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AMERICAN LITERATURE

Crossing Brooklyn Ferry

"Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" was first written in 1865 and then it was included in the "Calamus" section of *Leaves of Grass.* It is a long poem of nine sections which ranks very high in the poems of Whitman. Manhattan and Brooklyn are two of the five districts of Newyork. Brooklyn is separated from Manhattan by the east river which could be crossed by a ferry. Walt Whitman spent the best part of his life in NewYork city. In Specimen days he wrote, "Living in Brooklyn or New york city …….my life…. Was curiously identified with Fulton ferry, already becoming the greatest of its sort in the world for general importance, volume, variety, rapidity, and picturesqueness. Almost daily (1850-1860) I cross'd on the boats, often up in the pilot house where I could get a full sweep, absorbing shows, accompaniments, surroundings. What oceanic currents, eddies, underneath – the great tides of humanity also, with ever shifting movements! Indeed, I have always had a passion for ferries: to me they afforded inimitable, streaming never failing, living poems. The river and boy scenery, all about New york island any time of a fine day – the hurrying, splashing sea tides – the changing panorama of steamers, all sizes, often a string of big ones outward bound to distant ports—the myriads of white sail'd schooners, sloops, skiffs, and the marvellously beautiful yachts – the majestic sound boats as they rounded the Battery and came along towards 5, afternoon, eastward bound – the prospect off toward Staten Island, or down the Narrows, or the other way up the Husband – what refreshment of spirit such sights and experiences gave me years ago (and many a time since. My old pilot friends, the Balsirs, Johanny Cole, Ira Smith, Whiteman White, and my young ferry friend, Tom Cere – how well I remember them all" These simple experiences have been dramatized by Whiteman in this poem.

<u>Critical Appreciation</u>

Whitman takes up a simple, familiar experience in this poem. This experience is viewed as a symbol of the mystic unity felt in the entire universe

Crossing on the ferry is an experience wherein one finds himself with a variety of persons; and all these as grasped into a unity effected by the ferry. The same ferry later scatters them far and wide. There is just a moment of transcendence. In this moment, the persons are on the water and between the shores. This is symbolic of human fate:

The simple, compact, well-joined scheme, myself disintegrated

Every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme

The central metaphor of the poem is the floodtide which is symbolic of the sea of life into which we are all born. The future voyagers too have to cross the floodtide.

In availsnot , time not place--- distance avails not. The poet becomes one with the reader in his endeavour to present universal identity as a certainty. The differences wrought by time and space are set aside as false and unreal. But these are inevitable, being implied in the very fact of life. The self then is conceived as being in motion. Only the destination is not clear. But the poem inspired Crane to compose his *Bridge.*

Emotionally he is attached to his readers with whom he fuses himself:

I too had been struck from the float forever held in solution. The individual soul is precipitated from the over soul which is represented here as a liquid. The poet in the opening lines is in a meditative mood. This is also the lyrical mood.

The climax appears when he seeks to come "closer" to his readers: and in a moment of profound insight he asks:

Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking

At you now, for all you cannot see me?

We may remember that Whiteman called ferries the "streaming never failing, living poems". He could stand on them imaginatively and spiritually and in spite of the experience of eternity, he moves in time thereby providing a unity between the temporal and the eternal. It is a present continuous action. The real climaxcome when he enters the very being of the reader:

What is more subtle than this which lies me to the woman or man that looks in my face?

Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you

The theme is the mystery of identity. He contemplates as the paradox of individuality. It is a paradox because individuality is different from nature and also a part of the flux of nature. Thus arise Whiteman's public love poem. His feelings are said to be identical with those of the future generation. From the identity of situation he proceeds to an existential identity.

Nor is it you alone who knows what it is to be evil

I am he who knew what it was to be evil

I too knitted the old knot of contrariety…

He thinks of the future generations:

And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more

To me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

Like the over-soul and yet as the immanent spirit he witnesses the process. He discovers that everyone is to be at home in this life as a voyager. In section 7 he comes closer to the future voyager since he thinks of him prior to his bodily existence. Section 8 offers a contemplation of the river. The next one is an affirmation asking people to cross the river, asking the sea-birds to reel, and asking the clouds to bathe him in their splendour. Images drawn from light, colour, movement, sound, and sight enhance the significance of the theme, which refer to crossing the river of ***Samsara*** :

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers,
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate hence-
Forward,
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold
Yourselves from us,
We use you, and do not cast you aside --- we plant you,
Permanently within us,
We fathom you not- we love you- there is perfection in you
Also,
You furnish your parts towards eternity, Great or Small, you
Furnish your parts towards the soul.

Throughout the poem he has been enriching his own consciousness by assimilating the world of appearances and by setting aside the temporal distinctions. Toward the close the objects world is given a context within consciousness. The external world in itself is spiritual; and every moment the individual is crossing the stream in his endeavour to reach the Absolute:

Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown
Ways be looking upon you.

He fuses himself with the reader so that he can persuade him of the universal identity. This dramatic movement of section 3 leads his as to say in the next---

Others the same ___ others who look back on me because I
Looked forward to them

Then he pauses and asks as “curious abrupt questionings stir within me”. In section 6 he admits that he and his poems too are a mixture of the good and the bad.

The best I had done seemed to me blank and suspicious,

My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in Reality merge?

When he reaches the climax, he assumes his task to be accomplished:

We understand then do we not?

What I promises without mentioning it, have you not Accepted?

What the study could not teach – what the preaching could not accomplish is accomplished, is it not?

The last section is kind of ritual dance in words. He re invokes all the images of the earlier lines. These images too furnish their parts towards the completed from the poem.

The images refer to a single experience and to a single setting. The sense of verisimilitude is satisfied by the sensuous images of the first three lines. The various details of the scene come from a close observation of a unified experience. This transforms the image into a metaphor so that crossing if referred to the individual life and also to the lives of generations. All the images are grouped round the dominant image of the ferry. From this he derives the identity of experience and therefore the identity of soul among all men. At the end we have the images of the harbours scene, and these are drawn in a mood of exaltation. The basic symbol of ferry refers to a time. It is a link between the past, present and the future. Ferry thus comes to embody the identity and oneness of spirit. Moreover, even the poem is a ferry and it shuttles across the river of time.

Because I could not stop for Death

“Because I could not stop for death”was written by Emily Dickinson. Of all the poems written by Emily Dickinson on the theme of death this is the most famous and most technically perfect. The poet introduces us to two characters, Death and Immortality, who riding in a chariot come to the narrator. The carriage image, and the epithets used to describe death suggest the situation of a courtly lover along with a trusted companion who go out to seek the beloved.

The carriage comes to a pause. The pause here is contrasted with the violent movement of children playing in the ring in the third stanza.

We passed the school where children strove At Recess, in the ring.

The carriage comes to a halt at a house which is the grave as is shown by the line ; ' a swelling of the ground." The roof of this house is scarcely visible. It has only a heap of earth for its cornice. The entire description in this stanza is suggestive of a grave. Thus after leaving behind all activity, the carriage comes near death. Pickard says," here the terror is achieved without any morbid description of mouldering bones and worms so frequently used by Poe. The tenuous bond between life and death is 'scarcely visible' as the poet finally perceives her destination."

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church

By and large, Dickinson's religious poems deal less with religion and more with humanly affairs. In her view, Heaven is not the place where one might be very happy for it is infested with saints only, and earth itself could provide complete happiness as it is surcharged with humanly affection and love. In " I never felt at home below" --- the speaker states that " I don't like paradise"

Because it's Sunday - all the time---
And Recess ---- never comes---
And Eden'll be so lonesome
Bright Wednesday Afternoons---

In this and many other poems, she is very outspoken about religious piety and conventional dogmas. In "Some keep the Sabbath going the Church" she has a direct dig at those church-goers for whom religion is just a Sunday ritual, and who forget all about it soon after the Sunday. The original idea as is stated in the opening stanza.

Some keep and Sabbath going to Church---
I keep it, staying at Home---
With a Bobolink for a Chorister
And on orchard, for a Dome____

Robert Frost: After apple Picking

Robert Lee Frost was born in 1874. He was one of the most popular American poets of the 20th century. He was named after the famous General Robert Lee of the American Civil War. After his education he settled down with his family at a farm in New Hampshire. There for a number of years he wrote but was unable to make a mark. So he went over to

England where his works received high praise. With his reputation established he returned to America. He won many prizes and medals for his works. He died in 1963.

An apple-picker has stuck his ladder through an apple tree. The ladder is pointing towards the sky. There is an unfilled empty barrel below the apple tree. There are some unpicked apples on some of the boughs of the apple tree. The apple picker is tired. So he retired from apple-picking.

It is a winter night. The apples blossom and the flowers are rich in fragrance. The fragrance of the apples is like the essence of winter season. This very scent of apples fills the night air. The apple-picker feels tired. His eyes are dreamy and he is feeling drowsy. The winter season and the scent of the apples have induced a sleepy mood. All the objects of nature appear strange to him. He falls into a trance and starts dreaming. The apple-picker dreams of unusually big sized apples appearing and disappearing. The ladder is being swayed to and fro by the blowing mind. The scene shifts and the apple-picker finds himself in his cellar bin. He hears the rumbling of carts bringing load after load of apples. The barrels make the noise of loaded apples being rolled into the stock room. The over work has strained the apple-picker. He wished for a bumper harvest. The harvest of apples has been ampler than he thought. When he did get a bumper harvest, he was too tired to gather the apples. He had to leave the work unfinished. Each one of the apples was picked carefully. It was cherished for the feel of it. Then it was dropped into the cider-heap below as if it was of no worth. The strange sleep the poet is having is disturbing hem. He does not understand the nature and real meaning of the sleep. He is completely overwhelmed by his strange sleep. The apple –picker does not know whether it is just an ordinary human sleep or is it going to be long winter sleep of hibernation? The apple picker wonders whether the sleep is going to be the deep sleep of the woodchuck, the North American rodent of the squirrel family.

Essay

Write a critical appreciation of the poem ' After Apple Picking

Introduction

The poem ***After Apple Picking***is said to have helped Frost to establish his popularity. This poem seems to prove his theory. According to him it is a happy and sad blending.

The poem is about apple-picking and the drudgery of it. The apple-picker is in the orchard. He has almost finished with the picking of apples. He is very tired. He feels drowsy. He has stuck his ladder through an apple tree. The ladder is pointing towards the sky (heaven)

It is a winter night. The apples blossom and the flowers are rich in fragrance. The fragrance of the apples is like the essence of winter season. The very scent of apple fills the night air. The apple-picker wished for a bumper harvest that year. The harvest of apples has been ampler than he thought. Tens of thousands of apples has been picked up. The winter and overwork act like opiate on him. So Sleep is induced.

The apple-picker sees unusually big sized apples in his dream. They are appearing and disappearing in a misty manner. The ladder is being swayed to and fro by the blowing wind. The scent shifts and the apple-picker is in his cellar bin. He hears rumbling of carts bringing load after load of apples. The barrels make the noise of loaded apples being rolled into the stock room.

The strange sleep he is having is disturbing him. He does not understand the nature and the real meaning of the sleep. He is completely overwhelmed by his sleep. He does not know whether it is just an ordinary human sleep or hibernation. He wonders whether it is going to be the long winter sleep of the woodchuck.

Critics are of the opinion that the entire poem itself is a symbol. They say it refers to the poetic career of the poet. The apple-picker is none other than the poet himself. The drowsiness of the poet stands for the cycle of seasons. The sleepiness of the apple-picker indicates the death wish and the unpicked apples refer to the unfinished work of the poet. The ladder in the beginning symbolises the poet's mind. Thus the poem is rich with symbols.

Just as Wordsworth paints the Lake District in his poems. Frost paints New England in his poems. 'After apple-picking' presents a typical New England farmer. Though his

language is simple, the use of symbols has made his poem dense and complex. His poems ***Birches, Mending wall and AfterApple Picking*** are typical examples to this.

The Road Not taken - Robert Frost

Paraphrase of the poem

Stanza – 1

Two roads went in two different directions in a forest which looked golden in the morning light. The poet felt sorry that he could not travel in both the roads being one traveller. For a long time he stood there and watched one of the road as far as he could to the farther end where it took a curve towards the shrubs, bushes, low trees growing among longer trees.

Stanza – 2

Then the poet took the other road considering it as appropriate for his travel. It was fair and clean. Perhaps it had a better claim than the first road. The second road was covered with grass and lacked foot marks. Nobody used that road. It looked fresh. Except this both the roads were identical.

Stanza – 3

On that morning both the roads looked fresh and untrodden. No leaves turned black by the walking of human beings. The poet chose the first road deserved for some other day. He knew well that one road leads to another and therefore he was not sure that he would return to travel the other road.

Stanza – 4

The poet says that he will go on telling this incident with a sense of sadness in the times to come; that there met two roads at a point in a wood, and that he took the less travelled one, and this has made him all the more sad and different.

Critical Appreciation of the Poem

'***The Road not Taken'*** is one of the most popular poem of Robert Frost. It is used to include almost in all anthologies. Frost describes a simple incident in simple language. The poem is packed with hidden meaning.

