the promotion of the Arts in Renaissance England;
- trace how the English theatre moved from church to court;
- relate how Christopher Marlowe accommodated the contemporary experience in his *Doctor Faustus*;

- discuss the nature of the performances in the English theatre of the Renaissance;
- criticise Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*;
- highlight the major concerns of Isabella Whitney in *Will and Testament*.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 ELIZABETH 1, THE QUINTESSENTIAL ARTS PROMOTER

The activities and contributions of Queen Elizabeth 1 quite impressively spanned culture, the English economy and politics. But she is even better remembered for her contributions to the arts and literature across the genres of poetry and drama.

More importantly, she served as a patron to the playwrights of her time including the famous English playwrights, William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. The historical plays of Shakespeare were pro-Tudor, and were used as propaganda to further legitimise the Lancastrian and Tudorian rights to the throne from Henry VII, the founder of the Tudor dynasty who claimed and justified their legitimacy to the English throne by claiming relative ascendancy to the 15th century king of Lancaster.

Indeed, works of literature flourished greatly in the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1. Her contributions in this respect inspired every literary writer of her time including poets like Edmund Spenser. She also encouraged scientists like Francis Bacon. Her selfless contributions contributed greatly to the appropriate naming of her time as the 'Elizabethan Age', a form of mini renaissance, as a leading patron of drama and the stage. Her sincere and unparalleled contributions to literature made poets and playwrights to create works, particularly poetry to immortalise her achievements in glowing multiple terms.

It was her love for literature, especially drama and theatre that prevented the laws from executing the orders of the Mayor of London that the city theatres of London in the 1580 should be closed for immoral reasons. Crowded theatres were only shut down to prevent a further spread of the London epidemic. The Privy Council had respect for her love for the theatre and literature. A friend of the stage, she allowed performances in her palace; for instance, in 1562, the blank verse play, *Gorboduc*, was performed in her palace to entertain her. In 1595, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night Dream* was performed at Greenwich during the marriage ceremony of Burleigh's granddaughter. The play referenced the Queen and her court. Indeed, that she became identified with plays of her time gave theatrical practitioners recognisable, elevated social status in the English society of her time.

The elevated status accorded drama and theatres of her time informed integration/inclusion of plays (English and Latin into school curriculum). For instance, in the 1570s and 1580s exclusive boys' schools began the tradition of school plays, and the Queen had been part of the willing audience. Even in 1575

when Essex went on political tour of Ireland at Christmas time, Elizabeth was audience to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

Queen Elizabeth's love for the arts is never in doubt as she was reputed to be an excellent dancer and musician who entertained some of her close associates in a manner reminiscent of any professional musician of her age. The envy from Queen Mary of Scotland had testified to the unequalled excellence of the English Queen in songs and dance.

Based on the contributions of Queen Elizabeth to literature, we may argue that the Renaissance owe so much to the Queen for her interest in poetry, drama, theatre and the arts generally.

3.2 FROM CHURCH TO COURT: ENGLISH PUBLIC THEATRES AND PERFORMANCES

The English Renaissance theatre (1562 and 1642) began as church performance at the Inner Temple to celebrate the Christmas season, using blank verse, beginning with the *Gorboduc*, the first English play in 1561, at a time that the English Parliament banned plays in the theatres.

In a more strict sense of applicability or reference, the English Renaissance theatre encompasses the period between 1562 and 1642; while the Elizabethan theatre applies to 1603. We may argue that the English Renaissance theatre comprises Jacobean theatre (1603 to 1625) and Caroline theatre (1625 to 1642). The socio-economic and political periods of Queen Elizabeth 1 gave a new social outlook to the English theatre as plays moved into the Court, public play houses were opened and private theatres emerged. There was a positive change to going to theatres, as members of the upper class became more interested and even served as audience in public theatres.

Public theatrical practitioners toured Germany, Denmark, and London and performed before permanent English theatres (The Lion began in 1567). At last, drama ceased to be transitory when the permanent theatre came into operation. Public theatres were three stories high, built with open space at the centre. It was usually polygonal in nature, but the Red Bull and the First Fortune were square. The three levels of inward-facing galleries overlooked the open centre into which jolted the stage (a platform surrounded on three sides by the audience, with the rear restricted for the entrances and exits of the actors).

The upper level behind the stage served as a balcony from which an actor could view the audience during such plays like Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The structures were made of timber, lath, plaster and thatched roofs. The disadvantage of the material compositions of the structures was its vulnerability to fire. For instance, the Globe and Fortune theatres were gutted by fire in June 1613 and December 1621 respectively. They were later rebuilt with brick, but this changed their former squire structures.

