

**UGBA**  
**Semester II**  
**English**  
**Core Course (CC) & Elective Course (EC) – 112**  
**Title: History of English Literature: 1625-1660**

Unit No.	Title/Author/Topic	Text
01	A. Literary Features of the Age of Milton/ Puritan Age B. Metaphysical Poetry C. Milton as a Poet	<i>History of English Literature</i> by Edward Albert, Oxford University Press.
02	John Milton	<i>Lycidas</i> Orient Blackswan
03	<b>Poems:</b> 1. 'Goe and Catche a Falling Starre' – John Donne 2. 'Virtue' – George Herbert 3. 'To His Coy Mistress'-Andrew Marvell	<b>Strings of Gold</b> Second Edition Part 1 An Anthology of Poems (Macmillan Pub)
04	Acquaintances (Non-detailed) (See the Note below)	No Particular Text is Prescribed

**Note:**

**Unit 4: Acquaintances with the works of writers of this period.**

(The objective type of questions can be framed in which the students will be asked to write the name of the author, the year of publication, the form of the work and the age/period to which it belongs.)

**List of Titles for Acquaintances:**

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Comus</i>  | 9. <i>Perkin Warbeck</i>              |
| 2. <i>Paradise Lost</i>  | 10. <i>Religio Medici</i>             |
| 3. <i>Samson Agonistes</i>                                       | 11. <i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i> |
| 4. <i>The Temple</i>   | 12. <i>Leviathan</i>                  |
| 5. <i>The Mistress</i>   | 13. <i>Holy Living</i>                |
| 6. <i>The Rehearsal Transposed</i>                               | 14. <i>The Lady of Pleasure</i>       |
| 7. <i>Noble Numbers</i>  | 15. <i>The Compleat Angler</i>        |
| 8. <i>The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England</i> |                                       |

**Recommended Reading:**

- Bennett, Joan, . *Four Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw.* NY: Cambridge Uni.Press, 1964.
- Hudson, W.H., *An Outline History of English Literature.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2008.
- Long, William J., *English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World.* Boston: Ginn & Co., 1919. (Digitalized in 2007: Project Gutenberg)

ides, C.A. & Raymond B. Waddington, *The Age of Milton: Backgrounds to Seventeenth-Century Literature*, Manchester, US: Manchester Uni. Press, 1980.  
- Sanders, Andrew, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Oxford: OUP, 2004.

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**CC/EC: 112**

**Examination Pattern for external exams:**

- Q. 1. Long Answer based on Unit -1 (1/2) (Up to 850-900 words) Marks 14  
**Format 1:** General Question **OR** General Question **OR**  
**Format 2:** General Question **OR** Short Notes – 2 out of 2
- Q. 2. Long Answer based on Unit -2 (1/2) (Up to 850-900 words) Marks 14  
**Format 1:** General Question **OR** General Question **OR**  
**Format 2:** General Question **OR** Short Notes – 2 out of 2
- Q. 3. Long Answer based on Unit -3 (1/2) (Up to 850-900 words) Marks 14  
**Format 1:** General Question **OR** General Question **OR**  
**Format 2:** General Question **OR** Short Notes – 2 out of 2
- Q. 4. Answers based on Unit -4 (7/9) Marks 14
- Q. 5. MCQs (1mark ×14) (From Unit 1 to 4) Marks 14

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Total Marks: 70

## **UGBA- SEM II – Core English – 112**

### **(History of English Literature: 1625-1660)**

**Question: (a) What are the literary characteristics of the age of Milton? OR**

**(b) Discuss the prominent features of the Puritan age or period of Common Wealth?**

**Answer:**

**Introduction:** The entire period of this age is covered by the civil war. The earlier years were marked by the quarrels between people and monarchy. Elizabethan literature was marked by the unity in spirit resulting from the patriotism of all classes and their devotion to the Queen, who thought of the welfare of the country. But under the rule of Stuarts, everything was changed, the kings were open enemies of the people. In literature, the age is full of confusion as the nation was divided into political and religious causes. The old ideas were breaking leading to confusion everywhere. Spenser's traditions were breaking, his followers could not continue his masterly poetic excellence. The Puritanism was shattering the high ideals of the Elizabethan age. This age is called "gloomy age" which did not produce the great masters of verse and great prose. The literary features of the age are as follows:

#### **(1) The Reaction in the Tone of Poetry:**

There was a great change in the tone of poetry. The poetry of Elizabethan was marked by exalted poetic fervor full of hope and vitality. During this period there was decline in the standards of poetic excellence in several ways. According to Edward Albert, "The output, especially of poetry, is much smaller, and the fashion is towards shorter poems, especially the lyric of a peculiar type." In place of long poems, there was an output of shorter poems. Lyrics were attempted. In the new poetry there is more of intellectual play of fancy than of passion and profundity. In prose there is a prevailing of melancholy tone associated with the age.

#### **(2) Metaphysical Poetry:**

The Metaphysical poetry was started by John Donne in the later part of the Shakespearean age. It was continued by Crashaw, George Herbert, Vaughan and Marvel. Their work show blend of passion and thought, full of learned imagery and striking conceits. They reflect psychological insight and subtlety of thought. It denotes the work of a group of poets who came directly or indirectly under Donne's influence. Most of the metaphysical poets had religious and mystical

spirit. The poetry of this kind appealed to the intellect rather than to heart of human being.

### **(3) Cavalier Poetry:**

There was another kind of poetry produced during this age which was quite different from the Metaphysical poetry. It was called Cavalier poetry. The Metaphysical poetry was mystical and religious in theme of love. Herrick, Lovelace and Suckling wrote poetry under the influence Ben Jonson. They believed in classical restraint and concise lucidity. The Cavalier poetry had simplicity and graces in structure; and had highly polished and refined style.

### **(4) The Collapse of Drama:**

The drama achieved its supremacy during the Elizabethan age, which was not continued during the age of Milton. Many factors combined to oppress the development of drama during this age. Firstly the whole age was disturbed by the Civil War. Secondly the Puritans came to power in England. They were against the entertainment, so they opposed the performance of drama. In temper this age was not dramatic. As a result, the dramatic works were small and unimportant. The dramatic activity declined during this age due to closing of the theatres in 1642.