One day in autumn the poet was walking in a wood. At one place two roads went in two different directors. The forest looked golden in the morning light. The poet wanted to try both the roads at the same time. He felt sorry that he could not travel in both the roads

being one traveller. For a long time he stood there and watched one of the road as far as he could to the farther end where it took a curve towards the shrubs, bushes, low trees growing among longer trees. After much hesitation he took the other road considering it as appropriate for his travel. It was fair and clean. Perhaps it had a better claim than the first road. The second road was covered with grass and lacked foot marks. Nobody used that road. On that morning both the roads looked fresh and untrodden. No leaves turned black by the walking of human beings. The poet chose the first road reserved for some other day. He knew well that one road leads to another and therefore he was not sure that he would return to travel the other road. The poet says that he will go on telling this incident with a sense of sadness in the times to come : that there were two roads at a point in a wood, and that he took the less travelled one, and that has made him all the more sad and different.

While making the choice the poet felt that he would regret it. There will be no satisfaction. So he expected that many years later, he would speak with regret of the choice he had made. Then he would be feeling that the rejected choice might have proved better. What he chose now would completely alter the situation. So it would be always open for him to think that he had made the wrong choice.

The choice between the two paths in a wood in suggestive of a choice between two situations to a difficult problem. Both the solutions may be equally good or equally bad. But, later on, we shall be regretting our choice. The hope cannot be crushed that the rejected choice might have proved better.

THE RAVEN

A CRITICAL STUDY

Summary

The Raven has a melancholic atmosphere of death – death of a lady –love mourned by her lover.

The narration begins at the end of a story of love, and we understand that much has happened already. The protagonist of the poem is a student (evidently the poet Poe himself). He has recently lost his love, whom he called by the name Lenore. He now lives in inconsolable grief and sorrow. It is in this sorrowful mood the action takes place. It is a dark December night. The locale is the student's living room charged with the rich and cherished memories of Lenore.

The student has been reading a book, half asleep, in an effort to forget his grief. All of a sudden he hears a gentle knock on his door. He expects no one at that late hour of the night. But his mind begins to fancy that it is the spirit of his dead beloved that has come to visit him. The mystery deepens when he opens the door and finds no one outside. Softly he whispers the name of his lady love, "Lenore'. Again there is no one to respond, but the word echoes back and it adds to the mystery. He closes the door and returns to his study only to be disturbed again by a gently tapping on the door. This time he opens the window and peeps out into the darkness. Suddenly there hops in a big bird, a dark raven. The bird is in no mood to show any courtesy. With an air on nonchalance the bird perches comfortably on the bust of Pallas a statue kept by the student. The student, who is vainly expecting his dead beloved, is surprised to see a strange bird entering his room. First he takes it as a joke and asks the bird "tell me thy name by which you are known in the underworld." The question is intended to make fun of the bird, for he anticipates no reply. But the Raven utters the word "Nevermore" and the student is taken aback. When the student begins to comfort himself with the thought that the bird will fly away next morning the raven again utters the same word "Nevermore".

The student now believes that the bird has escaped from captivity and that is has learned one singly word from its master, who probably lives in misery and despair. With a sense of humour he begins to speculate about the bird and its croaking refrain. Suddenly he is reminded of his beloved, Lenore. He feels that the air around him is being perfumed from invisible censor by angels whose footfalls he believes to hear. He tells himself that in the form of angels God has sent him the means to forget his sorrow. But the raven utters the word "Nevermore". The student is startled, and he is even excited. A kind of superstition grips him.

He begins to think that there is some truth of prophecy in the bird's utterance. He delights in self-torture as he starts throwing a series of questions the answer to which is always that single word" ***Nevermore".*** First he asks the bird whether he can find relief from the agony and pain of separation. To this the raven answers with its customary monosyllabic reply "***Nevermore***". He flings at the bird the last climatic question whether he will reunite with his Lenore in the next world. "***Nevermore"***croaks the bird, promptly and immediately. His sorrow becomes unbearable when his hopes of reunion are shattered. He is now in a state of frenzy. At last he cries out to the bird in a loud order to quit his room:

"Take thy beak from out my heart and take thy

Form off my door"!

The bird refuses to budge. But it promptly croaks the monosyllable "***Nevermore"*** and continues to sit comfortably on the bust of Pallas. Symbolically speaking the Raven, as the symbol for the soul of the dead Lenore sits close to the student (ie. On the bust of Pallas)

2. **<u>The theme in the Raven</u>**

In most of Poe's literary compositions "terror has been the thesis --- the terror of the soul. This terror which haunted his soul was in the last analysis a panic fear of death, as it appears in his vivid description of the death of his characters. The fear of death and the final sinking into a never-to-be returned oblivion constitute the very subject matter of Poe's poems. All men experience the pangs of death, but it reaches a rare degree of intensity in his poems and often takes the form of phobias and manias of decidedly abnormal character. The lover in "***The Raven'***experiences that inexpressible pain of separation by death. He is all set to torture himself. This unmistakeable indication of masochism, which Poe in "***The Philosophy of Composition***" calls "the human thirst for self-torture" is evident in the theme of "***The Raven***". All the heroes of Poe are afflicted with it. In its extreme form the neurosis completely neutralizes the human instinct for self-preservation and turns it into a passionate desire for self-destruction. This is what happens to the poet lover, in "***The Raven".***

3. **<u>Imagery and symbolism in *the Raven*</u>**

The Raven published in 1884 made an instant stir in the literary circle of America. Every adult American reacted to the poem since it has becomes such a classic of declamation with symbols of far reaching importance. Poe's image of man's destiny is a frail boat, rudderless and out of control on the flowing waters of life, and it became the symbol of the age.

Poe's aim was not truth, not what he called the "passion or the excitement of the heart". A poem must not aim at mere truth, for then its "hardness" or nakedness" would repel the critical eye". In ***The Philosophy of competition"***Poe claims that two things are invariably required: first some amount of complexity or more properly adaptation; and secondly some amount of suggestiveness – some under current however indefinite, of meaning. It is this later, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that

richness." Beyond the details of the narrative, Poe says, the reader must feel the presence of a spirit which confers on all the details and incidents, an inexpressible meaning. Such was the ultimate aim of Poe. "***The Raven***" according to this reasoning, as explained in "***The Philosophy of Composition***", is not an end in itself, but a means to make us feel the mystery and terror of our condition. We are taken far beyond the surface of the narrative. The text in only a pretext which he uses to lead us beyond the appearances. He not only builds up a plausible plot in "***The Raven***" but also shares his dreaded dreams and desires, and reveals the irrational through the rational. The last stanza of the poem makes it clear that the lover and his dead beloved are symbols for "mournful and never-ending remembrances". The inner meaning is more explicit in the line "Take they beak from out my heart", to which the raven answers "Nevermore". It means that the lover cannot forget his beloved. His sorrow will be constantly brought home to him in the most acute way by the continuous presence of this ominous creature which stands for memory. This symbolism stands fully revealed in the last lines of the poem:

And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor

Shall be lifted ---- nevermore.

Now the raven becomes a symbol for the dead mistress which finds its ultimate refuge, the lover (here symbolised by the bust of Pallas). The idea of the union of souls, a pet theme of Poe, is shown by the raven's refusal to budge from the bust of Pallas.

BRAHMA

Assuming the role of Brahma, Emerson presents the first fourteen lines of the poem in first-person point of view. In the last two lines, he addresses the reader, using second-person point of view.

The Hindu god Brahma tells the reader that what appear to be opposites—a warrior and his enemy, remoteness and nearness, shadows and sunlight, and shame and fame—are really the same. Anyone who does not believe this truth lives in error, for all these things are part of the essence of Brahma—the eternal god who is beyond human understanding—and therefore are unified in him and are the same. Even a hymn sung by a Brahmin, a Hindu priest, is part of Brahma's essence. Other Hindu gods—such as Yama, the lord of death; Agni, the god of fire; and Indra, the warrior god and god of rain—long to live in Brahma's

essence (line 13), as do the holiest Hindus of the past (line 14). Brahma ends the poem by telling the reader that if he finds his way to Brahma's essence he will have all that he needs for all eternity.

BRAMA is one of the poems composed by Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American transcendentalist of the nineteenth century. The poem is composed in the form of an Utterance- a form which comprises sublime or metaphysical content, while adding to it the balladic quatrain-music pattern. (A dramatic form not in vogue, and distinctly different from Browning's dramatic developments). The form, therefore, is the first of its kind to include Oriental poetical material in the Western verse framework. The central speaker of the poem is Brahma Himself, who according to Hindu philosophers of India, is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent. The study of the Vedantic philosophy, the Gita and the Katha Upanishad is impressed upon the poem very forcefully. Body is for some certain period of time but within the body of man there is soul that is the divine spark, eternal, everlasting and never ending. It is a part of the Over-Soul Who is the supreme God, the Super Power of the Universe.

The first group of American thinkers who observed the Non-western philosophy was the Transcendentalists.Emerson was the leader and other prominent members of this group were Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Alcott& Elizabeth Peabody.Transcendentalism opposed the dogmatic concept of belief & urged to think freely.Transcendentalism has the principle that the answer to Man's cause is an acceptance of the final liberation- a quality that the Biblical religion imposed, and a quality that Hinduism attests as true, ultimately pleasurable and most importantly, to be thought out as a thinking individual- a quality that most appealed Emerson and his decision in giving up his institution of Unitarianism.

Different religions have different beliefs about their deity but the core concern of all is the Brahma,the super power.Thus, the theme of the poem is universal: The Brahma, the super power, has many little parts Atman,the human,who has to achieve salvation (linkage of Atman to the Brahma),but entrapped in Maya,transient one, the physical beauty of the world.One who can overcome the Maya will certainly understand the Brahma i.e the achievement of salvation.

Blue Girls

Themes and Meanings

"Blue Girls," like most of Ransom's best poetry, is a poem of antithesis, of an ideal, but impossible world of beauty and joy in conflict with a real world of violence, decay, death, and pain. It focuses particularly on the contrast between the desirable but evanescent world of youth and beauty and the undesirable but inescapable world of age and decay. The tension of the two worlds of youth and age introduced briefly in stanza 1 with the phrase "Go listen to your teachers old and contrary" moves progressively to culmination in the final stanza, with the blue girls set in contrast with the once-beautiful woman with "all her perfections tarnished." Though the speaker longs for that ideal world, experienced briefly, he resigns himself to the real world of degeneration. His detached resignation makes the feeling all the more poignant for the reader, who senses the deep emotion beneath the stoic surface, the pain masked by wit and irony.

Because the speaker urges the girls to practice their beauty, the poem is inevitably associated with the Horatian *carpe diem* tradition. Yet Ransom's poem varies significantly from this tradition in that the speaker is not a young man who has a personal goal of seduction or pleasure in mind. Rather, he is an elderly man who, despite his urging the young girls to enjoy the moment, seemingly has only a casual relationship with them and is interested in them not as individuals but as representatives of youth and beauty.

The speaker does not seek any kind of personal relationship with the "blue girls." In fact, he does not even promise, in the fashion of many Renaissance poets, to keep them forever young and immortal in his poetry. He vows instead to publish, write about Beauty, yet he does so with the clear knowledge that it is beyond his or anyone else's power to "establish" beauty. He stoically accepts the frailty of beauty, the only way tension between the ideal world and the real world is resolved in Ransom's poetry, but he continues to appreciate that beauty both as presently viewed in the young girls and as remembered from the past in the woman who once was "lovelier" than any of them.

The Meadow Mouse

People come and go but life goes on. Similar things happen to us with our pets, but life doesn't stop there. We learn to accept the fact and move on. In the poem, poet Theodore Roethke projects himself as a very sensitive and animal loving person who empathises over the poor little creature unlike most people who has sympathy but not the power to

empathise. Being brought up in a greenhouse, his childhood was surrounded by plants and pretty little creature which must be the reason he has learnt to love these creatures so much. His dear uncle committing suicide and his loving father's early death are two major incidents which made a great impact on his life. In my opinion, he compares helplessness during his childhood after the death of his father to the little creatures of earth who are prey to vicious predators.

It is a moving poem with wide use of imagery which gives us the visual impact and helps us feel the emotions more effectively. It begins with a very detailed description of the mouse from its absurd twitching out whiskers to his shaky leaf shaped lizard like feet, which imprints the image of the mouse in our mind. The poem starts off with the vulnerability of the little mouse even in such a cosy shoe-box stuffed with nylon stockings. Here, the mouse is unfamiliar with the surrounding and is very scared as it just got rescued from a very risky spot under a stick in the meadow. His whole body is trembling with fear or maybe cold as he tries to wriggle away using his wide spread whitish legs.

Soon the little mouse gets comfortable after eating three kinds of cheese and drinking from its bottle cap watering trough. It is curled up like a small baby and sleeping peacefully with its bulging belly. It twitching and turning its bat like ears at least sound trying to adapt in its new home.

The poet being a self-conscious and hopeful person questions himself about the behaviour of the mouse towards him. He also imagines that the mouse has adapted well in his new environment as it no longer trembles when the poet approaches it.

The feminine nature of the poet can be well observed when he fears for the mouse after it leaves its cosy shoe box to enter the world full of risk. The empty shoe box makes him wonder where his little mouse has gone. He is scared that his child like meadow mouse won't be able to defend itself as it comes around the bottom of the food chain and can easily be eaten up by the predators. However, he fails to understand that his little mouse is no longer vulnerable and is capable to adapt in the harsh world which is its natural home.

As he accepts the fact that his little pet has left, he thinks about all the other creatures who he thinks cannot defend themselves. He thinks about the nestling fallen into grass and the turtle in the dusty highway. He compares these creatures to paralytic stuck in a tub who has to depend on someone for its survival which in my opinion is very unfair as these creatures are not paralyzed and can survive if they strive to.