Public theatres were usually overpopulated during summer; the poorest citizens paid less (a penny) to be admitted into the theatre in 1640 while tickets into private theatres were often five or six times higher. In retrospect, the plays of the period were in the genres of history: *A Larum for London* dramatizes the sack of Antwerp in 1576; lives of kings such as in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, *Henry V*, Marlowe's *Edward II*, George Peele's *Edward the First*. Christopher Marlowe's tragedies popularised the genre. Examples are *Doctor Faustus* and the *Jew of Malta*.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *Othello* are part of the tragedies of the period. The common comedies of the period reflect life in the city of London, like Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemakers Holiday* and Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. The 1608 witnessed the less used pastoral genres like *The Faithful Shepherds* and morality plays like *Four Plays in One* in 1608 – 1613. The tragic-comedy and masque of the period were on the reigns of the first two Stuart Kings, James 1 and Charles 1.

However, only a few of the plays which coloured the Renaissance theatre were printed; a total of 600 plays were published in the period but mostly in individual quarto editions. Those of William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher; though late and limited, were printed in large numbers. Plays of the period survived in the form of manuscripts.

In terms of performances, acting companies of the period operated on a repertory system. This system was different from that of the modern theatre that could run production for days, months or throughout the year. For example, Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess* was performed for nine months in 1624 before it was banned by the authorities because of its political content.

Only men featured in performances, though adolescent boys could act as female characters in women's costume, as the latter were excluded from stage acting. Men from modest backgrounds wrote plays meant for the stage; some of them were graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, but many were self made. Shakespeare and Ben Jonson were actors but seem to have no performers. Christopher Marlowe died fighting in a tavern while Ben Jonson killed an actor in a duel. Playwrights were paid moderately, but often lost their copyrights to the company that buys it off the playwright. For instance, in the 1630s, Richard Brome agreed with the Salisbury Court Theatre to write three plays a year, but could not meet the requirements..

3.3 SIGNS OF THE TIME: CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE'S *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* discusses a German scholar, Faustus, at Wittenberg who is versed in knowledge, yet in search of the limits or ends of human knowledge. Haunted by the endless desirability for knowledge, he turns to the attainment of magic as an end to human wisdom. In response to Faustus' will

and desirability, an evil angel arrives to represent the choice of evil, juxtaposed with Doctor Faustus' existing knowledge of Christianity. The protagonist's dilemma to tread the path of external damnation and of God became apparent in the conflicting desires that jostled for attention in his conscience. The play reveals the quiet conscience of Doctor Faustus in conflict with itself while in his study:

Faustus

Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess:
Having commence'd be a divine in show,
Yet level at the end of every art,
And live and die in Aristotles works
Sweet Analytises 'tis thou hast ravish'd me!
Bene disserere est, 'tis finislogices
Is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?
Affords this art no greater miracle?
Then read no more, thou hast attain'd that end;
A greater subject fitteth Faustus wit
Bid on Kal me on farewell, Galen come,

Be a physician, Faustus, heap up gold,
And be eterniz'd for some wondrous cure
The end of physic is our body's health
Why Faustus, hast thou not attain'd that end?

Is not they common talk sound aphorisms?
Are not thy bills hung up as monuments
Whereby whole cities have escap'd the plague
And thousand desperate maladies been cur'd?
Yet are thou still but Faustus, and a man
Couldst thou make men to live eternally
Or being dead raise them to life again
Then this profession were to be esteem'd
Physic, farewell! Where is Justinian?
A petty case of paltry legacies
Such is the subject of the Institute
And universal body of the law.
This study fits a mercenary drudge
Who aims at nothing but external trash
Too servile and Liberal for me
When all is done, divinity is best
Jerome's Bible, Faustus, view it well
Ha! The Reward of sin is death: that's a hard
If we say that we have no sin, we deceive
Ourselves, and there's no truth in us

Why, be like we must sin, and so

Consequently die

Ay, we must die an everlasting death
What doctrine can you this?
What will be shall be! Divinity, adieu!
These metaphysics of magicians
And necromantic books are heavenly;
Lines, circles, letters and characters:
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires
O, what a world of profit and delight
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence
Is promis'd to the studious artisan!
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings
Are but obey'd in their several provinces
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds;
But, his dominion that exceeds in this
Stretching as far as doth the mind of man:
A sound magician is a demi-god:
Here tire, my brains, to get a deity?

(pp. 7 – 9).

Faustus' Christian conscience advises him against the choice of magic, but the devil tempts him with the power, strength, and the enviable mysteries that could be his should he accept it. He imagines the height of greatness he would attain when he acquires the power of magic. Then he decided to listen to the evil angel, Mephistopheles, who represents Lucifer. He agrees to Lucifer's proposal, and the terms of agreement was that Doctor Faustus will acquire the black arts in exchange for his soul for twenty four years. He will have to submit to every command of the devil during this period.

The agreement was sealed, and as he signs off his soul to the devil, the Latin words "Homo Fuge" which means 'O Man, flee!' appears on his arm and he is afraid. Mephistopheles rejoices, and sealed off the blood covenant with the dance of the devil. Faustus asks for a wife, but Mephistopheles gives him books of knowledge. After some time, Faustus regrets his agreement with the devil and curses Mephistopheles for depriving him of heaven. He manages to fight back, and torments the devil with a mention of the name, God, to scare him off. The Angels of good and evil reappear. The good Angel advises him to repent while the evil Angel admonishes him to continue in his cruel ways. At last, Lucifer promises to show Faustus what Hell looks like, and at the same time, the clown, Robin, has one of Faustus' magic books. With the aid of a chariot drawn by dragons, Faustus flies to Rome to attend the feast in honour of St. Peter.