### **(5) Expansion of Prose:**

The development of prose was carried further from the previous age. There as great output of excellent prose writings during this time. The great progress in the writing of sermons shows an excellent feature of prose. Many pamphlets were written on numerous subjects like history, politics, philosophy and contemporary problems. We see advancement in using prose style. The artificial prose style was replaced by natural way of writing.

### **(6) John Milton**

In this age, as compared to the Elizabethan age there were few great writers. The greatest contribution of the age was John Milton, who claims the greatest place in English literature. His prose is the finest example in English language, his poetic achievement is considered next to Shakespeare. He was the first poet to write an excellent epic successfully in English literature.

To Sum up, the significant event historically is the civil war. It actually started in 1642 and reached its culmination in the execution of Charles I in 1649. Then there was establishment of Common Wealth, rise and fall of Oliver

Cromwell. After his death in 1660, the monarchy was restored in order to remove further confusion in politics of the England.

## UGBA- SEM II – Core English – 112

### (History of English Literature: 1625-1660)

#### Question: Milton as Poet

**Answer:** Milton was one of the greatest poets of England and is placed next to Shakespeare in the hierarchy of English poets. The First period of Milton's poetic career begins from 1629 and goes up to 1640. This is the period of his University career and his study at Horton. It is popularly known as the Horton period. The early poems of Milton give expression to the feelings of his heart and they are prelude to the greater work that was to be produced in his later life. During the Horton period, Milton composed "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity", "L'Allegro", "II Penseroso" and "Comus". "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (1629) is produced under the influence of the Metaphysical poets. The ode is a dignified lyric. It celebrates the birth of Christ. It is regarded as the most beautiful ode to the English language. The poem indicates the influence of Spenser. There is in this ode that sublimity of thought and splendor of imagery, which are present in his later poems. While at Horton, Milton composed "L'Allegro" and "II Penseroso", two long poems in octosyllabic couples dealing with the respective experiences of the gay and thoughtful man. The pieces are decorative rather than descriptive, artificial rather than natural but they are full of scholarly fancy excellent poetical phrasing. In "L'Allegro" Milton represents the life of the joyful Man from the early morning to the time of his retiring.

The next two poems of this period were in masque form; one a fragment, *Arcades*, the other a complete masque, taking its title from the chief character, Comus, god of revelry. "Comus" is a remarkable poem which displays Milton's high poetical qualities. It shows him in transition from the pastoral, idyllic manner of his early poems towards the greater purpose of mature work. The poem represents the triumph of virtue and is marked by high seriousness and moral edification. The central theme of the masque is -

"Mortals that would follow me / Love virtue she alone is free / If virtue feeble were / Heaven itself would stoop to her".

It is the first of Milton's poems where Puritanism shows clear signs of its influence.

"Lycidas" is a pastoral elegy upon the death of Edward King, a college-mate of Milton who was drowned in the Irish sea. It is a pastoral elegy in the style of the Greek masters. Though the poem is written on his friend Edward King, yet Edward

King is not its real subject. The real subject of the poem is the uncertainty and torment occasioned in Milton's mind by his realization that death might ruin the achievement of that fame which was his ambition. In "Lycidas" the poet writes about fame and corruption prevailing in the Roman Catholic Church. The poem of mourning becomes a poem of vigorous satire and strong personal note. This poem is to be reckoned among the highest of Milton's achievements, is something new in the English poetry. In form it is pastoral, but this artificial medium serves only to show the power of Milton's grip. The elegy has the colour and the music of the best Spenserian verse.

During the second period Milton wrote political work and prose writings. He wrote many prose pamphlets and the famous "Aereopagatica". During this period of prose all that Milton composed by the way of poetry are the eighteen sonnets. The sonnets have varied interest. They are few in number and are historically of great importance, because they mark that return from Shakespearean form of sonnet to the Petrarchian model. Among the prominent sonnets of Milton, "On His Blindness" and "On the Late massacre in Piedmont" are worth to notice. His sonnets are written about controversial subjects, women, political figures, and his own life. The sonnets of Milton are characterized by sincerity of feeling, clarity of thought, simplicity of expression and lack of humour.

The third period of Milton's poetry is the period of great poems. During this period Milton produced "Paradise Lost", "Paradise regained" and "Samson Agonistes". "Paradise Lost" was begun as early as 1658, and issued in 1667. Its theme is the fall of man and in form it follows the strict unity of the classical epic. In conception the poem is spacious and commanding; it is abundantly adorned all the details that Milton's rich imagination can suggest. The characters, especially of Lucifer, are drawn on a gigantic scale and the blank verse in which the work composed is new and wonderful. This type of blank verse has founded a tradition in English; it has often been imitated and modified, but never paralleled. The plan of the poem is vast and extensive. Milton's aim in writing this poem was to justify the way of God to man, but he leaves the problem as ever. "Paradise Lost" is an epic of art based upon the classical conventions. The vast and vague dimensions of the poet's universe, in which super-natural beings pass between Heaven and Earth baffle the imagination. W.J. Long rightly remarks about the greatness of the theme: "It will be seen that this is a colossal epic, not of a man or a hero, but of the whole race of man; of that Milton's characters are such as no human hand could adequately portray ...". The similes and metaphors in "Paradise Lost" are splendid. There is not a simile in the poem that is trivial or meaningless, scarcely one that does not add dignity to the conception it illustrates. The style of poem is more Latin of any other English poem. The meaning of words, the syntax, the division of

sentence reminds the scholarly reader of classical authors. It an example of what Arnold called “the grand style’. It is indeed perhaps the greatest example in any language of that style, and it sustains that style almost throughout its entirely with miraculous power.