In the nutshell, use of alliterations like ‘twitching, tilting’ along with similes and metaphors like ‘feet like small leaves’ and ‘little lizard feet’ has enhanced the beauty of this poem. This indeed is a heart touching poem where great affection towards a little creature most of us wouldn’t even have noticed is displayed.

EDGAR ALLAN FOE:

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION

SPECIAL INTRODUCITON

The philosophy of Composition was written in 1846, the year of the death of Poe’s wife when she was four and twenty. The Raven and Other poems established in 1845 had made him famous. He wrote the Philosophy of Composition in which he propounds a theory of composition, which uses T*he Raven* as an illustration. It is interesting to note that much doubt has been the cast on him claim to have written The Raven. It has been crux of long and continuing debate, critically argued. On the face of Poe’s claim that he did write it, the controversy has been laid low by more compassionate viewers of the works, posthumously.

In this Composition, Poe establishes his own attitude to poetic instinct and how he organises the form, content and the tempo of his faculty, to project the required effect. He explains in great detail the process of his composing a poem and how exacting it could be. He gives an imaginary peep into the workshop of a poet at work in terms not highly flattering. He illustrates his technique of composing a poem by tracing the origin as an idea and an effect and then grasping the denouement towards which the idea has to be worked out, the length of the poem, the unity and artistic element, universalising it to be appreciable as a thing of beauty, He adopted a tone of sadness to excite the soul and melancholy, as the most proper of all poetical tones. He called this composition his best example of critical analysis, reconstructing the elements that went into his composition of The Raven which won him fame.

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

1. The denouement is the determining factor of a composition towards which the author should exercise his plot to carry the incidents and develop the intention. Godwin’s Caleb Williams, where the plot is worked up backwards, is an instance in point.

2. It is an error to take an incident and then proceed to combine other striking incidents to form the basis of a narrative and then fill in with description, dialogue and authorial comment to fill up the blanks
3. Poe commences his composing with a consideration of the effect he desires to create. Keeping originality always in view, he selects the subject that is calculated to impress the heart, intellect and the soul.
4. The next consideration is to contemplate the process of creating the vivid effect. It can be wither done by incident or tone or a select combination of both to arrive at the desired effect.
5. It would be quite a revealing matter if one should be able to scrutinise the work-sheet of an author attempting his composition, It would probably contain a number of painful erasures, selections, rejections, immature fancies, the step ladders and demon traps, the elaborate crudities of thought, the cock's feathers, red paint and black patches, This is why the author never provides his work sheet for public gaze. For these are the properties of the poet who is an actor rehearsing his role?
6. It is, of course, not the general rule for the author to begin at the end and retrace the steps he has to build, to get the beginning.
7. However, Poe does not consider it a breach of decorum to lay bare to public view his workshop of poetic composition and his modus operandi in the construction of his work, He would select The Raven which is most familiar to the reading public. It would be his purpose to prove that at no stage of his composition of the poem, there was an element of intuition but only a rigid mathematical precision that went into the making of it.
8. He will not speak of the circumstances that prevailed on him to choose to write on the Raven, as it is relevant for the essay on hand.
9. The intention to write about the Raven gave rise to consideration of the length of the poem, at first. If a poem has to be read at two sittings, then the unity of impression will suffer due to interval. The poet has to think if the loss in unity of impression is counter balanced by the advantage that would accrue in advancing the design. For a long poem is but a succession of brief poetical effects.

10. For instance, Paradise Lost is a long poem, one-half of it is necessity prose, with a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, but the extremeness of its length, the artistic element as unity of impression is sacrificed. The intense excitements of the soul are brief.
11. It is obvious that there should be a limit to the length of a poem, if it has to be artistic in its impression Prose compositions such as 'Robinson Crusoe' do not demand unity and hence may acceptable for a number of sittings. But not so with a poem.
12. The poem has to create intense poetic effect. Brevity, must be in direct ration to be the intensity of the desired effect, allowing for the minimal duration for the producing of it.
13. Having decided that the degree of excitement his poem would evoke will not be above the popular taste and also not below the taste of the upper critics, he settled the length of his poem, The Raven to be about 100 lines (actually 108).
14. Contemplation of the beautiful is the purest form of pleasure. The composition should be universalised. Effects should spring from direct causes. This object can be Truth, the satisfaction of the intellect and elevation of the emotion or soul. Truth demands that there should be a precision in the statement. Passion should bear homeliness also. But these two, Truth and Passion, should subserve Beauty, embellish and not overtake Beauty. For beauty is the essence of the poem. Truth and Passion are more readily and easily stated in prose than in poetry.
15. To express this beauty, the tone of sadness or melancholy is the most legitimate in poetry. The poet took this as the keynote. Then to dramatize the points, the intrinsic merit of a refrain, its force of monotone of sound, he employed at different situations to produce continually novel effects.
16. He next meditated on the choice of a refrain and resolved on one word as the closing of each stanza with a long 'O' as sonorous vowel and with 'r' as the most repeatable consonant, 'nevermore'.
17. The next compulsion was to look for a pretext to use the refrain 'nevermore'. A human being saying would be unpoetic. So the idea of an unthinking creature capable of speech like the parrot suggested itself, but the choice of the raven was more apt in keeping with the intended sadness of tone.

18. Having determined thus far the word ‘nevermore’ as the refrain, he asked himself as to which topic was most “melancholy” and of universal application. It was death. And how is it to be allied with beauty to make it prefect? This could be only by the death of a charming woman to lend poetic beauty and perfection.
19. A bereaved lover is a common exciting topic. The ideas of melancholy and poetic beauty were combined to give that poignancy of feeling which is deliciously self-tortuous to the lover who is lamenting her loss in depth of his soul. The word ‘nevermore’ was applied in several different contexts in a rising crescendo, beginning with nonchalance and ending with the tragic involvement of excess of suggested meaning.
20. It is here that the poem has its beginning namely at the end. The poet first established the climax and led the emotional involvement towards the denouement and rhythmical effect. The rhyme scheme was not original but a mixture and a combination of unusual alliteration and rhythm.
21. The locale was decided upon for concentration of effect, not in the open, which would disperse the concentration needed. So the lover was placed in his chamber. The rapping was to rouse the curiosity of the reader. The contrast, outside as of a storm and the serenity inside the chamber, as introduced. The contrast of the marble Pallas and the plumage of the bird were next suggested for effect.
22. The fantastic entrance of the bird was provided as denouement followed by the serious tone. With the final utterance of the word ‘nevermore’ the denouement was reached without overstepping the limits of the real.
23. Adaptation and suggestiveness are necessary therefore to avoid a certain amount of repulsiveness to the artistic eye. The undercurrent of the meaning of the poem should be made apparent. The moral is looked for and it is not found until the last line. The intension is only then distinctly seen and the impact of the world ‘nevermore’ in all richness realised in all its perfection.

ESSAY

1. How does Poe develop his theory of poetic composition?

Composition generally implies bringing together the ingredients necessary to make a new and original effect or result, such as a poem or a play or a literary form, arranged artistically to fulfil the desired intension. It is the art of literary production.

Poe sets about his elucidation of the theory of composition of a literary effort, critically analysing the various compositions that go into the making of it. At the outset, the writer should consider the 'effect', that is the impact he wishes to make, either emotional or intellectual, on the reader, such as romantic, heroic, comic, tragic etc.

The idea should be original and novel unsaid by any author before. This leads to the consideration of choice by selecting, among the innumerable topics that may occur to the imagination, the one suited to the purpose. His next consideration would be how to treat the incident that has been decided upon, if it should be developed as a peculiar genre and if so the structural pattern that will have to be evolved to implement the desired intention.

Having determined the tone or mood and the nature of the literary incident, such as a detective story or a romantic tragedy or even a poem, the author will have to decide upon the length of the composition. This is very important. If it is a poem that has to be read in two sittings, then the unity of impression or the totally of the effect will be diluted or lost. But no writer or poet can afford to avoid saying everything that has to be said with relevance to the development of the idea he wishes to impress, and so he will have to Weigh the gain of promoting the structural length of design against the apparent loss in unity of effect.

A short poem essentially intensive will excite the imagination or stimulate the soul of the reader. Such an attempt by its very nature will have to be a brief one. Its brevity will be in direct proportion to the degree of intended effect. It cannot be long for the reason that an intense mood cannot be situated over a length of period. A long poem, such as Paradise Lost, is half of is in prose. But it is interpreted with succeeding short intense dovetailed together with short depressing passages to such extreme length that the vastly important element of artistic unity is lost.

It follows therefore that a poetic composition should have a limit in length to lay claim to its begin a work of literary art. In some kinds of prose compositions, however like that of Robinson Crusoe, which demands no unity, the length would work out to be an advantage. But a poem has to conform to two limits, the extent of the poem as to length. It should also not be above the popular reach of the more informed.

Poe makes the interesting observation as an aside that if the work sheets of an author were made available, it would be observed that the writer had to go through desperate and laborious writing, re-writing discarding immature fancies, building up step ladders and demon traps, black patches and red feathers, before his final literary products could come to view. According to Poe, the vain claims of authors that they wrote their work at sitting in a heightened state of poetic frenzy intuited by their lofty imagination, is a myth. The workshop of the poet or the writer may not be able to recall and reconstruct the final shape of his literary composition.

As an illustration of Poe's critical analysis of poetic composition, he takes the example of his poem. The Raven and the manner of his processing the poem. He chooses it because it is popular and his critical reconstruction of it will be easily understood.

The Dual

O'Henry

In the short story, "The Duel", by O. Henry, two characters, Jack and William, travel from the West to New York City to seek opportunity and wealth. After a period of four years, the characters meet up again, and Jack observes how William has undeniably been changed by the city. O. Henry depicts New York as a society filled with evildoing using description from repeated paradoxes, war imagery, and the astuteness of Jack. In Jack's discussion with William, Jack utilizes repetition of paradoxes to draw attention to the idea that New York City puts on a misleading appearance. A paradox is a phrase that appears contradictory, but upon closer examination, may contain some teaching. Jack says, "It has the poorest millionaires, the littlest great men, the haughtiest beggars, the plainest beauties, the lowest skyscrapers, the dolefulest pleasures of any town I ever saw." Jack's employs the paradox, with the effect of belittling New York City. His argument, in its essence, is that while the people of New York City may appear to possess material wealth, they really have nothing. His words do not appear to be possible. The reason that Jack believes New York City's millionaires to be the "poorest" of any city, and its great men to be the "littlest", is because New York City has taken their identity, and given them wealth in exchange. Jack's argument stresses the importance of identity, and he considers it on an equal or greater scale of importance than wealth and name. In this way, Jack's use of the paradox accentuates his point that though people of New York City may gain material wealth, they lose something of equal or more important value.

During Jack's confrontation with William, Jack's creates war imagery in order to convince the audience of the evils of New York City. Jack says, "Hand to hand every newcomer must struggle with the leviathan. You've lost, Billy. It shall never conquer me." Jack later adds, "It has caught you, old man, but I will never run beside its chariot wheels." Jack's description of "hand to hand" struggles with the city, which Jack compares to the leviathan, a sea monster, picture a personal fight, which will either result in one's victory or one's submission to the cities social codes. Jack also describes the city's "chariot wheels". Against a group of foot soldiers, or infantry, the chariot is a formidable foe that would use speed to run down infantry, while also shooting projectiles to wear down the enemy. Jack's previous image of a one on one fight with the city, combined with Jack's new image of the city as a chariot, illustrates an unfair battle, in which the city has an advantage. If one is not to die, then he must join the city, or as Jack puts, "run beside its chariot wheels." Jack's war imagery pictures the city as a deadly enemy, which, if one does not side with, will probably be killed. In the big picture, Jack states that if one does not succumb to the city's social codes and fall into the same behaviour and characteristics as others, then he will be exiled.

Jack's nonconformity illustrates the evilness of the city. Jack is adamant in his resolve to win the battle against the city, as he describes using war imagery. Jack says, "You've lost, Billy. It shall never conquer me." Jack's stubborn behaviour attracts special attention because Jack is the only one in the story who sees the evil of the city. Being the only one in his opinion, Jack may be either crazy or correct. However, because Jack's belief is founded in reason such as the war imagery which he uses, as well as description using paradoxes, the audience is more inclined to believe his words. Jack's wilfulness illustrates flaws in New York City.

Essentially, O. Henry attempts to convince the reader that because the social codes of New York City are applied to everyone that enters, and that because most change themselves to suit the society, that New York City is an enemy, filled with sin. The city erases identity in exchange for status, which O. Henry argues, leaves its citizens with a net gain equal to or less than nothing. Jack and William's experiences in New York City illustrate a teaching on nonconformity. Sometimes, one will be preserved by it, and other times, one's adamant nonconformity will have a negative impact on one's life.

THE STRUCTURE OF 'WALDEN'

Walden consists of eighteen chapters in all. They are" 'Economy', Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,' 'Reading' Sounds', Solitude,' ' Visitors' ' The Bean Field', ' The Village' ' The Ponds', 'Baker Farm ', ' Higher Laws' 'Brute Neighbors' ' House – Warming' ' Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors' ' Winter Animals', ' The Pond in Winter', 'Spring' and Conclusion'.