Back home, Faustus' mysterious knowledge of astronomy made him extremely famous. He continues to command respect everywhere with his magic; in the court of Charles V, he gains the favour of the emperor by humiliating Benvolio, a Knight. As Faustus' twenty-four years burns out, he feasted and drank with his

students as death approaches. Faustus impresses his friends and fellow scholars with a spirit he invites to assume the shape of Helen of Troy. Shortly after, an old man came in and warned Faustus to repent, but Faustus prefers to enjoy, and summons Mephistopheles to let him have Helen of Troy as his love, to give him the desirable comfort as the end time of his life gets near. He agrees.

Faustus eventually confesses to his scholar friends that he exchanged his soul for his power. His friends left him to the consequences of his action. The irony is that Mephistopheles taunts Faustus as the hour of death approaches, while Faustus blames the devil for his misfortune. The good and evil Angels arrive, and he is abandoned by the good Angel. The gate of Hell opens, the devil ridicules Faustus, revealing the numerous torture that characterise Hell. As the clock ticks eleven, Faustus' time ends, he gives a monologue, and regrets his decision. The devil arrives at midnight and drags him away, while Faustus begs God and the devil for mercy. His friends later found his body torn to shreds.

Epilogue – The chorus recalls the end of Faustus, a great man of wisdom, and urges humanity not to forget the lessons it offers.

Major Themes

- I. *The Vanity of Human Wishes* - This is an overriding theme of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Faustus, a knowledgeable scholar, is suddenly consumed by the desire for power and fame.
- II. *Conflict between Classical and Renaissance Civilisation* - The Greeks and Renaissance world view are in clear conflict in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Christian world view and mysticism and magic in Medieval as well as Renaissance Europe are the core of the conflict in the play. People's contact with other powers, including magic, at the expense of other things of nature, redefines humanity. Christian view of life preaches an individual's subjection to a higher divinity, God, while the Greek philosophy equates humanity with god, or God, and consciously defines his authority. Thus, Doctor Faustus abandons the Christian conception of life, prefers godly or god-like status; the burden of a mystery that is attached to such desires wrecked him.
- III. *Pride and Disobedience* - It is pride that makes many forget the reason why Satan was thrown out of Heaven, and why Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden. It was pride that generated limitless levels of desirability and over ambitiousness in Faustus. Even when the Angels of good and evil competed for his conscience, the former advises him to repent, but Faustus ignored Christian ethics, the path of Heaven, for eternal damnation. At last, God ignored his plea for mercy, as written in the book of Proverbs, Chapter 1 verses 25–28:

But ye have set at nought all my counsel
and would none of my reproof. I also will
laugh at your calamity; I will mock when
your fear cometh... then shall they call
upon me, but I will not answer, they shall
seek me early, but they shall not find me

- IV. *Human Beings' Narrow View of Life* - Before he gave his life to magic, Faustus bothered his conscience about the aesthetic and limitless use to which he will channel his magic once acquired. This reflects in his opening speech in the play. But, immediately, he seals a deal with Satan, giving away his soul to eternal damnation, he became extravagant, excessive and wilful, to his own detriment.
- V. *Reality of Eternity and Damnation of Hell* - Doctor Faustus has agreed to give his soul to Mephistopheles, and the latter has also given him the magical power he desired. Even with that, God still left the option of repentance open to him, asking and pleading with Faustus to repent. This condition suggests that the divine ethics of Christianity admits a repented soul, no matter the weight and burden of sin; s/he only needs to confess his/her sins in sincere sobriety, to earn God's mercy and forgiveness. In the case of Faustus, he could not repent till he died; unfortunately, God does not give room to repentance after death. Hence, Faustus took all the knowledge he acquired to Hell.
- VI. *Renaissance Age of Deadly Aspiration* - Learning in all areas of knowledge reached its height in the age of Renaissance. The domineering and reckless search for fame, power and knowledge generally by people is not usually without its price. Faustus rose from his acquired force of knowledge, in search of a much higher power, obviously with which he could manipulate, change the existing order of things and dominate. This desire mirrors the emergence of the rebirth of knowledge in Renaissance Europe, which began in Italy in the late fourteenth century and spread through Western Europe.

Language and Style

The plays of the Renaissance composed in verse are meant to be spoken on stage to the audience. The purpose is to inspire the audience with the use of words and make the story life like. In the process of narration, the characters voice their thoughts aloud to the audience using asides and soliloquies, often rich in figurative use. The chorus plays a vital role in presenting the action and climax of

the story; sometimes, the story is narrated in chorus. The language of Christopher Marlowe is not different from that of William Shakespeare in his plays. The similarity reflects versification, the use of the language of poetry in their plays.