## **UGBA- SEM II – Core English – 112**

### **(History of English Literature: 1625-1660)**

**Question:** What are the main characteristics of Milton's poetry?

**Answer:**

Milton was one of the greatest poets of England and is placed next to Shakespeare in the hierarchy of English poets. Mark Pattison is of the opinion that if England was represented in a congress of international poets, she should be represented by Shakespeare first and Milton next. Milton's works are divided into three periods and the poems he composed during these periods have great importance in the history of English poetry.

The following are the characteristics of Milton's poetry.

#### **[1] Sublimity:**

The supreme quality of Milton's poetry is sublimity. His poetry elevates and uplifts us. Milton's poetry exercises an elevating influence on the mind of the reader. He gives us an impression of moral exaltation. Milton's subject matter is sublime. Voltaire is of opinion that Milton's poetry was the grandest thing in English literature. Not lovers and lasses, but God, Satan, Adam, Eve and Christ are the characters that Milton introduces in his poetry. In the "Nativity Ode" the subject is Christ who brought about religious regeneration in Europe. The songs of the spheres are heard in his Ode. The poet presents the setting of stars and oceans by the God at the beginning of the creation and trumpet of doomsday. In "Comus" Milton presents sublime thoughts concerning virtue. "Paradise Regained" is an expression of the sublime thoughts and ideas that Milton had about God and religion.

#### **[2] Sense of Beauty:**

The chief characteristic of Milton's poetry is his profound love of beauty in its various forms. He is deeply sensitive to the beauty of external nature. He depicts the beauty of countryside in "L'Allegero". He describes the beauty of the sun, the clouds, the sunset, lawns and trees standing in their beauty and grandeur. In "Il Penseroso" he presents many exquisite landscapes of beauty for our delight:

"To behold the wandering moon / Riding near her highest noon,

Like one that had been led astray / Through the heaven's wide pathless way",

In 'Paradise Lost' his sense of beauty is supreme. In Book IV, he gives a glowing description of the beauty of Adam and Eve.

### **[3] Milton's High Seriousness:**

Matthew Arnold considered high seriousness as a characteristic of good and great poetry. His seriousness marks both Milton's character and poetry. There is a lack of humour in Milton's poetry. Walter Raleigh beautifully says, "Almost all men are less humorous than Shakespeare but most men are more humorous than Milton." The poet never bothers about a big audience of admiring readers. His desire is to have "fit audience though few", an audience that may be able to appreciate the high seriousness of his poetic thought.

### **[4] A Great Poetic Artist:**

The high seriousness of Milton's poetry goes well with his profession as a poet. Milton is convinced that the vocation of poet is lofty and exalted and keep up to his vocation he writes poetry of great sublimity and beauty. The artistic workmanship of the poet comes out everywhere. He writes as a conscientious artist and whatever has been left behind is a hallmark of artistic perfection. Poetry has been by far our greatest artistic achievement and Milton is for the greatest poetic artist.

### **[5] His Superb Imagination:**

Milton's imagination is superb. Only a man of Milton's imagination could have the "Paradise Lost". The theme of the epic is vast and of a more universal human interest than any theme handled by Milton's predecessor. The imagination of the poet creates a world of heaven and hell which could only have been possible with the superb imagination that he has. He has an imagination that can soar above time and space and be at home in infinity. Lowell rightly says: "In reading "Paradise Lost: one has a feeling of a vastness. You float under an illimitable sky brimmed with sun-shine or hung with constellation ... ."

### **[6] His Suggestive Power:**

The most striking feature of Milton's poetry is his suggestive power. The effect of his poetry is produced not only by what it expresses, but by what it suggests. The imagination of the poet conjures many beautiful and suggestive pictures. In Milton's poetry more is meant than meets the ear.

### **[7] Milton's Classicism:**

Closely connected with his Puritanism, there is in Milton's nature a strong bent for classicism. He is keen student of the ancient classics and is steeped in classical learning. He is great scholar. He introduces a number of classical references in all his poems. A large number of epic from Homer and Virgil are scattered throughout his works. His learning was wide and matured and he wrote Latinian prose and verse as freely as he wrote English. His classical bent is apparent in (a) his choice of classical and semi-classical forms – the epic, the Greek tragedy, the pastoral and the sonnet, (b) the elaborate descriptions and enormous similes in "Paradise Lost", (c) the fondness for classical allusion, which runs right through all his poetry, (d) the dignity of classical turn.

### **[8] Style and Diction of Milton:**

Milton's style has been called grand style, because it has always been an unmistakable stamp of majesty in it. Milton's language is not the language of ordinary life. His diction is grand and majestic and the language that he employs is the language of a special art. He borrows words from Latin and employs them in his language. With Latin words there goes his classical diction. The Miltonic diction follows the ancient models. Similes and metaphors abound with the result that the impression that is left on our minds after reading his poetry is that of grandeur, majesty and dignity.

To sum up, sublimity, sense of beauty, high seriousness, a great poetic artist, superb imagination, suggestive power, his classicism and his style and diction are the qualities of Milton's poetry.

## **UGBA- SEM II – Core English – 112**

### **(History of English Literature: 1625-1660)**

#### **THE METAPHYSICAL POETRY OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

A group of poets in the seventeenth century gave us an altogether different type of poetry. Here the word different\* is used in the sense that it neither contained the Elizabethan love-theme nor the chivalrous adventures which were very well relished by the Elizabethan writers and the readers. For the poets of this group, their poetry became a media of their mental and spiritual exercise. Their poetry is marked by the presence of divinity and religiosity in it. The poets of this group made attempts positively to make their poetry look different from the poetry of the preceding age. They introduced certain literary features in their poetry.

Dr Johnson, keeping in view those literary features of their poetry, coined a term 'metaphysical poetry' which later on proved to be a label for their poetry. Even today, the readers of English literature recognise their poetry using the same term. Dr Johnson has understood, defined and described the characteristics of the metaphysical poetry in his own way, in the light of the literary features of their poetry. It must be noted, however, that Dr Johnson, who did not approve of the poetic practice of these poets, used the term 'metaphysical poetry' in a derogatory sense. Dr Johnson has marked a number of new poetic features in this poetry. Almost all the metaphysical poets were men of learning and their major function was to make the manifestation of their learning through their poetry. But it was unfortunate on their part that they tried to express it through their poetry which, sometimes, merely remained verse.