The notice of this book's appearance was carried in the Week, but it was delayed for five years because the former work proved a failure. Thus, it was ready by 1849 and appeared in 1854. Therefore, Thoreau utilized the gap –time in revising and recasting the material. As a result, Walden turned out to be a real gem, though this can't be said about A Week. In the wordsof F.O. Mattheiessen, Walden has 'the firmness with which Theoreau binds his successive links," and has demonstrated "the ordered whole." And Spiller thinks, " It is a packed book, beautifully and economically written; among many things the autobiography of a mind and body is in cooperation enjoying fullness of living. The structure of the whole is based on the framework of the author's life at the pond; its sense of time established by the passage of the seasons, through summer, autumn, and winter to triumphant spring – the year Itself is a symbol of man's lifetime. As in the Week, and with like purpose, Thoreau did not stick to the chronology of his stay, but considerably shortened it. Itsmay topics and reflections, arranged with a skillful eye on contrast or argument, are joined with nearly managed links and transitions." We shall, hereafter, examine the structure of Walden chapter wise.

The first chapter of Walden is 'Economy'. In it Thoreau discusses the best method of arranging the practical circumstances of one's life to reap the maximum advantage. He terms it "that economy of living which is synonymous with philosophy." For Thoreau, philosophy meant an intelligent shaping of one's way of life, not mere idle speculation. To him, man seeks self-realization, and man should strive to solve the problems standing in his way. Man has to work to provide himself with food, clothing, shelter, furnishings, and social entertainment, but he must do it with utter simplicity and with as little effort as possible, so that he should have enough leisure to understand 'reality'. The whole moral life of man and the strength of his knowledge are built on his practical dependence on nature, which is the real source of man's spiritual consciousness and inspiration. Walden is the truest expression

of this consciousness. It begins with a practical plan for ordering one's life, and it ends with an enthusiastic prediction of the results one may expect.

In 'Economy,' the recurrent metaphors are: 'inward spring' and 'inward morning'. One spring day, for instance, Thoreau sees a half-thawed snake run into the water and lie on the bottom, and adds: "It appeared to me that for a like reason men remain in their present low and primitive condition' but if they should feel the influence of the spring of springs arousing them, they would of necessity rise to a higher and more ethereal life." And again, "They were pleasant spring days, in which the winder f man's discontent was thawing as well as the earth." An overall glance at Walden would make it clear that the rotation of seasons actually provides the axis of its structure.

The next chapter is "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,' which sets forth the aims and objectives of Thoreau's purposeful living. In this chapter, the key-image is that of the morning, " Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep." Earlier "Morning brings back the heroic ages" and "All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning time and in a morning atmosphere Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour."

At the very outset of Walden, Thoreau makes a statement of his intentions, and what follows is its practical demonstration, In his view, the double face of life is no longer ' truth' and 'fact,' but rather 'reality' and 'sham'. He thinks that knowledge should not be indiscriminate or acquired simply for its own sake; it must have some higher goal to follow. To the author,' Truth' is pragmatic, based on the study of facts, and it must "flowed out" in one's life. By leading the life of discovered truths, one can come in contact with 'reality' To arrive at ' reality' is a hard nut to crack, since it dwells beside "a hard bottom and rocks." man can reach it by living close to Nature, which is Truth. Moreover, 'reality' is not an absolute term; it depends on the nature bring about the desired results, he has to educate himself.

To be plain enough, the structure of Walden is not very intricate. The cycle of seasons, as stated above, provides it with a framework. As contrasted with 'springs,' it has also the winter months. The very titles of the chapters make it clear: 'Former inhabitants and Winter Visitors,' 'Winter Animals'. 'The pond in winter.Winter with its retraction of life and freezing over stands for sleep or loss, from which man awakens to the discovery of

himself and the “infinite extent” of his relations. ‘spring’ declares that “Walden was dead and alive again”. The wakefulness and the renewal of joy of the last chapter depend entirely on period of self-discovery which preceded it.

The first two chapters, thus, introduce the specific aims of the mode of purposeful living. The following chapters represent stages in the year’s adventure, starting with the chapter on ‘Reading,’ It is not a discussion of authors, but of intellectual education, concerning all men, not simply readers. The ‘classics’ are defined as those books which tell us most about ‘reality’, and therefore have perennial freshness. Good books are fine companions, whereas, newspapers and popular novels are cheap things. Valuable books thought Thoreau, come from philosophers. They are useful, and furnish us with the real material for cultural improvement. At the end of the chapter, Thoreau pleads for an expansion of schools and libraries: “ It is time that villagers were universities” so that we may “throw one arch at least over the darker gulf of ignorance which surrounds us.”

The next chapter is ‘Sounds’, which stresses the ‘language’ of things, as contrasted with the ‘language’ of men dealt with in the preceding chapter. The author warns us against the “danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak without metaphor, which alone is copious and standard.’

This chapter depicts a typical day of sounds, from early morning, through the afternoon, with its freight train, to the evening, and night, with its famous owls and frogs. This serves as a formal introduction to life at Walden Pond. It concluded with the discussion of the cock- crow, and thus returns to the theme of morning; which makes men “unspeakably healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

The next two chapters ‘Solitude’ and Visitors’ concentrate on communication. Thoreau rejects here what is profane and superficial. Nature is the storehouse of sincerity and impartiality, he pleads, Society creates loneliness and fear, which can be dispelled by constant with Nature. A man is never alone if he is aware of his non-human relationships. “The value of man is not in his skin, that we should touch him.” Solitude gives man a chance to draw closer to Nature, the living reality: ‘Solitude is an affirmation of trust in the indescribable innocence and beneficence of nature.” It is against this scale that socialrelations can be judged. Real distance is that when we fail to communicate with another.

The next chapters, 'The Bean Fields' and 'The Village,' do not represent a further exploration of what is wild or unknown. As beans are only another kind of weed, "The attached me to earth, and so I got strength like Antaeus." The cultivation of beans reminds man of "the prodigality, magnanimity, and impartiality of nature" – "the soundest basis for our trust and freedom from anxiety." Planted grain symbolizes hope the hope of feeding mankind.

'The Village' emphasizes not society, but getting lost from it, its roads and land-marks.

'The Ponds' which is the next chapter, identifies Walden Pond as the vital centre: "It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature" Here nature is examined in a broader perspective. The facts in Nature provide the ultimate foundations of all human enterprises.

The next chapter 'Baker Farm', describes and unforeseen adventure, due to a rainstorm that interrupts Thoreau's fishing. it provides" a pattern for any adventure and meeting with strangers," for 'Baker Farm' is another country than one's own. "We should have come home from afar; from adventures, and perils, and discoveries everyday, with new experience and characters."

The next chapter, 'Higher Laws,' apparently deals with dualism, 'Spiritual and animal, and thus is contradictory to the author' other views. The animal' is characterized by " unrestrained appetite and predatory practices." Whereas the 'higher' stands for the otherworldly values in life. As we find constant growth in an individual from the 'animal' to the 'higher', so is also the case with the race. 'Higher' morals, as Thoreau thinks, are the discipline of the animal in man, of his slothfulness and sensuality. In many a puritanical passage, he emphasizes 'purity' and 'chastity': "Nature is hard to overcome, but she must be overcome". Thereafter he takes up the question of sexual energy, which can be unclean, or inspiring and invigorating. He attributes all great 'spiritual' achievements of the race to chastity. He holds that natural laws support the development of the spiritual man. He suggests that 'Laws' mean self- regulations he, however, does not identify 'higher laws' with natural laws; nature may be moral or amoral as man takes it.

The next chapter, 'Brute Neighbors.' makes an attempt at analysing the relations existing between the 'spiritual' in man and nature. Curiously enough, the chapter is set next to 'Higher Laws' to underline the contrast. It begins with a dialogue between a 'Hermit' and

a ‘Poet’ (identifiable with Theorea and his friend, Channing). It is written in a humourous tone. The chapter deals with a close observation of various animals – the mouse, the patridge, ants, etc. ‘The Battle of the Ants’ is the record of Thoreau’s observatory power and his immaculate skill of description of such minute things as the ants.

‘House Warning’ is the next chapter dealing with the theme of the approach of winter and bringing of fire into the house. Winter stresses the fact that man is rooted in nature. The author adopts the same methods to warm himself as some other animals: “even the wildest animals love comfort and warmth as well as men; and they survive only because they are so careful to secure them.” Civilization means only improved methods. “The animal merely makes a bed, which he warms with his body, in a sheltered place; but man, having discovered fire, boxes up some air in a spacious apartment, and warms that,instead of robbing himself of his bed, in which he can move about divested of more cumbrous clothing, maintain a kind of summer in the midst of winter and by means of windows even admit the light, and with a lamp lengthen out the day. Thus he goes a step or two beyond instinct and saves a little time for the fine arts.”

The next chapter is ‘Former Inhabitants’ and ‘Winter Visitors’. It deals with the life indoors a natural sequence to ‘House- Warming.’ Thoreau waits for “the Visitor who never comes.”

The following chapter, ‘Winter Animals’, contains only a summary of observed facts with as good deal of comment. Like the preceding chapter, this one is also written in a low key. As against this, the chapters that follow have an exuberant rise of spirits.

The next chapter, ‘The Pond In Winter’, has three sections. The first section in brief and is about a dreamy and psychological event. The middle section, which is the longest, is devoted to the measurement of the popnd. The measurement of the pond becomes for Thoreau the metaphor of exploration of man’s own depth. Walden Pond is only as deep as one’s self, depending on the extent of its service to the imagination. The mind of man thrives and develops by meeting and coming to terms with the world he lives in. Man can discover himself only when he discovers facts outside of himself. In the last and concluding section, the author an exalted and cosmopolitan vision of the Pond: The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. With favoring winds it is wafted past the site of the fabulous islands of Atlantis and the Hesperides, makes the periplus of Hanno,

and floating by Ternate and Tidore and the mouth of the Persian Gulf, melts in the tropic gales of the Indian seas, and is landed in ports of which Alexander only heard the names.

'Spring' is the last but one chapter in Walden. Its theme is the arrival of the spring season, which gives an invitation to enter a new season of hope and self-exploration ; " The first sparrow of spring! The year beginning with younger hope than ever ! The faint silvery warbling heard over the partially bare and moist fields from the bluebird, the song sparrow, and the red wing, as if the last flakes if winter tinkled as they fell ! What at such time are histories, chronologies, traditions and all written revelations ? The brooks sing carols and glees to the spring." Spring comes as a symbol of bright prospects, high hopes, and of eternity : "So our human life but dies down to its root, and still puts forth its green blade to eternity."

Last of all comes 'Conclusion", which reiterates of reawakened spiritual life - the flooding river of our lives." The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will be drawn out all our muskrats." And then, "The light which puts our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star."

Thus the structure of Walden is complete with the dance of the seasons- summer, winter and spring – around the year, which is a symbol of man's full life on this earth.

Thoreau's Style in "Walden"

Thoreau's Walden is regarded as a masterpiece in American letters. It is the work of a conscious artist, who took every care to drop the lapses, if any. It is not loose in construction. The stylist is at work here.

It may be said that A Week by Thoreau is weak in its narrative and organization, but this charge can's be sustained in case of Warden. Warden is so well-knit and so well-planned that its each sentence, each paragraph, and each chapter is an inlaid precious stone, removing which would damage the entire structure of the edifice. The basic unifying device used in it is the year or the cyclic change of season. Thoreau's stay at Walden Pond extends beyond the cycle of one year. He lived there for two years, two months and two days, but he compressed the period into a single year. This device enables Thoreau to incur artistic wholeness into his work, without any risk of repeating the relation of the year. Walden, if we remember aright, opens with the cutting down of the pine trees in March and

the building up of the cabin through the spring. In summer he moves into the cabin and tends his bean field. In the autumn he builds his fireplace and makes his house warm. In the winter he observes his neighbours-human, animal and inanimate. Then the book closes up with an account of the ice-break on the pond and the renaissance of spring. Thus, the author has, with great care and artistry, gone round the year observing and mapping the changes it brought about in successive seasons. Lynden Shanley in his interesting work, The making of Walden, has dwelt at some length on the theme of the cyclic movement of the year.

In Walden, each individual chapter has its fixed place, whence it can't be dislodged without an artistic loss. There is a good poise, a beautiful contrast to be seen herein, which adds to the charm of the book. It helps the author to exploit the situation in its totality. For instance, the spiritual is followed by the mundane, such as in 'Higher Law' and 'Brute Neighbours.'

Similarly the practical and the ideal are placed side by side, such as in 'Economy' and 'Where I Lived, and What I Lived For'; the human and the animal are grouped together at close quarters, such as in 'Winter Visitors' and 'Winter Animals.' Contrast is to be seen at work in the arrangement of chapters like 'Solitude' and 'Visitors'; 'The Pond in Winter' and 'Spring' are chronologically placed together. It is noteworthy that the three major expository chapters ('Economy', 'Higher Law' and 'Conclusion' are placed strategically at the beginning middle, and end of the book.

Walden is structured on an elaborate metaphor of a traveller, who explores the very ground he moves on. It describes a practical expression to discover how far 'the higher potentialities of a human being can be developed, when one lives deliberately.' This evolution is a spiritual evolution. The recurring theme in Walden is that of spiritual awakening,' It appears in metaphor in almost every chapter, the commonest symbols being those of spring, morning and the sun. In the chapter 'Where I Lived and What I Live For', we have the description of dawn or morning in almost every paragraph. It is also reflected in the overall structure of the book. The seasonal change from winter to spring is exploited metaphorically at the end " to describe the awakening of the human being to self-realization, well-being, and development."