The strength of the language of the playwright is the visual effect that the conversational use of language creates in every part of the play. The extract below is a versification of the desirability of the limitless ambition of Doctor Faustus:

Be a physician, Faustus, heap up gold,
And be eternic'd for some wonderous cure.
The end of physic is our body's health
Why, Faustus hast thou not attain'd that end?
Is not thy common talk sound aphorisms?
Are not thy bills hung up as monuments
Whereby whole cities have escap'd the plague
A thousand desperate maladies been cur'd?
Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man
Couldst thou make men to live eternally
Or being dead raise them to life again
Then this profession were to be esteem'd,
Physics, farewell! Where is Justinian

(p. 7)

In order to explain the similarity of the stylistic versification common in the age of both English playwrights, Shakespeare and Marlowe, we present an extract from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*:

Tarry Jew
The law hath yet another hold on you
It is enacted in the laws of Venice.
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seeks the life of any citizen.
The party against the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the State
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only 'against all other voice
In which predicament I say thou stand'st,
For it appears by manifest proceeding.

(pp. 189 – 191).

While we share from the vision which Marlowe has created for his character, Faustus, we are similarly taken in by the imagistic conception of what will become of Antonio, should Shylock insist and should the court give a judgment in the latter's favour. The poetic use of language in the plays are characterised by

the use of imagery which enriches ordinary statements. The language of poetry beautifies and elevates the different subjects treated in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. In both plays, the sentences are deliberately rendered in short and sharp lines, sometimes in phrases, and hanging forms, leaving the reader to the task of completion, especially in Marlowe's code mixing with Latin, in almost all the verses of rendition. Poetic language makes the characters in the plays speak more effectively, thus achieving precision and meaningfulness than prose would do.

3.3.1 ISABELLA WHITNEY'S *WILL AND TESTAMENT*

The poem discusses the theme of the inevitability of death and joyful departure both from London and from this world. In her nostalgic reminiscences, the poet announces to her only son that the time has come for her to die, leave her son as well her cherished city of London where she was nursed from childhood to adulthood. "The time is come I must depart from thee, ah, famous citie"! Although the poet did not give us her son's name, but we know him to a trusted, faithful, and compassionate child; and the poet nursed no fear to give her handwritten will to her son. She finds it difficult to depart from her only son, but she includes in her Will a long list of advice which ranges from how to cope with women, friends, neighbours and live a disciplined and successful life. She warns him never to harbour malice, acrimony or nurse a grudge against anyone who may show dislike to her.

She explains:

...did hide that thou hadst pitie,
I never yet, to true my smart,
did finde that thou hadst pitie,
wherefore small cause ther is, that I
should greeve from thee to go:
But many women foolyshy,
Lyke me and other moe.
Doe such a fyxed fancy get
on those which least deserve.

The poet reveals that many of her fellow women liked her, while some mocked her, but her boy should still admire her and let them pass by unnoticed "fyxed fancy set on those which least deserve". She admits that time is the sole determinant and judge in her own case, as it will in the case of every one. She believes in the healing power of time. This handwritten will of hers stands as a testimony of the life she had lived; especially her relationship with close associates, including the life of charity that she lived "in perfect love and chartie. My testament here write". She admonishes her son not to depart from the path of

faithfulness, trust and discipline as exemplified by the type of life she lived. She insists, "... I leave to thee such Treasurge as I in it recite".

The first part of the poem begins with the poet's advice to her nameless son in the poem. In the second part, she requests her son to permit her to write her will – "Now stand aside and geve my leave to write my latest Wyll."

The poet assures her son that she is ... "whole in body, and in minde, but very weake in purse". The poet testifies to her faithfulness, but decides to write her will for fear that she might not slip into a worst form of poverty: "dou make, and write my Testament, for feare it wyll be worse". She "commends" her soul and body to God, relying greatly on her poetry "hymn", but her body essentially to the "grave", till the Day of Judgment when her soul and body will be united eternally "dwell for aye in ioye". Isabella Whitney requests to "...dispose such things, as I shall leave behind", so that those she will leave behind when she dies will understand her disposition to them all. She is haunted by the nostalgia to leave London where she grew up. She recalls the "buildings", "churches store"; the stores that littered the streets of London.

She recalls the deeply satisfying life provided by the London "street", "Nets of every kind of sort" the "French Rulfes", "high purles", "Gorgetes and sleeves", every kind of "Lawne", "knives", "knives", for combe or "Glasse". Every store owned by the poet are willed to her son, some of which include the ones in Birchin Lane; some of the stores are "show or pantables good store", "Beds", "body makers bee", "Artyleery at Temple Bar", "Dagges at Tower hyll". Some of her other properties are to be shared among "folke" already named in the poem, such as Saint Martins, "Cornwall", "Bodymakers bee", "Artyllery" at Temple Bar, and Paul will inherit the "Brace buildyings". Thames shall have the "Brewers store" and "Bakers at your wyll", "eat fish thrice a weeke". The poet's two streets, "watly ng streete, and canwyck street", of wollen leave" and Linnen streete", are also willed to her son. She tells him that she has left him so much, much than expected,

...in many places, shops are full
I left you nothing scant.