If we consider poetry as an imitative art as mentioned by Plato, Donne and his followers do not deserve to be called poets. They imitated nothing - neither Nature nor life. Dr Johnson puts them below the level of imitators. The thoughts that they produced in their poetry were new but not natural. The wit for which they are highly rated was, according to Dr Johnson, nothing but a combination of dissimilar images or resemblances among the images which look different on the surface. Their interest was fully centred around achieving something unexpected from the people and surprising them. They neglected the human sentiments while writing their poetry. The metaphysicals wanted to prove their superiority by showing the contemporary literary world that they had begun an enterprise which none of their predecessors could think of. Amplitude was a mania with the

metaphysicals who amplified everything. It was up to the extent that they left fancy and reason far behind in their zest for giving a metaphysical effect to their poetry.

While showing such drawbacks of the metaphysical poetry, Dr Johnson does not forget to show us the positive side of it. This is a proper way of acquainting the readers with a new type of poetry. It is true that they were fond of manifesting their wit which they did by bringing about different conceits in their poetry but, in doing so, sometimes they were successful in finding out the unexpected truth. Their far-fetched images and conceits could carry the idea and meaning of the poem to that realm which was neither expected nor imagined by their contemporary readers. The second benefit, which was shared by both the poets and readers was that, they were required to possess vast reading and thinking either to write or interpret this kind of poetry. This does not mean that the poets used such images to widen the horizon of knowledge. They did it simply because they wanted to be praised rather than understood.

Generally, they drew their conceits from those areas of knowledge which are quite unfamiliar to the readers of literature and lovers of poetry. In brief, the metaphysicals brought their images and conceits from the remote background which was not traced by the readers of that time. Some of the metaphysicals, who tried to depict platonic love in their poetry, gave great importance to the tears of lovers. Sometimes, they used images which contradicted their own ideas that they wanted to express in their poetry. Of course, it should not be forgotten that it was a voluntary act on the part of the metaphysicals to deviate from the main currents of poetry to give some new shape to it. This they practised in excess and hence, they failed in their zestful attempts to create something new.

The remarkable feature of the metaphysical poetry is its emphasis on intellect. The metaphysical adopted the intellectual approach both in selection and in the treatment of the subject-matter. Helen C White describes the following two factors which are responsible for the birth of the metaphysical poetry: (1) the philosophical conception of the universe, and (2) the role of a human being in the world. These two factors inspired the poets to write in a new pattern. With the metaphysicals, the first and the foremost problem was: what kind of verse should be selected to express religious and philosophical ideas? The poets of this group, according to Helen White, put emphasis on intellect not only because they had that zest to give something new but also because they found it necessary to use wit for bringing in conceits and images.

It is because of the element of wit that the metaphysical poetry has secured a special place in the literary history of England. All the metaphysicals had a great fascination for wit with which they tried to refine their language of poetry. Wit played a vital role in the selection of far-fetched and scientific images. The writers during the period of Renaissance were interested in the love-theme or in the expression of the abstract in the universe. The metaphysicals shifted the mode of expression from abstract to personal. Of course, this made their poetry ambiguous for the readers. It became necessary for the readers to refer to their private life and issues, before making an attempt to analyse their poetry. This quality of personal expression is not present in all the metaphysicals. Some of them tried their hand at doing so. Donne expresses his personal views on love and religion in many of his sonnets and poems. Cowley, one of the metaphysicals, says of poetry that it is not the picture of a poet, but of the things and persons imagined by him. It is because of this that personal quality enters his or her poetry. Most of the metaphysicals were interested in the personal expression in order to communicate their feelings. This tendency resulted into a new point of view in poetry, commonly known as the writer's point of view. Here the reader has to think on the lines demanded by the writer.

The Relation of Thought and Feeling: Commenting on the relation between thought and feeling in the poetry of the metaphysicals, T.S. Eliot states that the relationship between thought and feeling is in fact "the recreation of thought into feelings". Reacting to this comment of Eliot, Duncan says: ... Eliot has understood the metaphysical poets at least somewhat better than the metaphysical poets could have understood the theories of their work. While minutely examining their poems, a relationship could be seen between their thoughts and feelings. Donne, in his poem "The Extasie", finds a close link between body, soul and mind. His letter to Mr Henry Goodyere is an evidence of his admission of this relationship:

We consist of three parts, a soul,  
and a body and mind: which call  
those thoughts and affections and  
passions, which neither soul nor  
body hath alone, but have been  
begotten by their communication,

as Musique results out breath and a coronet.

The metaphysicals were well-acquainted with the human elements like thought, passion and affections and they also believed that there exists some kind of relationship among these three which they viewed more in terms of morality and less aesthetics.

Ambiguity: Duncan considered ambiguity also a major feature of the metaphysical poetry. In the dictionary of Modern Critical Terms, it has been defined as "something which is opposed to clarity". But in recent times, it has been considered a major virtue of literature, with the help of which, a writer can achieve the desired effect in his work. I A Richards has also defended the presence of ambiguity in poetry with an argument that the clarity which is required in the scientific language is not essentially needed in poetry. But this does not give a licence to a writer to employ this device just for the sake of employing it. The poet should not possess undue lust for creating different shades of meaning at a time. Whenever the poet creates multiple meanings by employing this device, he should see that his created meanings are interlinked and all those meanings should intellectually interact with the readers.

Most of the metaphysicals were fond of using puns in their poetry which became a distinct feature of their poetry. It gave witty touch to their poetry. The ambiguity which they created in their poetry proved to be an ornament to their poetry for it gave the special credit to their poetry. Metaphysical poetry is the blend of passionate feelings and paradoxical ratiocination. Whether they wanted to express their love or faith in Christianity, they remained passionate in the expression of their feelings. This can be located in the poetry of Donne.