First of all, Walden has what might be called " an absolute form" an overall shape and symmetry independent of the content and function of each individual section. These

sections seem to gather themselves into two groups roughly balanced around a longer central section. 'The Pond'. Secondly, Walden has a narrative patter, taking the reader through a sequence in time! Though Thoreau often moves outside this pattern, essentially he retains it, alluding to the season, month and even date. This preserves the normal progress of time organic in nature, as different from man's tendency to accelerate time in his world. On the conception of time as organic in nature Thoreau bases his myth of spiritual rebirth.

Thirdly, Thoreau is quite clearly trying not only to give the story of his sojourn at the pond, but to give to the reader to body of information about the two worlds of man and nature. In this connection, " Where I Lived and What I Lived For' is the pivotal section in Walden. Between this chapter and 'The Ponds' he deals with six topics, giving us his main activities and principles. Between 'The Ponds' and the conclusion of chapters drift in different directions, meeting again towards the close of the book: from the first half (of the book), they treat earlier subjects such as Thoreau's habits, his walks, his visitors, animal neighbours and co-tenants and the ever present, ever changing pond, in the context of new seasons, especially winter. But the basic pattern here in expository.

The fourth and fifth patterns are mutually connected- Walden's myth and rhetoric. The myth is a content of Walden's wearing, the rhetoric is the means by which the verbal image4s, symbols and gestures of myth come to the reader. Walden sets forth not one, but two myths : entry into nature and rebirth through nature. Thoreau establishes how man can unite with nature and through union be spiritually reborn. The following six chapters should be taken as pairs :' Reading' and ,' Sounds' ,'Solitude' and Visitors, The Bean-Field' and 'The Village'—activities of private life as contrasted with activities of public life.

Each of these chapters has a special rhetorical function. 'Reading' shows how to give ourselves to Walden ; 'Solitude' under what conditions it is best to do so; and the ending of ' The Village' when Thoreau cries out, 'Wherever a man goes, men will pursue and paw him with their dirty institutions, " shows to what a desperate state we have come, and thereby completes our mental and spiritual derangement and makes us eager for the reassurance of 'The Ponds". Through the first six chapters of Walden, Thoreau brings his myth of entry nature closer to its fulfillment in 'The Ponds'.

Thoreau takes every care and pain in constructing the individual chapters and paragraphs. We have examined the chapters already. Thoreau's paragraphs are unusually long. Walden contains only 423 paragraphs, an average of only slightly more than one a page in the typical edition. But so logically are they developed that one does not ordinarily notice their length. Their structure is widely varied. However, one of the favourite devices of Thoreau has been his use of the climax ending. The reader may mark how neatly Thoreau sums up the entire paragraph in the final sentence. Not only this much, he usually carried it one step beyond, with an added thrust if the paragraph is satirical, with a broader concept if the paragraph are independent essays in themselves and can stand along. But they can't move from their specific niche without damaging the book's structure.

Thoreau's sentences are also often unusually long. One can very easily find one half a page in length at least. But again, his sentences are strongly tight in construction and one does not have difficulty with their syntax and is hardly aware of their complexity. Mark the length and construction of the following two sentences :

1. "The real attractions of the Hallowell farm, to me, were: its complete retirement being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and the barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and last occupant; the hollow and lichen covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark."

2. " They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddle-bow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished."

These sentences look like paragraphs in length. Perhaps, Thoreau tried to write in Milton's grand style in prose; perhaps, he wanted to imitate the Latinized syntax and style of Thomas Browne, and we know that he was terribly in the grip of the ancients like Homer,

and that he admired the style of both Milton and Brown for their grandiloquence of sobriety.

Perhaps the most notable characteristic of Thoreau's word-choice is the size of his vocabulary. Walden is sure to send the serious student to a dictionary. In a random sampling, we find such words as umbrageous, integument, ailment deliquium and periplus. Still Thoreau was not slowly in the selection and usage of words. He simply searches for the most striking words and phrases for each situation.

Another characteristic of Thoreau's prose is his allusiveness and references. If called for, he echoed a biblical phrase, quoted from a metaphysical poet, translated a few words from an ancient classic made an allusion to a Greek god or goddess, cited an authority on early American history and tossed in a metaphor from a Hindu Scripture. By his allusive power, Thoreau arouses curiosity in the serious reader to devote himself to a knowledge of the used terms. Moreover, whatever he alludes to is easily graspable even without a fore-knowledge of it.

A third characteristic is his constant use of figurative speech. Going through Walden, one may mark illusions ('Twelve labours of Hercules") metaphors ("No time to be anything but a machine") rhetorical questions ("Does any divinity stir within him?") alliteration ("fetch fresh fuel") analogy ("Man's body is a stove"), puns ("cooked ….. a la mode") epanorthosis ("more and richer food, larger and more splendid houses, fine and more abundant clothing"), archaism (" vert") parables (about the Indian selling his basket), similies ("grew like exogenous planst"), meiosis ("not being the owner, but merely a squatter") anti-stophe ("men are not so much the keepers of herds as herds are the keepers of men"), oxymoron ("pious slave-breeder"), epizeuxis ("Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity"), anaphore ("one man…..one house….one vessel") litotes ("Yet not a few…"), antithesis ("why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?"), portmanteau words("realometer"), metonomy ("My head is hands and feet") contrast ("Their train of clouds…..going to heaven while the ears are going to Boston"), onomatopoeia ("tr-r-r oonk"),paradox ("I have a great deal of company in my house; especially in the morning, when nobody calls"), personification ("an elderly dame(nature), too dwells in my neighborhood") synecdoche ("asks the black bonnet of the gray coat"), irony ("I felt proud to know that the liberties of Massachusetts and of our fatherland were in such safe keeping"), apostrophe ("Walden, is it you?") and hyperbole

("I could sometimes eat a fried rat with a good relish"). And this list could be extended almost indefinitely.

But the most important characteristic of Thoreau's word choice is its vividness. Emerson once remarked of Thoreau: " In reading him, I find the same thought, the same spirit that is in me, but he takes a step beyond and illustrates by excellent images that which I should have conveyed in a sleepy generality". Thoreau's words are primarily sensory. He makes us feel through the senses. His descriptions of Nature are particularly interesting. One may recall Channing's epithet for him in this regard. Mark Thoreau's power of observation in the following

"Ilove the wild not less than the good. The wildness and adventure that
are in fishing still recommend it to me. I like sometimes to take rank hold On life and spend my day more as the animals do. Perhaps I have owed to this employment and to hunting, when quite young, my closest acquaintance with Nature".

Thoreau was skilled enough to express the abstract in concrete terms, such as in the following:

"Every man is the builder of a temple, called his body, to

The god he worships, after a style purely his own, nor can he
Get off by hammering marble instead. We are sculptors and painters,
And our material is our own flesh and blood and bones. Any nobleness
Begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to
Imbrute them".

Looking at these examples and many more interspersed through out Walden, one may safely, say that Thoreau was the first American to write a modern prose and that his Warden is one of the masterpieces of American literature. Hemingway, Frost, Sinclair Lewis, Proust, Willa Cather, Ellen Glasgow, E.B.White and Miller praised his style.

THE POND AND THE SYMBOL

Thoreau's mane will always be associated with the Walden Pond, Where he carried on his famous experiment in living. The Pond has in a way, become "one of the best illustrations of Yeats's statement that "there may be a landscape that is Symbolical of some spiritual condition." (Autobiographies, London. 1955, P, 74), and of Thoreau's statement that "this world is but canvas to our imagination" (Weak, P. 246 : Wednesday')" Thus the Pond was place fit Thoreau's contemplation and giving spurt to his imagination. It would be

erroneous to take it physically, though the author gives it measured dimensions; that it was "half a mile long and a mile and three quarters in circumference," that its "line of greatest length intersected the line of greatest breadth exactly at the point of greatest depth," and that its temperature on the 6^{th} of March, 1857 was 32^{o} in the middle and 33^{o} near the shore. Only the symbolical interpretation of the Pond and Walden would prove an adequate interpretation, because Thoreau conveys different meanings to different readers. To a common reader, Thoreau is primarily the naturalist and hence 'master of the art of descriptive writing". To some Thoreau is "an escapist," while to some others he is "a subtle satirist of contemporary civilization."

At the higher level, Walden is really spiritual biography. Some readers take it as an attempt at 'self-reform'. It is the author's quest for spiritual scales of living. To Thoreau, the Pond stood for the outside world by correspondence with which he defined and expressed his inner being with the aid of myth and rhetoric. For spiritual awareness, Thoreau led the life of utter economy and dispossessions.

Desai in his scholarly article makes a sound comparison between Thoreau's Walden and Yeast's Byzantium", both being perfect pieces of art and symbolically significant. Thus, he writes, " …… Walden Pond becomes-among other things-a symbol of art for Thoreau; that he invests it with qualities of pe3rmannence and perfection and believes, as did yeast later, that through the process of creating this work of art he, the artist, could change inwardly at approaching the condition that h is are represented. "

First of all, Thoreau in his treatment imparts to the Pond a non-physical dimension. In this way, he seems to suggest that the Pond exists on levels other than purely naturalistic one. One must bear in mind that, to Thoreau, "Walden is melting apace" during the onrush of spring. He also refers to it as "Walden was dead and is alive again."2 Similarly, Thoreau proposes that Walden by called "God's drop" due to its remarkable serenity and purity 3 and confers upon it "an immortality that transcends its physical endurance in time and space, for it partakes of eternity." One should also remember that Thoreau at the Pond was sometimes visited by a mysterious stranger, as mentioned by him in the chapter 'Solitude' in Walden. It is not possible to identify the visitor unless we take it as his own self.

The Pond as a work of art carries within itself a quality of timelessness that leaves it undefiled by impurity. "It possesses an obsolete beauty that preserves it from change and decay." Time and space do not touch it, nor can they stale it. Thoreau, as though he has

touched the still point of Eliot, describes Walden as “a perfect forest mirror set around with stones …….. its surface ever fresh.”

Walden: Symbol of Art:

According to Desai, Walden Pond, inlaid with precious stones, is “a symbol of art that triumphs over time and change.”5 Elsewhere Thoreau pictures Walden as “a gem of the first water which Concord wears in her coronet,”6 and the pickerel of Walden as “the pearls, the animalized nuclei or crystals of the Walden water.” Thus, Walden represents a state of unchanging perfection comparable to Blake’s Jerusalem, Keats’s Grecian Urn, Yeat’s Byzantium. It would not be far from truth that Thoreau made Nature the starting point of the journey towards art. Walden, as Thoreau treats it, remains immune to storms, dust, and impurities that can’t dim its surface. The Pond is not quite a symbol of Thoreau himself, who is surely to decay and die one day: rather it represents Thoreau’s finished work of art-the perfection of the artist’s creation as set against the imperfection of the artist as man. In short. Thoreau was building hers “the artifice of eternity” His sojourn alongside the pond represents his artistic self, while the Pond stands for his art, namely the book Walden.

The artistic self- moving along the Pond has been expressed by Thoreau in different symbolical forms: in the building of his chimney whose “importance and dependence are apparent,” in identifying himself, not with Walden Pond but with its “stony shore”; in depicting himself if in the role of a maker (i.e., the artist as maker) sitting in his boat and playing the flute while the fishes, charmed, hover round him and the moon travels “over the ribbed bottom, which was stewed with the wrecks of the forest.”

In the words of Desai, “Thoreau’s symbols of permanence and creation are the outcome of an artistic sensibility that detaches itself from the stream of liife and establishes its own lonely outpost on the frontiers of human consciousness. His self-exile to the shore of Walden Pond stands for the detachment of the artist, or Thoreau himself puts it in the chapter ‘Solitude’:

However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but a spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it, and that is no more I than it is you, when the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned.

So also is Thoreau's Walden Pond a work of the imagination only, 'a fiction', a dream of passion' – to employ Hamlet's terminology – and though the pond elicits from Thoreau much precise and objective description, it becomes clear to the sensitive reader that the significance it claims is more the consequence of the workmanship of Thoreau, the artificer, than of Thoreau, the naturalist. Perhaps this distinction between the imaginative pond and the real pond explains Thoreau's own quite cheerful expectation of 'the ornamental grounds of villas' dotting the shores of the pond at some future time ……"

Walden : A Search of the Self :

Thoreau retired to Walden for a purposeful experiment and a meaningful living. He lived there for over two years, not even a single day more than really required. He had gone there to be able to hear the winds whispering among the reeds, to watch the progress of the seasons, and to better himself, Many contem-poraries thought of him as an escapist, a poseur, a sheer eccentric, a 'concentrated crank', etc. R. L. Stevenson considered him as a 'skulker.' But this is going the negative way, because Thoreau has said himself: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life. I wanted to live deep and suck all the marrow of life." This retreat was meant to make a contented self and to lead a happy life. His attitude posed a threat to his neighbors, and a threat to the industrial civilization of the West and of America. Thoreau maintained that it was "more important to live than to make a living." And real living is the living without so many wants and living." And real living is the living without so many wants and so many possessions. Herein lies the secret of happy life, - the self-satisfaction. The retreat to Walden was, therefore, not owing to an economic fore-thought, but to a spiritual forethought. Thoreau had gone there to discover his genius, his real self, as the Hindu philosopher would put it. Forest would be the fittest place to attain wisdom and self – realization. Hence Thoreau's recourse to it !