The poet has numerous stores at Mint Street "it is impossible to tell it". There are stores of wine at "Stiliarde". She did not provide only for her son and family members or neighbours; her charity also extends to the poor and needy, motherless and prisoners. She says:

And that the poore, when I am gone,
 have cause for me to pray
I wyll to prison portions leave
what though but very small
Yet that they may remember me,

occasion be it shall.

For those imprisoned, the poet is of the opinion that they deserve fair treatment, irrespective of whether they are on death roll or will soon regain their freedom. She is determined never to grieve or make any one sorrowful by her actions in life. She chooses to fulfill her Christian duty of reparation rather than die in debt or “some Bankrupts”. Isabella Whitney confesses her love for the “Arte” of the “Bookbinders of Paulles”. She advocates that “wealthy widdowes” should be courteous to gentlemen, “Gentylmen”.

Obviously a writer, she vows that every week, her printer shall have money from the proceeds of her books sold on her behalf, “They e’ry weeke shal mony have, when they from Bakes departe.” Poor maidens too will get their own share. Whitney remembers her parents who live in Smithfeelde who deserve to “have a Hose and neat good store thrice a week”. She permits the “blynd and lame” a fair amount of her properties also. The beautiful memory of London re-echoes in the mind of the poet, as she adds to the fine list of the things she leaves behind for her nameless son.

She describes herself as a woman of conscience, the conscience that will be buried with her “when I am gon, with conscience... nothing named have, to buy me with all”. As she continues to explain how she should like to be buried, she says none of the material wealth mentioned on the page of her Will will accompany her to her grave, except her conscience. She pleads with the living, including her son, to cover her grave with “shrowding sheete”.

And let me have a shrowding sheete
to cover mee from shame
And in obliuyon bury mee
and never more mee name.

Isabella Whitney rejects other forms of ceremonies and expenses that may be organised in her favour when she dies. She believes that such expenses are not necessary but mere losses:

Ringings nor other ceremonies,
Use you not for cost:
Nor at my burial, make no feast
Your mony were but lost
Reioyce in God that I am gon,
Out of this vale so vile

Instead of engaging in wasteful and meaningless spending, the poet warns that the living should thank God that she departs from this restless and sickly world.

She concludes that her son must be patriotic to the “good London of her dream”. But to everyone who may ask how she spent her days, her son should be

courageous to reply them accordingly. She commends him to advise them against mourning her, and instead correct her errors while she is alive:

And unto all that wyshe mee well,
or me that I am gon
Doo me commend, and bid them cease
my absence for to mone
And tell them further, if they wolde
my presence styll have had
They should have sought to men my luck;
whichever was too bad.

Our poet prays that the Almighty God protects her son from enemies:

God sheelde thee from they foe
And styll make thee victorious
of those that seeke thy woe
And (though I am perswade) that I
shall never move thee see
Yet to the last, I shall not cease
to wish much good to thee.

She regrets her inevitable departure but vows to continually wish her son the best in his activities in life. She ended and signed her Will in London on 20th October AD 1073 in the presence of unidentified witnesses who are the poet's "nearer kyn", who will make themselves known to the poet's son only when any possible change both in the poet's will or the inevitable should occur, but there is not likely to be any change.

"So finally I make an end", thus the poet ends the poem on a note of the inevitable end of every one.

3.3.2 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SLAVERY: A DISCUSSION OF APHRA BEHN'S *OROONOKO*

Oroonoko, set in the northern coast of South America, discusses the tragedy of an African prince, Oroonoko and his wife, Imoinda who were captured by the British, enslaved and taken to Surinam as slaves. The story took place in the 1640s, just before the English surrendered the colony to the Dutch.

An Unidentified Female Narrator Tells the Story

The narrator lives in Parham plantation, waiting to be transported to England. She is the daughter of the new deputy Governor who died during the family's voyage to take up the new appointment. While she was waiting, she met and befriended Prince Oroonoko and his wife, Imoinda.

The narrator had taken us literarily through the Island before she begins to introduce the principal characters. We are taken through the Island's colony, and introduced to its inhabitants, including variegated feathered birds and insects, the anthropological accounts of the natives who were co-traders with the British, the innocence of the natives, comparable to that of the biblical Adam and Eve.

At first, the British lived happily with the natives whom they could not enslave as a result of their tick population; the British decided to look elsewhere, probably to Africa for slaves who will work in the sugarcane plantations.

The narrator then decides to take a cursory look at the West Coast of Africa, precisely Coramantien, Ghana. Oroonoko is about to meet Imoinda, the daughter of the general who has just died trying to save Oroonoko's life. Simultaneously, the King of Coramantien, the grandfather of Oroonoko, has also fallen in love with the beautiful girl. The 100 years old man has sent the royal veil to the girl, and by the dictate of tradition, no lady rejects the King's veil, hence Imoinda could not reject it; she must marry the King, and live the rest of her life in the King's Seraglio. When the king noticed the affection between his youngest wife, Imondia, and his grandson, he decided to nip it in the bud.