## UGBA- SEM II – Core English – 112

### (History of English Literature: 1625-1660)

#### Unit – II – Lycidas – John Milton

**Question: Evaluate Milton’s “Lycidas” as a pastoral elegy.**

**Answer:**

John Milton’s “Lycidas” is an elegy on the death of his friend Edward King, who was held at Cambridge as a scholar of great promise. Before King’s genius could show its full brilliance, his life was cut short by an accident. In the long vacation of 1637, King started for seeing some of his friends; but ship struck on a rock and sank. When the news of King’s death reached Cambridge, the university was plunged into grief, and some of his intimate friends decided to publish a volume of memorial verse. There were 23 poems in Greek and Latin and 13 in English. Milton’s “Lycidas” was one of them and it was the last poem in the English section.

Milton writes in “Lycidas” as a shepherd mourning a dead companion; the poem is a pastoral – a form whose conventions went back through Renaissance imitations, to the Greek and Latin classical poetry. Pastoral poetry is a literary form began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. with the “Eclogues” of the Greek poet Theocritus. It was followed by Bion and Moschus and in Latin by Virgil. Pastoral poetry becomes a picture of carefree youth, love and friendship. In sophisticated Renaissance revival, it thus turns into picture of young poets or scholars, before they enter the cares and dangers of adult life. “Lycidas” follows Petrarch, the Latin poet and Spenser in “The Shepherd’s Calendar”.

There are certain common characteristics of pastoral elegies and how they are applicable to “Lycidas”.

**[a] The Refrain:** “Lycidas” is rather unusual in not having a refrain. Milton’s other Latin elegy for his friend Charles Diodati has refrain.

**[b] Nature’s Mourning :** Almost all pastoral elegies contain either an appeal to Nature to mourn for the dead person or a representation of the sorrow of Nature.

“The Shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves,



With wild Thyme, and the gadding vine O'er grown,  
And all their echoes mourn."

**[c] Reference to the Nymphs:** This may occur either by way of invocation or by the way of complaints; that they were absent while the lamented one was dying.

"Where were you Nymphs when the remorseless deep  
Clo'd over the head of your loved Lycidas"

**[d] Procession of the Mourners:** There is a procession of those who come to ask the cause of the disaster in "Lycidas", they are Neptune's herald, Comus and the Pilot of the Galilean lake.

**[e] Command to flower the bier:** There is also command to decorate the bier or grave of the dead with garlands or the representation of friends of the dead bringing flowers.

"Return Sicilian Muse,  
And call the vales and bid them hither case  
Their Bels, and flowers of a thousand hues."

**[f] Resentment against Fate:** There is an expression of resentment against the cruel fate which brings people an untimely death. This is an element "Lycidas".

**[g] Reassurance and Consolation:** There is an expression of reassurance and consolation. The pastoral elegy is predominantly a lament; but it usually rises to an expression of consolation based on the thought that the dead one is now living in another world. This consolatory element occurs in the classical elegies. It is seen in "Lycidas", "Adonais", and "Thyrsis".

The name "Lycidas" chosen by Milton for his departed friend is familiar to the readers of pastoral elegy. It was the name of the shepherd in Theocritus, Bion, and Virgil. Milton wanted to express his grief not in the direct, straight-forward manner; but in the conventional style of poetry.

In "Lycidas" Milton uses pastoral conventions in a characteristic bold and original way. The poem is tumultuous, but ordered meditation on human life; and his task as interpreter of its meaning, the shepherd is both, poet and priest, he is loved by God, and so must suffer and die young. The water that drowns the poet is form of death that opens eternal life. When the poet has finished his song, he turns away from the past and looks forward to new poetic tasks.

## **UGBA- SEM II – Core English – 112**

### **(History of English Literature: 1625-1660)**

#### **Unit – II – Lycidas – John Milton**

**Question: Critically analyze Milton’s “Lycidas” and discuss the structure of the poem.**

“Lycidas” is a carefully structured poem and this design accounts partly for its force. There are eleven verse paragraphs in “Lycidas”, each expressing a movement of the thought or feeling. But the poem can be divided into four main sections.

#### **Section I – Prologue lines 1 to 22**

The prologue states the situation and sets the mood of the poem. The young shepherd Lycidas, (Edward King, the friend of Milton) of great promise had died prematurely. His fellow shepherd, who survives, must gather flowers to make funeral wreaths. Respect must be paid to the departed shepherd so that his soul may find peace. In the manner of classical poets Milton invokes the Muses. He must lament the loss of Lycidas so that a brother poet may perform a similar service for him when he dies.

The poet once again feels impelled to write an elegy on the death of Lycidas, the peerless young poet. The poet is not a matured writer yet. Even so he writes in the hope that someone might similarly write about him when he died. The poet declares that both, he and Lycidas were like two shepherds who were reared on the same hill and carried out their activities in each other’s company in the fields and by the riverside during the day and also during moonlit night.

#### **Section II Lamentation – Lines 23 to 84**

Beginning with a lament for the death of Lycidas, this part proceeds to reflect on the worthwhile of poetic self-dedication when confronted with the possibility of untimely death. All nature laments the loss of Lycidas. The woods and caves mourn his death. The willow and the hazel shall no more fan their leaves to the rhythm of the shepherd’s song. Cruel death has killed Lycidas as the canker kills the rose, as the worm kills young sheep and as frost kills flowers. Then the poet addresses the guardian nymphs and blames them for their absence from the place of tragic event. Then the poet reflects that it is futile to blame nymphs. The Muse Calliope herself was unable to rescue her son Orpheus, who could charm

stones and trees and wild animals with his enchantic music, from being torn to pieces by the enraged Tharcian women.

What is the purpose of all his long and intense self-dedication to poetry if he is liable to be cut off before achieving his end? One wonders whether it is not more worthwhile to live a life of self-indulgence. We deny ourselves in many ways in pursuit of fame, but before we pluck the fruits of our labour death arrives. But Phoebus, the God of song answers poets fears saying that true fame is granted by God, not by men, and that dedicated action will have heavenly reward.