Nature and the Symbol:

Thoreau as a Transcendentalist felt spiritual forces at work everywhere. He saw the whole realm of the spirit pervading the atmosphere. Nature was another name for divinity. Thoreau had a marvelous intuitive power, which helped him, to a great extent, to build up a strong philosophy of the self. He held that he had within himself "all that mattered most."

Thoreau's Transcendentalism involved an attitude toward Nature which may be summarized, as Emerson did in his 'Nature':

(a) Words are signs of natural facts.

(b) Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.

(c) Nature is the symbol of spirit.

Thoreau went to Nature as a source of beauty, peace and privacy. He found Nature to be "symbolic of spiritual facts." Thoreau was a man of unique tastes and temperament. He was a poet naturalist, a creative thinker endowed with weighted wings; he was also an ascetic with a passion for living. Physical appearances carried an additional meaning for him in the Bradleyan sense. Thus the Pond, the dawn the morn, the change of seasons, the sun's warmth, all had for him a unique message and stirring. His elevation of Nature leads him into poetic guesses in an inspired way., For example, the morning often revealed something to him; it was the best hour when all the wonderful events, including the attainment of true knowledge, of the worlds happened. It was, in brief, suggestive of the beautiful dawn of wisdom. Similarly, the fresh grass in spring "suggests how our life but died down to its roots and still puts forth blades to eternity."

The changes in seasons bring in the changed phases in Thoreau's own life. He observes: "The seasons and all their changes are in me." Thoreau employs language not as a medium of artistic expression or literary grace, but as a medium of artistic expression or literary grace, but as a medium to exercise its transcendental function. Therefore, a Thoreau reader should approach him with an open heart and free mind, as there is, almost always, a symbolic touch in his writings.

The Pond and the Symbol:

The Pond forms the central, key image in Walden. It gives it its contents and pattern. It is "the keystone of the arch of Walden's absolute form." It also marks a major stage in the furtherance of Walden's narrative movement. It reflects that movement in miniature, showing within itself "Thoreau's double chronology of compression into one year and extension far chronology of compression into one year and extension far beyond." It also completes the first half of Walden's exposition and marks an important shift to the second half. It, however, does more than this. It invites us to think poetically rather than logically or dialectically, and thus frees us from the challenge and controversy of the first half of the book and takes us into an innermost confidence that the earlier sections don't do. The Pond, While we are busy in poetic speculation, provides us a window to like into the world of Nature.

Symbolically speaking, the Pond tells us of the need for a seasonal renewal from the muddy, mundane, to the pure, solitary life, a life cleansed by regular change and so reflecting heave. The Pond (or Ponds) following 'The Village, identifies 'Walden Pond' as the vital centre. "It is earth's eye, liking into which the beholder measures his own nature." The figure of the Pond is not fully exploited until towards the close of Walden, when the bottom is measured in the dead of winter. There had been a fond legend around this figure, - the local inhabitants took it as bottomless. But by measuring its length, breadth, and depth, Thoreau dispels the legend. But Walden is still not too deep for Imagination. The Pond as a symbol, therefore, for self-exploration must answer human nature, depth for depth.

"What if all ponds were shallow? The minds of men too would be shallow, men would not think sufficiently deep'.

Thoreau says, "I am thankful that this pond was made deep and pure for a symbol. While men believe in the infinite, some ponds will be thought bottomless.'

The significant metaphor of Walden becomes the exploration of one's own surroundings. One finds oneself wherever one is. Thus the Walden Pond is only as deep as one's self depending on the extent of its service to the imagination, since Nature provides the only reliable measurements of man, The man's mind develops in close touch with the world he lives in. Self-discovery is, thus, associated with the discovery of fact outside oneself. The Pond's depth and purity, thus, reflect the depth and purity of man's self. On both sides the quest is bottomless or eternal. In the early chapter 'The Ponds'. Thoreau says, "Yet this Pond is so remarkable for its depth and purity as to merit a particular description.' The colour of Walden Pond is Thoreau's personal frontier between the natural and the divine. "Walden is blue at one time and green at another, even from the same point of view lying between the earth and the heavens, it partakes of the colour of both." Walden is thus green like the earth and blue like the sky. It shares the colors of both. And this suggests the merging of heaven and earth, divine and natural.

Another important symbol is that of the sun. Much of Walden is a development of the ambiguities of sun imagery. Walden begins with the theme: "Be alert and healthy, nature remembers that the sun arose clear": it ends: "There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star," The sun dispelling mist, smoke, and darkness symbolizes Thoreau's rebirth at Walden. "Walden is, in fact, a vast rebirth ritual, the purest and most complete in American Literature." The entire frame work of the book is based on the basic rebirth

pattern, the death being symbolized by winter, which ends with the magical emergence of spring, which heralds the dawn of a new, vital life.

Thoreau's link with the Pond is nowhere expressed more sincerely than in the following sentences: "It is continually receiving new life and motion form above." "It is intermediate in nature between land and sky." Here the key-image is 'sprit' with ascending meaning of reach, flow of air, life-principle and possibly God. Thus, through Nature man is reconciled with Divinity.

The "rise and fall of Walden at long intervals" serves to purify the shore regularly. It takes away the shrubby groubby on the bank since the last rise – "pitchpines, birches, alders, aspens, and others – and falling again, leaves an unobstructed thereby implies, perhaps, that man's spirit, which is sometimes overpowered with material wants, finally "emerges triumphant by rejecting the infringement of the material."

In the second half, however, Thoreau purposely adopts a new manner to wait the second half of his journey on earth. Here the tone changes. In the Sections dealing with winter, Thoreau's tone is personal and quiet. IN them perhaps, he wants to suggest "his myth of spiritual sleep or death followed by the miraculous rebirth or reawakening of sprung at which time the tone of rhetoric passes out of revelry and rises swiftly to affirmation and exultation." The myth of birth, death, and rebirth is made clear in the final section of Walden. The reader is prepared in the earlier sections to trace the second myth of seasonal change in the latter sections. This makes the Pond the central section of Walden. We, thus, mark that, "Thoreau starts with Walden Pond and then takes a South Western sweep across Concord from Flint's Pond to Goose Pond to Fair Heaven."

We may also note the fact that the narrator of Walden is the saint Thoreau, not the objective Thoreau. As Stanley Edgar Hyman points out, the whole of Walden runs into images of death and rebirth – "rebirth accomplished by proper religious rites of purification, sanctification, praise and dedication."

Another notable feature about Thoreau is that he measured the cost of living not by material standards, but by the spiritual scales. He said, "Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they save a 100 stitches today to save nine tomorrow. AS for work we haven't any of consequence."

Conclusion:

Walden, on one level, is a literal record of one man's experience. There is no doubt that Thoreau attached a large intrinsic importance to the facts of his life at Walden Pond: the rude shelter, the simple diet, the brute neighbors, and the rest. To Thoreau, high thinking seemed to require plain living. But he recognized the symbolical character of what he did and said, and his larger meaning is missed by the reader who dismisses the book with the remark, "I don't want to live in a one-room shack." Thoreau's aim was, in his best phrase, to "adventure on life", and this can be done (as Thoreau was aware) under physical conditions other than the precise ones that he himself chose. The lessons of Walden can applied under various conditions and in other surroundings.

Norman Holmes Pearson has called Walden "an extended metaphor of living." The cabin itself may stand for a withdrawal from the world. But it is not a hermit's retreat, or an escape from the world. It is a withdrawal perhaps necessary for the accomplishment of some private business. The withdrawal itself is a form of action (in this case, the gathering of materials) for a book), and it is followed logically by a complementary action: Thoreau returns to the world with increased resources and strength. His participation in the life of man, and his contribution to that life, are enhanced by the Walden experience.

In Walden, "there is the large, overall allegory, and there are the particular, subordinate allegories." Thoreau beautifully suggests the general direction that a symbolical reading of Walden may well take, when he says near the end, 'I have learned this, at may well take, when he says near the end, 'I have learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and Endeavour's to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

MOBY DICK

HERMAN MELVILLE

Moby Dick has several layers of meaning. It underlines the theme of the alienation of man from his environment, and the stresses the dangers of alienation. It has resulted from extreme self-dependence and a sense of egotism in Ahab. Ahab with his leg crunched by the White Whale bears a physical disability and a scar which has engendered a monomania driving him to hunt the White Whale. The Loneliness and sufferings have intensified his anguish and he has piled his ire upon the hump of the While Whale. "Yet when by this collision freed to turn towards home, and for long months of days and weeks, Ahab and anguish lay stretched together in one hammock, rounding in mid- winter that

dreary, howling, Patagonian cape; then it was , that his torn body and jashed soul bled into one another and so interfusing, made him mad" On way back home Ahab's monomania overcomes him and his loneliness transforms his into a raving lunatic. Ahab's isolation from society is a product of his egoistical 'self- reliance' as Newton Arvin has mentioned. His flaw is not so much excessive arrogance, as the extreme self-dependence. The question of self-absorbed the attention of the concord Transcendentalist in the nineteenth century. R.W.Emerson, Whitman Melville and Thoreau explicated the meaning of self in their own way. For the transcendentalists the self -signified even the spiritual self, full of tremendous possibilities. Melville reveals the dangers of 'solipsism or hypnotic self-regard.' Ishmael alienated from the society, emphasizes the fact in the opening chapter. Ishmael depicts "watergazers" in the insular city of the Manhattoess" posted like silent sentinels all around the town".. Thousands of persons are engaged in the ocean reveries. The water and contemplation go together. Melville brings in the mythological anecdote of Narcissus who not being able to grasp his own image plunged into the water." " Surely, all this is not without meaning. And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life." This is the danger of the self-absorption. Ahab, like Narcissus in also a water gazer. He sees his own image while peeping in water in "profound and unknowable abyss of nature". Even the White Whale is the creation of his imagination.

The theme of alienation is a dominant theme of the novel. Ishmael like Ahab has been exiled and alienated. The crew of the 'Piqued' and 'isolates'. Ishmael's trusted ally is the pagan Queequeg. He has been created in his father's own image. Melville's father was jailed for his indebtedness and he died there when Melville was a boy. Melville went to sea and his predicament is Ishmael's predicament. Moreover, Ishmael is not in a position to arrive at any conclusion. His mind is torn with the doubts and dilemma and he cannot find any solution of philosophical questions. It is his uncertain personal vision, the contemplation of the self which is left for him. This uncertainty or lack of final solution has heightened his agony.

The isolation was the general problem of the nineteenth century materialistic society of America. The political degeneration, gross materialism, and the spiritual degradation of Christianity caused a sense of disenchantment. Man felt isolated from his

environment. Melville stressed this escape from society in most of his novels. His heart was spiritually lacerated and he searches a society or land which is devoid of these ills.

The man who is egotistical and depends on himself only endangers his position. The extreme self-reliance and solipsism pose dangers. “Death-spiritual, emotional, physical is the price of self-reliance when it is pushed to the point of solipsism where world has no existence apart from the all sufficient self”. This universe is full of horrors and contradictions. If the hero in this world is engrossed in his self, chooses a course of action which is wrong, he is bound to face difficulties. The novel ‘Moby Dick’ accentuates the vices of alienation and egotism. The alternative to the egotism is cosmic piety. Richard Chase quoting Arvin remarks about the alternative to the egotism:-

On one level it is an intuition that carries us beyond morality in the usual sense, into the realm of cosmic piety; on the usual ethical level, however, it is a strong intuition of human solidarity as a priceless good”

Melville refers to this ‘human solidarity’ in Moby Dick. The nineteenth century American writers have delineated this type of human solidarity in their works as ‘priceless good’ Mark Twain in Huckleberry Finn has brought Huck Finn, and escaped Nigger Jim together on the raft on which both of them have been sailing to escape the cruelties and barbarism of society, and conventions. Walt Whitman stresses this human solidarity. Ishmael, the isolate and lonely Christian in Moby Dick befriends Queequeg, the pagan harpooner from the South Seas. He turns to his alter ego Queequeg from the wolfish world. The crew of the ‘Pequod’ is a heterogeneous combination of the negro, pagan, Christian Parsee and Fedallah. This theme of the human solidarity is evident in Natty Bumpoo and his companions, and the Blithedalers and has become important where the emergence of the strong individualism has brought in its rail the dangers to this solidarity. Ahab’s egotism and water gazing have removed him from humanity, and turned him into a maniac. It is in the same ship ‘ Pequod’, the crew from difference places have subordinated their interest to share the common vicissitude.

A reference to the Doubloon, the gold coin is significant. The Doubloon is a coin, the purest virgin gold raked out of the heart of the gorgeous hills, and prepared in Ecuadorin South America. The coin has been nailed in the ‘Pequod’ and is to be owned by the person who sights the While Whale first. The gold coin has certain figures carved on it which are interpreted and explained by different characters in the light of their genius. It has borne

REPUBLICA DELECUADOR QUITO, “Zones by these letters you say the likeness of three Andes’s summits, from one a flame; a tower on another on the third a crowning cock ; while arching over all was a segment of the partitioned Zodiac, the signs all marked the equinoctial point at Libra.”