The King lied to Oroonoko that he has killed Imondia, whereas, she has been sold to slavery. The British colonialists arrive at Coramantien to trade for the captives of war. The Captain invites Prince Oroonoko and his friends as guests in his vessel but they were enslaved. When Oroonoko and his friends refused to eat, he promised them their freedom, but failed to fulfill his promise when the ship arrived at Surinam. Oroonoko is sold to the humorous but ill-mannered Overseer of Parham Plantation, Tefry, who became his friend. He meets the narrator, who assures him that he and his friends will be freed when the Lord, Governor Willoughby, gets to Surinam.

Oroonoko is never overlaboured, but kept away from other slaves in the plantation house. His unique physical appearance, education and impressive social status earned him preferential treatment among other slaves. One day, as he took a walk in the plantation, he runs into Imoinda. Both embraced joyfully and married shortly after. Imoinda becomes pregnant. Oroonoko expects the child to be born, but not into slavery, hence, he grew more concerned about his status as a slave despite the promise of freedom by the narrator and Trefry. They attempt to occupy Oroonoko with hunting, fishing and a visit to a nearby village. At last, Oroonoko instigated a revolt among the slaves in the surrounding plantations. They took advantage of the drunken white slave masters and escaped on a Sunday night. The slaves took a bush path after they had set the bush on fire to create a path or an escape route. They had a plan to form a new community by the sea shore where they could find a ship to Africa. The narrator is absent temporarily as he escapes to safety.

The deputy governor, Byam, assures Oroonoko that he will also free his family members and return them to Africa if he agrees to surrender. Oroonoko

surrenders to the shocking reality that Byam has lied to him once more. The deputy governor ensures that he is whipped and pepper poured into the wounds he sustained from the lashes. It dawns on Oroonoko that he may never be freed and that his child may be born into slavery. He tells Imoinda his intention to kill her honourably, avenge Byam's treacherous lies and the mistreatments he received from him. He also informs his wife that he will also kill himself at last. Imoinda thanks Oroonoko for a promise of a honourable death. He then cuts her throat, removes her face with his knife. At last, Oroonoko suffers depression, and lost the courage and energy to pursue Byam. The offensive odour from the corpse attracts the deputy governor's men to the site and they made to kill him. The strong willed Oroonoko stands smoking his pipe, while the white men chop off his nose, ears and legs till he falls down and died.

Themes in *Oroonoko*

The crafty nature of colonialists and colonial enterprise – The British slave merchants are portrayed as dishonest, crafty, queer and unpredictable. They pretend to befriend Oroonoko, but turned treacherous liars. Byam lies to him twice, that he will free and return him to Africa. British slave trading merchants sell him to Trefry. The Deputy Governor of Sunnam who had also repeatedly assured Oroonoko of his freedom and disappointed him, had pretended to be his friend. At last, Byam declared Oroonoko a traitor, hunted him down and killed him violently. The crafty nature and unreliability of British slave merchants in the text gets clearer when Oroonoko declared ironically that he has finally heard a white man tell the truth (p. 76 – 77).

Inhuman nature of slavery and colonialism - The British slave merchants make much profit through the sale of slaves. They also get them overworked and underfed in the sugarcane plantation. King Charles 1 was beheaded. Bannister, a member of Byam's elected Council, condemns Oroonoko to death. And when Bannister captures Oroonoko, he assured him, "you will die like a dog", and he was killed and his body torn to shreds.

The Africans in their serene and beautiful environment are portrayed as skilful artisans, in their innocent world. They are more virtuous and cultured than the whites who tell the world they are more civilized, religious and superior to other races of the world. For instance, the Africans in nudity are prosperous in their various trades, compared to the immoral Europeans. The former make axes, knives, pins and beads of beautiful colours. They are also skillful fishermen, farmers and tree climbers. The writer returns readers to the beauty of innocence, the pre-technological age where Africans rely on local skills to survive. They may be portrayed as savages, but they are of exceptional qualities when compared to the British.

The Horrors of Slavery - Every page of the text reveals the horror of slavery. Slavery is seen as part of the social existence of Oroonoko and his people. Oroonoko had sold captives of war as slaves. Hence, it appears he is not bothered about the questionable ideal of slavery. By telling readers this aspect of

Oroonoko, the writer seems to tell the world never to exonerate Africans on the issue of slave and slavery. Perhaps, it was almost a thriving global practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The European slave masters flogged Oroonoko, tied him to iron, rubbed his whip marks with Indian pepper, and watched him bleed to death..