### **Section III The Mourning of Nature, Poets, Learning and Religion**

First the muses, sacred to Sicilian and Latin pastoral poets are invoked. The fountain Arethusa is in Sicily, home of Theocritus, and the river Mincius is associated with Virgil's Eclogues. The poet then questions the elements as to the manner of his friend's death. Following the classical precedents, Milton here introduces a procession of mourners. Triton, the herald of the sea God Neptune, and Hippotades, God of Wind, both declare that there was no storm in the sea when the unfortunate ship drowned. The tragedy took place because the ship had been built during an eclipse, an inauspicious time. The procession of mourners is continued by Camus, God of river, Cam who represents Cambridge University. Camus laments the passing of Lycidas, his dearest student.

The last of the mourners is St. Peter representing the universal church. St. Peter, wearing Bishop's attire and holding the keys of Heaven, praises Lycidas as the true shepherd priest who would have devoted his life to the service of his flock. Lycidas's brief but exemplary service is contrasted with the furtive activities of the corrupt clergy whose downfall through divine vengeance is foretold. Lycidas will rise again.

### **Section IV Invocation**

Alpheus, lover of Sicilian Arethusa, and the Muse of the pastoral poetry, are again invoked by the poet. The Vales of Sicily are asked to draw their flowers on the grave of Lycidas. But the poet cannot escape the sad realization that the mourners are denied even these obsequies since the corpse of Lycidas cannot be recovered. This part close with a prayer to St. Michael to restore Lycidas. The speaker affirms that Lycidas is not dead and therefore the shepherds must now stop mourning. He has sunk beneath the sea only to rise again like the Sun, through the power of Christ who commands the waves of the sea. He is received into the kingdom of heaven by the blessed angles to the accompaniment of music of the

Lamb of God. Lycidas is made deity of the locality where the drowning occurred, to safeguard the lives of future travelers along the way.

### **Epilogue Lines 186 to 193**

Following classical writers, the poet adds an epilogue in the third person, unlike the rest of the elegy which is in the first person. The shepherd's song for his departed comrade is over. The sun has set. The day is done. Tomorrow he must lead his flock to another pasture.

## UGBA- SEM II – Core English – 112

(History of English Literature: 1625-1660)

### Unit – III - Poems

#### Virtue : BY GEORGE HERBERT

##### Text

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky;  
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,  
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave  
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;  
Thy root is ever in its grave,  
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,  
A box where sweets compacted lie;  
My music shows ye have your closes,  
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
Like season'd timber, never gives;  
But though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives.

*Virtue* (The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations) is a didactic poem. It teaches us that virtue is supreme and super lasting. In this world of impermanence, beautiful thing and beauty itself are subject to decay but a truly virtuous soul remains unchanged through all eternally. The poem is finest specimens of metaphysical that are present in the poem are – a blending of thought and feeling, metaphysical concentration, unification of sensibility learnedness.

In *Virtue* Herbert speaks of the permanence of a virtuous soul. All the beautiful things of the world including a sweet day a sweet rose and the sweet spring are subject to decay but a virtuous soul remains unchanged. To assert his points

Herbert uses three images in this poem. First he speaks of a sweet day which must come to an end and be swallowed up by dark night. Secondly he refers to a sweet rose which in spite of its sweet color and fragrance is destined to wither. Thirdly he speaks of a spring which, with its music and color is damaged to sink into oblivion.

Herbert visualizes a sweet day which is cool, calm and bright. He fancies that the day represents the wedding of the earth and the skies as if they have worked together in order to bring about the day:

“Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky,”

However, a cool, calm and bright day must come to an end with the passing of time and at the fall of night. The dew shall weep because the sweet day will die in night. The evening dew is regarded. Here is the tear of mourning over the death of the sweet day. Herbert presents a serene yet invigorating day and locates the reader in the celestial and terrestrial realms simultaneously, for the day in its loveliness brings them together. Day, however, gives way to night, just as life gives way to death. The narrator asserts, turning a daily natural event, nightfall, into a metaphor. Beyond death, the line also suggests grief at the loss of paradise on Earth, the Fall, which is the original cause of death in the Judeo-Christian story of the Creation. The evening dew, invested with emotion and made to represent grief, is equated with tears, which are shed at nightfall over the Fall, the sin that brought death into the world:

“The dew shall weep thy fall tonight;  
For thou must die.”

Next, the poet speaks of a lovely delightful rose. The sweet rose has a bright red color which indicates its angry mood and splendid look. Accordingly to the poet, the rose seems to be asking onlooker to wipe the tears from its eyes as it knows that it must fade away and die. The color dazzles the eyes of the onlooker:

“Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave  
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,  
Thy root is ever in its grave,  
And thou must die.”

The spring is pictured here being full of 'sweet' days and colorful and fragrant flowers and is compared to a box full of sweets to denote the sweetness and beauty of the reason. The delights presented in the first two quatrains are also contained in the third, and the narrator solidifies his suggestion of the earth's rich bounty. But the poet asserts that spring, with its music color and fragrance is destined to sink into oblivion. But it has its "Close" is a technical term in music indicating the resolution of a musical phrase. Thus, the poetic verse, like everything else the narrator has so far depicted, must come to an end, as it temporarily does with the four stressed and conclusive beats of the twelfth line:

“Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,  
A box where sweets compacted lie,  
My music shows ye have your closes,  
And all must die.”

However, the last quatrain presents images of an eternal soul. Through a metaphoric explanation the poet says that a seasoned timber cannot be burnt and changed into coal and therefore it never surrender to corrosion. Similarly, the virtuous soul remains unchanged in spite of the passing of time. The phrase 'turn to coal' means totally destroyed. It implies that the whole World will be destructed with the passing of time. By 'chiefly lives' the poet means that the soul will remain alive when the world will remain no more. As such, the entire poem, which all along warned of death, shows the way in which Herbert believes that he and his readers may achieve eternal life:

“Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
Like seasoned timber, never gives;  
But though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives.”