These images carved on the coin are the subject of the varied interpretations. Ahab, the egotist projects his own subjective ideas in interpreting the meaning of the three pillars. He traces his own predicament where the interpretations offers by the other characters suit their own geniuses, and are in the light of their preconceived notions. Ahab remarks about the three tops:-

“ There’s something ever egotistical in mountain-tops and towers, and all other grand and lofty things; look here, three peaks as proud as Lucifer. The firm tower, that is Ahab ; the volcano that is Ahab ; the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that too is Ahab; all are Ahab; and this round gold is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician’s glass, to each and every man but mirrors back his own mysterious self. Great pains, small gains for those who ask the world to solve them ; it cannot solve itself. Methinks now this coined sun wears a ruby face; but see !aye he enters the signs of storms, the equinox and but six months before he wheeled out of a former equinox at Aries ! From storm to storm ! So be it, then. Born in throes, tis fit that man should live in pains and die in pangs. The proud Ahab had projected his own nature in expounding the significance of the peaks. The passing of the ruddy sun from storm to storm reminds him of the fate of the man born in misery and dying in pains. Thus Ahab perceives his own self in the three summits and the round gold represents the world.

The Christian Starbuck interprets the images embossed on the coin in the light of his religion. The three pillars are Trinity and the dark vale is the valley of death. “ God girds us round and over all our gloom, the sum of righteousness still shines a beacon and hope. Stubb explains the meaning of these images in the light of his own subjective likes and dislikes. In the movement of the sun, there is a jointly and the life is accepted in this jollity. To Flask the Doubloon is a gold coin which worth sixteen dollars, and will but nine hundred sixty cigars.

The old Manxman sees his own doom in it. Queequeg with marks of tattoo sees signs of Zodiac on his person. He looks for sun in his thighs in the calf or in the bowels, and treats the doubloon as a button off some king’s trousers. The Devil Feddallah sees the

image of the sun on the coin and behaves like Lear's fool. He does not find anything in the coin and hints at the impossibility of knowledge , " I look, you look, he looks, we look, yet look, they look". He has been studying Murray's Grammar and it is in the fitness of things that reacts to the images in his own w ay.

For Ishmael the coin is the equator, that divides the world in two. There are two types of human personality; one type consists of those who are introverted, self-absorbed and see vision, and the other type is more objective and clung to life. The characters of the novels can be divided in two categories, on group seeing visions, and the other more extroverted in nature and clung to life. Diverse interpretations are difference shades of reality seen by different persons.

The symbolic meaning underlying the White Whale is also vital to the understanding of the novel. The While Whale is monolithic, gigantic, murderous, primitive and barbarous. It is an emblem of external nature which is inscrutable and vast "like nature the whale is paradoxically benign and malevolent, nourishing and destructive. It is massive, brutal, but at the same time Protean, erotically beautiful and infinitely variable. It appears to be unpredictable and mindless; yet it is controlled by certain laws. The White Whale is the image of nature.

The Whale is white and a white colour is the mixture of various colours, and yet white. The nature also is the mixture of all the colours. The whiteness stands for vivid immensity, "virginal purity, innocence, death and corruption." The whiteness enhances beauty, but, 'when divorced from kindly associations and coupled with any object terrible in itself, to heighten that terror to the furthest bounds. "This whiteness has different meanings for Ahab and Ishmael.

The novel Moby Dick has deep suggestiveness and is surcharged with the poetical significance. A sense of alienation begotten by egotistic self-absorption is throughout present. It further reveals the dangers of introversion and depicts Ahab's futile efforts to explore the baffling mysteries of nature of which the White Whale is a symbol. The work, further delineates a devotee's realisation of truth which is harsh. The Calvinistic doctrines and the stern Presbyterian faith which held many Americans minds in their grip, have also been epitomised in Moby Dick. Various themes underlying this work are connected with Moby Dick a symbol of Christ and God and also an incarnation of evil.

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

ERNEST HEMINGWAYS

1. **Catherine Barkley**

Catherine, a passive character

Catherine Barkley is a passive character. She is simple-minded. She is afraid of rain and death. She loves deeply. In fact, love is religion for her. It is also destructive. Her life is like a dream full of romance. She is 'a little crazy' as estimated by her lover Henry. But she is no aggressive nor is she self-assertive. She completely surrenders herself to Frederic Henry.

Catherine is a tall blonde girl with grey eyes and beautiful hair. She is a British nurse serving in Italy. When Rinaldi introduces her to Henry, she had just lost her fiancé in war. She is still depressed. Henry in his first meeting thinks her a little crazy. Later she herself admits that she has been somewhat disoriented in the beginning.

Catherine is impulsive. Henry takes liberties with her in their second meeting. When he holds her hand, she does not reject his advances. Emboldened by her passive response, he kisses her. Her reaction is immediate and she slaps him. But quickly she cools down. He apologises to her. She asks him If he will be good to her. He becomes more intimate. She starts crying and he consoles her. It is clear that she needs someone to fill the dead fiancé's place.

In the next meeting, Catherine ,makes Henry commit himself about his love. Even Henry who has taken his affair lightly begins to feel differently. Yet, for her love making is a game, a rotten gam. She has instinctively felt that Henry considers his affairs with her better than going to the brothel house. That is why when he says to himself that it is a game like 'bridge' she echoes him. She asks him not to pretend that he loves her. Her innocent pleadings need affirmation on the part of Henry. He says , 'I do love you'

Next, at the hospital at Milan, she once again asks him whether he truly loves her. He repeats his affirmation. She has become deeply involved with him now. She attends on him with care, without letting any other nurse go near him. She surrenders herself completely. She is ready to do anything he wants her to do.

Henry offers to marry Catherine. But she hesitates as the authorities would send her away if she gets married. Further she considers herself to be already married to him.

Nothing worries her except that she may be sent away from him. "You're my religion. You're all I've got". She declares with finality.

Catherine is pregnant. She does not feel guilty. For her, "it is natural thing' to have babies. She thinks he feels trapped perhaps. But he is not by her for he says. " You always feel trapped biologically". She feels very happy. Henry describes her as a fine simple girl.

Henry comes to Stresa to meet her after deserting the army. He has made a separate peach now. Ferguson finds fault with him for not marrying her. In fact, she rebukes both of them. But Catherine has deep faith in her lover. She continues to be submissive and gentle even at this critical moment, when they have to decide where to go. They escape to Switzerland.

Catherine is heroic and adventurous. The lovers are on their journey to Switzerland rowing the boat. She is concerned about the blisters he will get on rowing continuously. She offers to row for some time and he lets her.

The couple's life in Switzerland is one of the happiness. The biological fact of Catherine's narrow hip is a matter of concern. But this does not stop her from enjoying the life on the mountains. She is anxious to please him. She is ready to ruin him by her intense love.

Catherine develops labour pains. She is taken to the hospital at Lausanne. The pains are not regular and she feels exhausted. She cannot struggleany more and she feels death close to her. She asks Henry, "Darling, I won't die, will I?. But she does not want to die and that is because she does not want to leave him. She desperately tries to hand on. After the caesarean, she asks about her boy without knowing that the baby is still-born. The bleeding does not stop. Henry's assurances that she will be alright do not convince her. " I am going to die'. She says, then hastens to add ' I hate it'. Now she takes her impending death with courage. She says she is not a bit afraid and it is just a dirty trick. With these last words she loses conscious ness. She soon dies.

Catherine proves herself to be a courageous woman in spite of her simplicity and gentleness.

2. **Frederic Henry**

The novel deals with the development of Henry's character

A farewell to Arms is a novel about Frederic Henry's experience that shape and soften his life. He grows from the rootless person who cares for nothing to someone who becomes humanly alive. He loves wine and woman for physical pleasure. He is not a war-hero showing great heroism and valour. But he is not a coward. He is not sentimental or romantic but when he starts loving really, his love is intense and transforms him into a caring person.

Earl Rovit inhis "Learning to care" traces the development of Henry through the five books of the novel. At the beginning of the novel Henry is rootless. He has little to do with his American Identity. He does not care about anything in the world. He has volunteered to serve in the Ambulance Corps in Italy for no obvious reasons. He has nothing to do with the Italian soil. He seeks physical pleasures. There is no emotion but only emptiness in him. But though he pretends not to care, the priest concludes that he has the potential to care for other. In his first meeting with Catherine, he considers her a sex object. When she slaps him, he becomes angry but confesses that he does not love her. When he is wounded, the nearness of the death shocks him to have some value of life. He starts moving away from the uncaring Rinaldi to the priest who preaches the love of God.

In book Two, Henry consummates his love with Catherine. He has started loving her and caring for her. He is worried that he has not married her. But he remains the master not the giver. At the war front, Rinaldi is losing faith in himself while the priest is depressed that the war had not ended. In the Caporetto retreat, Henry is forced to become a deserter. He is yet to commit himself as a selfless lover of Catherine. In Book Four, he accepts the consequences of his action and realizes his obligation to care for Catherine. He understands that being in love is a religious feeling. But as predicted by Rinaldi, the caring Henry suffers greater remorse. The catastrophe is Book Five makes one concludes saying, "Frederick Henry establishes a connection with the world in his love affair and in so doing, becomes humanly alive".

Life and death seem to Henry to be of no consequences. He is not afraid of death. He takes the death of others casually. When the sergeant engineers refused to cut bushes to push the car from the mud, he shoots at them. Hew coolly instructs Bonello to cock the

pistol to kill one of them hit by him. Aymo gets hit on their way to Pordenone on foot. Henry deals with the situation in a matter of fact manner.

Henry is a realist. He is aware of the hardships war brings to everyone. Gino complains of shortage of food for the soldiers in the war front. Henry in his casual way say, 'It can't win a war but it can lose one". His musing about glory and sacrifice shows his attitude towards these values. The words 'scared' ,'glorious' and 'sacrifice' have no relevance for him. "Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates" he says. He has a similar view about human existence itself. He considers it futile. He compares human beings to ants on a burning log.

But at the same time, he values his own life. He jumps into the river to escape the military police. He does not want to suffer the same fate as the lieutenant colonel. Earlier, he shows concern for the two virgins . He gives them some money and asks them to join the fleeing families on the main road. While ducking under the canvas in the freight train, he hurts his forehead. He refuses to think of anything, including Catherine, except the present. The existential problem of survival along is foremost. "The head was mine, but not to use, not to think with; only to remember and to too much to remember" he says. He bids farewell to war. "But it was not my show anymore. I would have to stop" he declares..Henry takes the death of Catherine in the same vein. His senses are numbed and he has lost his capacity to feel. When the doctor tells him there is nothing for him to do, he feels as if he is saying goodbye to a statue.

3. **Rinaldi**

Dr.Rinaldi is an Italian doctor. He is a friend of Henry,when they are lodged together in Gorizia. It is he who introduces Henry to Catherine. In fact before the meeting he declares to Henry that he is in love with Catherine and proposes to marry her. When they return to the room afterwards he says, "Miss Barkley prefers you to me that is very clear".

Rinaldi loves physical pleasures. He changes his opinion about love and marriage. He believes love to be a folly. Romantic love for him should ultimately lead to physical sex. He hates war and he wants to drown his misery by getting drunk. He is boisterous and talkative. He has a good sense of humour. When he visits Henry at the hospital, he brings a bottle of cognac. Immediately after Henry's recovery from jaundice he forces him to join

him for a drink, saying, “I will get you drunk and take out your liver and put you in good Italian liver and make you a man”.

Again, Rinaldi, discourages Henry’s involved relationship with Catherine. He warns him that love is an illusion. He is one of the persons who have seen through Henry entirely. “ You are really an Italian. All fire and smoke and nothing else,” he remarks.

Rinaldi does not often make fun of the priest while all the other officers especially the captain at the mess taunt him. He indeed likes him. But he does not spare him when he is left along in the mess. He tries to provoke him by taking about St.Paul.

Rinaldi is depressed because he fears that he has contracted syphilis. To forget his degradation he buries himself in his work.

Comment on the structure of A Farewell of Arms

The physical form of the novel is like that of a drama. There are five books, each book comprising distinct scenes. The first book introduces the reader to the main characters and to the general war setting. In the second, there is a development of the romance between Frederic and Catherine. The third book deals with the retreat and the decision of Frederic to escape the chaos of war. In Book IV, the couple escape. In the last book, there is the hope of sanctuary which through a reversal of fortunes comes to a climax in the scene of Catherine’s death.

The opening chapter sets the tone and mood of the play

The introductory scene sets the tone of the novel. There is the marching of the troops, and the going of the guns. There is fighting for the mountain and splashing of the mud. The late summer turns into the autumn of brown, dead vineyards and autumn changing into the winter of permanent rain. There is cholera and death. There is the mention of soldiers, marching with cartridges as though “six months are gone with child”. As Philip Young points out, “the introductory scene at the very start presents an ominous conjunction of images --- of rain, pregnancy, death --- which set the mood for and prefigure all that is to follow”. The catastrophe at the end is foreshadowed in the first scene itself.

The conflict in the novel

The conflict of the novel is created by the exigencies of war. It is also in the mind of the hero who is apparently a “Dumb Ox’. Behind his careless life, there us a quest for meaning. As Ray B West suggest, “the initiation of Frederic Henry comes gradually. He learns about war, love and finally death. Catherine’s death is the finale stage in his

initiation". He discovers that the attempt to find a substitute for universal meaning in a limited meaning of the personal relationship is doomed to failure.