The negative effects of slavery on the human psyche - The text reveals not just the inhuman nature of the British slave merchants, but also the psychological effects of slavery on the enslaved. When Oroonoko runs into his wife, Imoinda, in the slave camp plantation and impregnates her, he gets overwhelmed by the fear that he will father and nurse a child as a slave. But it dawned on him that slaves are never given such freedom when his slave master hunted him. Apparently unsure of his safety, he feels he could best reciprocate his wife's love by killing her. Imoinda too, already overpowered by the psychology of slavery, prefers to be killed by her husband to dying in the hands of her slave masters. The feelings of Oroonoko and Imoinda are that there is greater freedom in death than the British sugarcane plantation or similar slavery. Thus, she allows Oroonoko to kill her.

The intrusive and destructive nature of colonialism - Aphra Behn portrays colonialism as the white colonialists' deliberate intrusion into the cultures and peaceful life of others. This is actually against the 'virtue' of colonialism. The writer subtly questions the inability of the British to give what they do not have. Thus, we see a clear comparison between the quiet and Edenic-like nature of the Africans in the Island dominated by the British slave masters.

Style in *Oroonoko*

Aphra Behn uses the omniscient narration and adds occasional comments or opinions; that is why such narration may be said to show editorial omniscience. He presents the thoughts and actions of the characters, but does not judge them or comment on them. In the novel, the intrusive female narrator interrupts the narrative. On the journey, the narrator tells the reader how she came to Surinam, as well as how her father died while traveling to assume duty as lieutenant – general. The novel describes the culture and tradition of the local people. This narrative style elevates the novel to travel writing. The novel is conversational in technique, “I have already said...”. “I didn't know I should leave”. The active expression makes the story real and believable. Sometimes, the female narrative voice retreats, reminiscences to connect the past with the present. For instance, we know the involvement of Oroonoko in slavery through reminiscence.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write six adjectives you will use to describe Oroonoko?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the contributions of Queen Elizabeth 1 to the promotion of the Arts. We have also discussed the movement of the English

theatre from church to the public; studied the life changing choices in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. We have also added some female literary figures of the English Renaissance like Aphra Behn and Isabella Whitney.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- That the contributions of Queen Elizabeth 1 to Renaissance Literature helped the literature of the period to flourish.
- That the English theatres began in the church and then moved to the streets (play house).
- How Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* mirrored the Renaissance's search for knowledge
- The parting gift of a mother to her only child in Isabella Whitney's *Will and Testament*.
- Why the enslaved prefer to secure his freedom through death in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1) List and explain the contributions of Queen Elizabeth 1 to Renaissance Literature.
- 2) Give a summary of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.
- 3) Outline the facts of life contained in Isabella Whitney's *Will and Testament*.
- 4) Discuss the major themes in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 A GUIDE TO ANSWERING THE TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

Module 1, Unit 1 – A Historical Background of the Medieval Era in England

- (1)
 - (i) The examinee must be exact on the nature, causes and consequences of the ‘in-house’ war; names of rival factions must be cited.
 - (ii) Answers which should include the nature, causes, spread and consequences of the Black Death must be given with precision.
- (2) Answers which may be in the form of an outline or essay should include the economy, social, and political activities of the late Middle Ages.
- (3) The examiner requires a brief but factual account of and results of the Hundred Years War, how the hostilities began as well as the participating countries, losses and victories.
- (4) The causes and impacts of the Peasants’ Revolt should be outlined.
- (5) The examinee should highlight the intellectual and cultural experiences of the medieval period to include the languages of communication, literatures, science and technology.

Module 1, Unit 2 – The Rise of Literature

- (1) The answers should include the legal, social, military and political responsibilities of the church over the government of medieval England.
- (2) This question requires the major differences between religious and secular writings. The former should include theological writings and learning while the latter should include both English and imported verbal arts. Writers and oral borrowings that were reduced into writing are required.
- (3) A detailed explanation on the themes of the conversational poem of the owl and nightingale should include human nature, corruption, social vices and medieval conflicts.
- (4) This should include the various reasons why the soul is given more importance than the body should be stated.

Module 1, Unit 3 – Life as a Stage: The Proliferation of Staged Plays

- (1) This requires a comprehensive discussion of how drama evolved from the Greeks, Romans to England.
- (2) Brief discussions are required on mystery, miracle and morality plays. Each of these concepts must include the nature or characteristics of the play.
- (3) Such differences must reflect origin and examples.
- (4) This aspect requires the transformational history of drama from the Greco-Roman through Europe to include how it became an important part of the church and relevant influences.

Module 1, Unit 4 – Morality Essays and Travel Literature

- (1) The examinee should give the history of travel literatures to include its various types as well as examples for each type.
- (2) Such definition must give various examples of works of such nature.
- (3)
 - (i) This should lean on the travel experiences of writers, and various works cited.
 - (ii) Precision is also required here but with citations of works.
- (4) The answer to be given here must be on the core philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. This should include theological, moral scriptural as well as the fundamental principles of knowledge observed by Aquinas.

Module 1, Unit 5 – The Growth of Humanism

- (1) The definition should include the core values of the theory/movement and its socio-cultural implications for Europe and England particularly.
- (2) This requires the examinee to give his/her own definition based on his/her study of this unit.