**UGBA- SEM II – Core English – 112**

**(History of English Literature: 1625-1660)**

**Unit – III - Poems**

**To His Coy Mistress: - Andrew Marvell**

**Text**

Had we but world enough, and time,  
This coyness, Lady, were no crime  
We would sit down and think which way  
To walk and pass our long love's day.  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side  
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide  
Of Humber would complain. I would  
Love you ten years before the Flood,  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews.  
My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires, and more slow;  
An hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;  
Two hundred to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest;  
An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should show your heart.  
For, Lady, you deserve this state,  
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear  
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.  
Thy beauty shall no more be found,  
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
My echoing song: then worms shall try  
That long preserved virginity,  
And your quaint honour turn to dust,



And into ashes all my lust:  
The grave 's a fine and private place,  
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue  
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,  
Now let us sport us while we may,  
And now, like amorous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our time devour  
Than languish in his slow-chapt power.  
Let us roll all our strength and all  
Our sweetness up into one ball,  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Thorough the iron gates of life:  
Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

**Andrew Marvel**, an English poet, politician, and satirist, probably wrote "**To His Coy Mistress**" between 1650 and 1652. It was first published in 1681 (by his housekeeper!) several years after his death. Since then, it has become one of the most famous poems of its kind.

Marvell belongs to a group commonly known as the "Metaphysical Poets." The group includes some other poets we love: [George Herbert](#), [John Donne](#), and [Richard Crashaw](#) – all from the 1500s and 1600s. Their poems are famous for the surprising (and, at times, shocking and daring) use of language to explore BIG questions about love, sex, the earth, the universe, and the divine. Time holds a huge fascination for poets in Marvell's era, and the phrase *carpe diem* (seize the day) has a special significance. "Life is short, so live it to the fullest," is one way to describe the *carpe diem* mindset.

## SUMMARY

"To His Coy Mistress" is divided into three stanzas or poetic paragraphs. It's spoken by a nameless man, who doesn't reveal any physical or biographical details about himself, to a nameless woman, who is also biography-less.

In the **first stanza**, the speaker tells the mistress that if they had more time and space, her "coyness" wouldn't be a "crime." In any case, he continues.... If they had all the time and space they wanted, they could Google everything, read guide books, and carefully consider where they might go next, while aimlessly strolling and resting whenever they pleased. He would go back in time to Noah and the Flood, and forward in time to the "conversion of the Jews," all the while loving her. The speaker's grand, Biblical language mocks poems which describe love in divine terms.

My vegetable love should grow

Vaster than empires, and more slow; (Lines 11-12)

Then, we get one of the poem's most famous lines. The speaker starts telling the mistress about his "vegetable love." Much debate occurs over the meaning of this term. The word "slow" in line 12 gives us a clue. We think "vegetable love" is "organic love" – love without the pressure of anything but nature, a natural process resulting in something nourishing – vegetables.

He extends this discussion by describing how much he would compliment her and admire her, if only there was time. He would focus on "each part" of her body until he got to the heart (and "heart," here, is both a metaphor for sex, and a metaphor for love).

In the **second stanza** he says, "BUT," we don't have the time, we are about to die!

But at my back I always hear

Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near; (lines 21-22)

And, then, he gives her a huge gigantic "BUT." Ouch. You see, the speaker hears something behind him: "Time's winged chariot," to be exact. He's being chased down by Time's hybrid car! He doesn't say who's driving, but we can assume it's probably Time.

My echoing song: then worms shall try

That long preserved virginity, (Lines 27-28)

This next part is even creepier. The speaker tells the mistress that, in the grave, worms will have sex with her. According to the line, she's a virgin.

He tells her that life is short, but death is forever. In a shocking moment, he warns her that, when she's in the coffin, worms will try to take her "virginity" if she

doesn't have sex with him before they die. If she refuses to have sex with him, there will be repercussions for him, too. All his sexual desire will burn up, "ashes" for all time.

In the **third stanza** he says, "NOW," I've told you what will happen when you die, so let's have sex while we're still young.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue

Sits on thy skin like morning dew,

And while thy willing soul transpires

At every pore with instant fires, (Lines 33-36)

He brings her back from the grave here. Just a minute ago, he imagines her dead in the crypt, and, now, he tells her how young she is, and how her soul rushes around excitedly inside her, leaking out through her pores. "Transpire" has a few fun meanings that you can ponder. The first is "to come to light." The second is "to happen."

Hey, look at those "birds of prey" mating. That's how we should do it – but, before that, let's us have a little wine and time. Then, he wants to play a game – the turn ourselves into a "ball" game. He suggests, furthermore, that they release all their pent up frustrations into the sex act, and, in this way, be free.

Let us roll all our strength and all  
Our sweetness up into one ball,  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Thorough the iron gates of life: (Lines 41-44)

Next comes his actual description of sex. The rolling up in a ball doesn't sound so bad. "Strength" carries on the idea of sex as sport from line 37. Come to think of it, "ball" works that way, too.

Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

In the **final couplet**, he calms down a little. He says that having sex can't make the "sun" stop moving. In Marvell's time, the movement of the sun around the earth (we now know the earth rotates around the sun) was thought to create time. Anyway, he says, we can't make time stop, but we can change places with it.

Whenever we have sex, we pursue time, instead of time pursuing us. This fellow has some confusing ideas about sex and time. Come to think of it, we probably do, too. "To His Coy Mistress" offers us a chance to explore some of those confusing thoughts.



## Go and Catch A Falling Star - By John Donne

### Poem

Go and catch a falling star,  
Get with child a mandrake root,  
Tell me where all past years are,  
Or who cleft the devil's foot,  
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,  
Or to keep off envy's stinging,  
And find  
What wind  
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,  
Things invisible to see,  
Ride ten thousand days and nights,  
Till age snow white hairs on thee,  
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me,  
All strange wonders that befell thee,  
And swear,  
No where  
Lives a woman true, and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know,  
Such a pilgrimage were sweet;  
Yet do not, I would not go,  
Though at next door we might meet;  
Though she were true, when you met her,  
And last, till you write your letter,  
Yet she  
Will be  
False, ere I come, to two, or three.

### A summary of an unusual Donne poem

‘Song’, often known by its first line, ‘Go and catch a falling star’, is an unusual poem among John Donne’s work in several ways. It doesn’t use the extended metaphors that we find in some of Donne’s greatest poetry, and yet it remains one of his most popular and widely known works. As the short analysis of ‘Song’

below endeavours to show, 'Go and catch a falling star' is, nevertheless, in keeping with Donne's beliefs and poetic style in many respects.

Although the poem is songlike – as its title suggests – and its tone is light and frivolous, 'Go and catch a falling star' seems to endorse the misogynistic belief that all women (or all beautiful women, anyway – just to make it worse) are unfaithful and shouldn't be trusted. Yet the way Donne builds to this conclusion is beguiling. In summary, he advises the reader (or, as this is a song, the listener) to perform a series of impossible tasks: catch a 'falling star' or meteor in the sky, impregnate a mandrake root, find the past and return it to the present, or discover why the devil has cloven feet. Similarly, the listener is commanded to hear mermaids singing (possibly a reference to the sirens of Greek mythology, who were actually half-bird; it was impossible, unless you were Odysseus, to hear the sirens' song and survive). Other impossible commands include finding a cure for the 'sting' of envy, and what wind exists that can help an honest mind to get on in life.

In the second stanza, the impossibilities continue: Donne's speaker says that if you seek strange sights – things which are invisible, even – then ride for ten thousand days till you're old and your hair is white ('ten thousand days and nights' is just over 27 years, if you're wondering), and when you return, you'll be able to tell Donne's speaker about all the strange things you saw, and also, you'll be prepared to swear that truly faithful and beautiful women do not exist. (In other words, if women are 'fair' or attractive, they will not be true to you.)

The final stanza might be summarised as follows: 'If you do manage to find a woman who is both faithful and beautiful, let me know – a journey to find such a woman would be worth it. But having said that, even if she were next door and you wrote to tell me to come and see her, before I'd managed to make the journey to meet her, she would have been unfaithful to several men.'

Can we still enjoy a poem that seems to be so down on half the human race? (Or the beautiful section of that half, leastways: poor unattractive women can apparently be trusted to remain true, presumably because Donne's speaker thinks no one else would want them.) This aspect of Donne's poem – and the problem is not confined to 'Go and catch a falling star' – has exercised critics for a while now.

Christopher Ricks, in his *Essays in Appreciation*, has a good essay on what Ricks sees as the unhealthy endings to many of Donne's poems: they seem to become uncharitable as they reach conclusion. But Ricks's issue with this poem in particular is not its misogyny (which loses its power to offend by being such a worn-out complaint) but the fact that the poem's ending seems false to itself: it goes against what the rest of the poem promises. William Empson, who was heavily influenced by Donne and wrote extensively on his poetry, said of 'Go and catch a falling star' that 'the song had aimed at being gay and flippant but turned out rather heavy and cross'.

Conversely, for another great Donne critic, John Carey, 'Go and catch a falling star' is more about self-improvement than women: the earlier sections of the poem, enjoining the listener to go out into the world and make discoveries and see strange sights, is the real core of the poem's meaning, in Carey's analysis. Certainly such a reading connects to Donne's preoccupation with space travel and exploration. How should we view the poem? Or does it derive its vital energy from offering both the exploration motif and the complaint about women in one poem? Can we overlook the negative twist at the end? That may depend on our view of Donne's other poems.

## **UGBA- Core English – 112 - Unit- 4**

### **List of Titles for Acquaintances:**

(1) Name of the Work: Comus

Name of the Author: John Milton

Type of Work (Literary genre): Mask (play)

Year of Publication: 1637    Age: Age of Milton

(2) Name of the Work: Paradise Lost

Name of the Author: John Milton

Type of Work (Literary genre): Epic

Year of Publication:        Age: Age of Milton

(3) Name of the Work: Samson Agonistes

Name of the Author: John Milton

Type of Work (Literary genre): Tragedy

Year of Publication: 1671    Age: Age of Milton

(4) Name of the Work: The Temple

Name of the Author: George Herbert

Type of Work (Literary genre): Poetry

Year of Publication: 1633                      Age: Age of Milton

(5) Name of the Work: The Mistress

Name of the Author: Abraham Cowley

Type of Work (Literary genre): Poetry

Year of Publication: 1647                      Age: Age of Milton



(6) Name of the Work: The Rehearsal Transposed

Name of the Author: Andrew Marvell

Type of Work (Literary genre): Prose Work

Year of Publication: 1672-73

Age: Age of Milton

(7) Name of the Work: Noble Numbers

Name of the Author: Robert Herrick

Type of Work (Literary genre): Poetry

Year of Publication: 1647

Age: Age of Milton

(8) Name of the Work: The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England

Name of the Author: Edward Hyde

Type of Work (Literary genre): Prose

Year of Publication: 1702-04

Age: Age of Milton

(9) Name of the Work: Perkin Warbeck

Name of the Author: John Ford

Type of Work (Literary genre): Historical Play

Year of Publication: 1634

Age: Age of Milton

(10) Name of the Work: Religio Medici

Name of the Author: Thomas Browne

Type of Work (Literary genre): Prose work

Year of Publication: 1642

Age: Age of Milton

(11) Name of the Work: A New Way to Pay the Old Debts

Name of the Author: Philip Massinger

Type of Work (Literary genre): Comedy

Year of Publication: 1633                      Age: Age of Milton

(12) Name of the Work: Leviathan

Name of the Author: Thomas Hobbes

Type of Work (Literary genre): Prose work

Year of Publication: 1651                      Age: Age of Milton

(13) Name of the Work: Holy Living

Name of the Author: Jeremy Taylor

Type of Work (Literary genre): Prose work

Year of Publication: 1650                      Age: Age of Milton

(14) Name of the Work: The Lady of Pleasure

Name of the Author: James Shirley

Type of Work (Literary genre): Comedy

Year of Publication: 1637                      Age: Age of Milton

(15) Name of the Work: The Compleat Angler

Name of the Author: Izaak Walton

Type of Work (Literary genre): Prose work

Year of Publication: 1653                      Age: Age of Milton