- (3) The features that are common to all Humanism should include regard for human values, and individual freedom and happiness.
- (4) An outline of the achievements of a humanist of the examinee's choice is required here.
- (5)
 - (i) The brief definition here must include outside influences.
 - (ii) The definition should include whether its core values correspond with the medieval view of Christianity or not.

Module 2, Unit 1 – Life as a Journey: Geoffrey Chaucer and his *Canterbury Tales*

- (1) This should include the connectivity and linear nature and exchange system of the *Canterbury Tales*.
- (2) The themes should include religion, social class distinction and societal and church corruption.
- (3) The question requires that the examinee identifies aspects of the tales that relate with the medieval Oral Literature.
- (4) A stylistic discussion of Chaucer's tales should include the use of language and literary creativity.
- (5) Evidence of Chaucer's literary adaptation should include evidence of Classical culture in the writer's work, and evidence of adaptation of Chaucer's tales in the writings of P. C. Doherty, Don Simmons, Henry Dudney and Richard Dawkings.

Module 2, Unit 2 – The Love of People: Edmund Spenser's Poetry

- (1) This should include the general comparisons of the excellence of the poet's subject with the divine and other references in the poem that connect the subject with the celestial.
- (2) The themes should include deception, escape, love, fear and submission.
- (3) A definition of the two types of love should be given, with examples from the poem highlighting their contrast.
- (4) The poet's theory of love is seen in the general definition of love given in the poem, the moral advice, the general caution and rubrics that define love, courtship and marriage.

Module 2, Unit 3 – Sober Reflections: John Milton's *Paradise Lost*

- (1) The adjectives chosen should reflect the poet's great love and respect for William Shakespeare.
- (2) Convincing points should be identified and discussed for the examinee's stance.

- (3) The poet's musings include the dilemma he is in over the two languages he loves – Latin and English. The student should elaborate on this.
- (4) The features that the poet uses to highlight the natural and divine character of the subject should be identified and discussed.
- (5) The two poems discuss subjects that were highly regarded. There are many similarities and differences between the two, one being that the two subjects are a man and a woman.

Module 2, Unit 4 – Other Notable Writers: Sir Phillip Sydney

- (1) A glaring theme is love. The student should identify the other themes and discuss them
- (2) Your answer should be original and describe the poet's love for the subject.
- (3) The answer to this question requires the student to put himself or herself in the shoes of a the female subject who is uninterested in the love advances of a male admirer.
- (4) Identify a number of these themes and discuss in relation to the poem.

Module 2, Unit 5 – A Comparative Analysis of the Stylistic Elements in Medieval and Renaissance Writings

- (1) Even though the two concepts look similar, there are also marked differences. Examples are required.
- (2) Each poet has his or her own individual style. Discuss the style of the poet you have chosen.
- (3) The list should include diction, imagery, rhythm, metre. Brief explanations will be added advantage.
- (4) The particular way a language is used in a particular context should be emphasised.

Module 3, Unit 1 – Historical Highlights of the Renaissance

- (1) The definition to be given should be conscious of date of the period and major events that helped to give meaning to the Renaissance.
- (2) Such discussion should not ignore early European Romances in pre-Renaissance. Examples of the Classics and writers should be given.

- (3) The various factors that were build up to the separation between the church and the English monarchy should be identified and discussed.

Module 3, Unit 2 – The Printing Press and the Increase in Literary Works

- (1) Major facts/nature of Guttenberg’s printing press should be highlighted. They are use of duplicated images by means of stamps, printing of clothes preceded the printing of paper. Guttenberg developed the European movable type of printing. The invention became a boost to communication and knowledge throughout Europe.
- (2) The summary should include the origin of secularism and all important participants as well as its philosophy and contributions to the society.
- (3) Answers must include the nature of the Pocket Books, origin, adaptations and innovations that redefine the Pocket Books.

Module 3, Unit 3 – From Humanism to Science

- (1) Such major differences should include, the humanists’ reliance on reasoning, as social philosophers, slaves of the intellect. Scientists believe in experimental study of the existence of every phenomenon, adopt practical method to issues, and expose every law to scientific verifications.
- (2) The list may include, but is not restricted to, Arzachel an astronomer, Avempace, a physicist, Avenzoar, a Surgeon, Roger Bacon, Albert Magnus and Isaac Newton.
- (3) Your answer should include some of the theories he propounded.
- (4) Answers should include his theory of light, colour and gravity.

Module 3, Unit 4 – A Flourishing of the Arts

- (1) The list may include, as patron to playwrights, genuine love for literature, and allowed playwrights to perform in her palace.

- (2) The summary should include Marlowe's desire to choose between evil and good, how Marlowe sealed an agreement with Mephistopheles and the consequences of his action.
- (3) The facts should include the poet's feeling of nostalgia, readiness for death and issues in her Will.
- (4) The theme should include the inhuman nature of slavery and colonialism, crafty nature of colonial enterprise and negative effects of slavery.