The ending of the novel

The concluding scene is a fitting climax for a great tragedy. Critics have made much of the justly famous and tight-lipped conclusion. For Catherine, her death is just a 'dirty trick'. Frederic thought he could get a king of relief in remaining alone with her dead body. "But after I had got them out and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-bye to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain". It is a high point of lonely suffering in modern fiction, a peak of tragic loneliness of 'a lost generation'. The scene is also seen as the epitome of stoic acceptance of the inevitable.

The Novel compared to Shakespeare's play

The parallel between ***Romeo and Juliet*** and ***A Fare well to Arms*** has been referred to by Hemingway himself. Carlos Baker makes a study of the similarities. Henry and Catherine are seen as star-crossed lovers. He points out that the catastrophe is not the direct and logical result of the immoral social situation. The death of Catherine is an unfortunate biological accident; it is an artistic inevitability like that of Juliet. War does not kill Catherine. But the emotional experience of the novel makes one imagine that her death is directly associated and interwoven with "the whole tragic pattern of fatigue, suffering, loneliness, defeat and doom" of which the war is itself the broad social manifestation.

The Theme of the Novel

Twin theme of love and war in the novel

A Farewell to Armshas been twin theme of love and war. Prof.ChamanNahal in his study of the novel points out that Hemingway is not primarily concerned with war in the novel. He argues that a the actual scenes of battle are very few and as there is no record of personal heroism, it cannot be termed as a war novel. But Philip Young's theory of twin theme cannot be so easily dismissed. The novel, it is true, is about the course of love; but without war, whose product is Frederic, it will be without a protagonist.

Twin themes run parallel

Philip Yong show how the courses of love and war run exactly, though subtly, parallel, so that in the end we feel that we have not read one story but two. He points out how in Frederic's affair with war, he goes through six phases: desultory participation,

serious action, wound, recuperation, retreat and desertion. His relationship with Catherine also undergoes six corresponding phases; sexual affair, actual love, Catherine's conception, her confinement in the Alps, trip to the hospital, and death. In both there is struggle and Frederic is a loser in both. He takes nothing at the end.

Casual nature of love in the beginning

The early stages of the love between Frederic and Catherine are almost casual. They seek each other as a kindof relief from war. In one of their first meetings, Catherine says, 'we do get along', to which Frederic remarks, " And we have gotten away from the war". At their next encounter, Frederic muses over a kiss: " I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her,". "This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards". Catherine also asks him not to pretend he loves her.

The love affair becomes serious

The love affair begins to be serious, perhaps when Frederic feels lonely and hollow on being told by Miss Ferguson that Catherine cannot meet him. Their attachment becomes stronger after Frederic is wounded. Catherine visits him at the American hospital at Milan. The moment he sees her, he knows that he loves her. "When I saw her I was in love with her. Everything turned over inside of me". She also asks him after their love-making. "Now do you believe I love you?". They consider that day their wedding day. That day is their day of consummation and Catherine will not hear of getting married. "What good would it do to marry now? We're really married. I couldn't any more marry', she says.

The death of Catherine

Their perfect happiness results in Catherine's conception. And Frederic leaves for the front and the separation is painful to both. But he returns to Milan and goes in search of her to Stresa. They decide to go to Switzerland. As is to expiate his sin, he rows her in a boat all night to Switzerland. Once again, they have a happy period of love. In the hospital, before her death, Catherine tells him. "I'm going to die; I hate it". She feels that some dirty trick has been manipulated to end their love. Her death eventually leaves everything for him blank and empty.

War is omnipresent in the novel

As love is the theme that sustains the tragic narrative, war is omnipresent in the novel throughout. The opening chapter itself speaks of troop movements, and long barrels of guns. The protagonist is wounded in war. It is war that interrupts his happy life with

Catherine at Milan. He becomes a deserter and renounces his military uniform, bidding a farewell to war. But is pursues him even then and he realizes that it is not really over for him. He says to the barman, " May be there wasn't any war. There was no war here. Then I realized it was over for me. But I did not have the feeling that it was really over". Ray B.West who considers was as a symbol for the chaos of nature remarks that war pursues Frederic even to Switzerland; it catches up with him and Catherine. Yet was does not kill Catherine. It is a biological accident. However, in the emotional experience of the novel, her death is directly associated with the whole "tragic pattern of fatigue and suffering, loneliness, defeat and doom, of which the war is itself the broad social manifestation.(Carlos Baker).

The title of the novel ambiguous in nature

The title of the novel, which is intentionally ambiguous also suggest the two themes of love and war. One of the interpretations of the title will be that Frederic bids farewell to the arms of Catherine. If this is right, then it will mean that the novel is about Frederic's love and its failure. In that case, it will be a limited interpretation. On the other hand, if the farewell is taken to mean Frederic's good bye to war, the novel is seen only as a war novel. But Ray B.West sees the title as completely ironic, validating the twin themes theory. "Frederic has attempted to escape war, but he felt like a school boy who was playing truant….. Catherine and Frederic has said farewell to the life of action and struggle, but ironically their greatest test___ the attempt to save the life of Catherine ____ came at the very moment when they seemed to have achieved a successful escape.

What the novel says, finally, is that you cannot escape the obligations of action ___ you cannot say " farewell to arms", you cannot sign a separate peace. You can only learn to live with life, to tolerate it.

THE EMPEROR JONES

The Synopsis of the play

Emperor Brutus Jones is a Negro, formerly a Pull-man porter who was imprisoned for his crimes. He had broken jail and escaped as a stowaway to a West Indies Island. With the help of his white lieutenant Smithers he has come the emperor of the island. He has exploited and heavily taxed the Negroes in the island. He has convinced the black people that he cannot be killed by a lead bullet, but only a silver bullet, which he has forged for

himself. He has moved unharmed among his sullen subjects by virtue of this legend of his invention that only a silver bullet could harm him. Once a native tries to shoot him at point-blank range, but the gun misses the mark and he is safe only by a stroke of good luck. For some time the negroes deify him and treat him as a miracle out of the Bible.

Soon the natives of the island stand in rebellion. They assemble at a distant hill and start the beating of tom-tom at the rate of the pulse-beat to muster strength and courage in the religious ceremony. They are participating in a war-dance before they start their revolution. Brutus Jones, terrified, flies through the dense forest, sees ghosts and supernatural beings. On entering the forest, he relaxes on the ground dead-tired and panicky. The rhythmic beat of tom-tom is still audible, and he is overwhelmed with his deeper fears and apprehensions when his back is turned, the Formless Fears creep out of the forest. They are projection of his hidden fears appearing shapeless with their glittering eyes.

Further, the gale of themocking laughter heard in the forest unnerves Jones, and he fires his first bullet. The beating of tom-tom has been quickened. It is moonlight night, and Jones has penetrated into the dense forest. His own guilt's are incarnated in his imaginary fears. He sees the vision of the Negro Jeff for whose murder he was imprisoned, and he fires his revolver to dispel his fear. He visualises before him the prison-guard whom he had murdered. These incarnations of fears emanating from his personal unconscious have disheartened him. He fires another round at the guard's back in his defence. The forest has enclosed him like a prison-wall and the rapidly of the drum-beat has increased. His uniform is tattered and he is in rags.

In the next scenes, the deep fears from his collective unconscious hold him in their grip. The slave-auctioneer intends to sell Jones to one of his planters. The reactions of Jones are full of terror " "What you all doing," "white folks? What is all dis? What you all looking at me for? What you doin' wid me, anyhow ? … Is dis a auction?" Jones fires rounds at the auctioneer and the planter, and rushes crying with fear.

In the last vision, there is the stone-altar near a tree. He is naked and near the altar to pray. A Congolese doctor starts a religious dance in which he participates. A crocodile from the river is summoned by the witch-doctor. Jones fires his last silver bullet at the crocodile, causing its death, and the flight of the doctor. In the last scene which is on a realistic place, Jones has been killed by the natives with a silver bullet.

The origin and Sources of the Plot

O'Neill got the seed of the plot in a bar at the old Garden Hotel at Madison Avenue. " Among the habitués of the bar was an old circus man who talked entertainingly. One night he talked about a man named VilbrunGuillaums Sam who had seized control of the island of Haiti. As President Sam, he lasted about six months the then the natives went after him. This strong arrogant, superstitious, bold ruler had taken refuge finally in the French legation at Prot-au-Prince." They'll never get me with a lead bullet. I 'll kill myself with a silver bullet first. Only a silver bullet can kill me, "he told his fellows. O'Neill was fascinated by the plot of this happening, and with his personal knowledge and creative experience transmitted it into a fine expressionistic play. The picturesque description of the dense forest introduced in the play came from his knowledge of the impenetrable jungles through which he had to pass in Honduras in the Central America when he went there as gold prospector. He was bitten by the crawling vermin's and insects and was disgusted with them. Besides this, O'Neill's introduction of the drum-beating started at the rate of the heart-beat, rising later in order to touch the deeper chords of the hearer's inspiration, came from his study of religious feats in Congo. O'Neill decided to use his knowledge for his play by way of an experiment and he succeeded so well.

Jungian Influences

The Emperor Jonesis a deeply psychological drama. It delineates the psychological conflicts and the unconscious working in the mind of the hero, Brutus Jones, through expressionistic technique. It is a play of visions and psychological motivations. The mental processes of the hero, his visionary fears, feelings of guilt and the conflicting motives have been portrayed. Hence the stress is not so much on the conscious as on the unconscious. The scenic images, and the symbolic uses of the drum and the dark forest have enabled the dramatist to explore the mental conflicts and cogitations. The inner reality is suggested in dream-like fashion; the scenes are brief; they alternative between reality and fantasy ; stage-reality becomes sub consciousness, and sources of conduct are explored. The use of the psychological time in delineation of the past memories through flashback method is an important trait of the stream-of-consciousness technique. The language is colloquial, and the flow of thought continuous. Short, incomplete expressions depict the terrified and anguished soul. Further, the thoughts of his racial memories haunt and obsess him. With

the help of his ejaculations and interjectional expressions, his deep-seated feelings have been shown. Thus, with his inventions of new dramatic devices, like the sound-effect, scenic images, setting interjection expressions and symbols. O'Neill has followed expressionism, and the play bears a clear stamp of Juny, the modern psychologist. The thematic basis of the play is apparently Jung's regression to the primitive – to the racial unconscious. O'Neill has relied upon the Jungian theory of fears which grip a pursued Negro.

The suggestion which excited O'Neill in ***The Emperor Jones***was Jung's fundamental premise – the existence and power of the collective unconscious. The mind of a given man contains ideas from the collective unconscious which come to him simply by virtue of his membership in the human race, as well as ideas inherited from his own specific race, tribe, and family. His mind contains in addition, unconscious ideas and symbolic arising from his unique personal situation to make up the structure of his personal unconscious. Finally from this personal unconscious emerges his own consciousness, his ego.

The Hero of the Emperor Jones

The hero of ***The Emperor Jones***is a remarkable creation. He has attained a stature, and is a person of some magnitude. He has not been involved in any physical conflict. It is through his own egotism and pride, through his exploitation of the natives, that he has provoked a revolution. His own hubris have brought about his downfall. But the main interest lies in following his mental reaction, his cognitations, and imaginary fears. Brutus jones resembles the heroes of the Greek tragedies in so far as his own pride and egotism have antagonised him with others, and he wishes to belong to the universal order. Like other tragic heroes, Brutus Jones also has his epiphany or the moment of the self-realisation. But O'Neill's heroes : An O'Neill protagonist is not compelled to make choices between alternate actions in order to accomplish another action ; he must make a choice between the alternate image of the self in order to discover the real- self which he often fails to do. Certainly, he performs acts, if nothing else, he antagonizes other characters who are engaged in their own search for self, and it is this conflict that many of O'Neill's play consist of. But the conflict, with others is only a by-product of the protagonist's conflict with himself. He must solve that, must find his integrated self, before he can engage unpurposeful action." Thus O'Neill's heroes are engrossed in their conflict with self-images

and real images. They must realise their true-self from which they have been removed. In this process, they clash with other characters. Brutus Jones is after realization of his real-self.

Doris Falk, further comparing characters in Aristotle and O'Neill, points out that in Aristotle the character reveals a moral purpose. But in case of O'Neill's heroes there is "the ethos or moral purpose of the character to perpetuate and strengthen an illusion about himself." Thus every hero including Brutus Jones has created a self-image which he regards as the real image, but it runs against his real image or self. The false image causes hatred of the self and this impels him to run after something illusory, and this is the hero's ***hubris.*** Brutus Jones' self-image is born of his pride and dishonest unscrupulous ways. There is a portrayal of this pride in the Greek tragedies which provokes gods to hurl down the hero. O'Neill's hero has neurotic pride which entails his suffering and doom.

Brutus Jones is not an Aristotelian hero. Aristotle laid down that the hero of a tragedy must be an exceptional individual, a man of high rank, a king or a prince, so that his fall from his former greatness would arouse the tragic emotions of pity and fear. All Shakespeare's heroes fulfil this requirement. But Jones, the central figure in the play, is not a hero in the Aristotelian sense. He is a crook with a shady, criminal past, who freely exploits the natives and by his superior cunning becomes their emperor within two years. No doubt he is superior to the natives in intelligence but he is entirely lacking in that nobility and greatness of soul which the tragic here should have.

Pride is the fatal flaw in Jones' character. His pride makes him contemptuous of the natives over whom he rules, of the laws which he himself has made, and of his role as an emperor which he calls "a circus show" and which he stages not for love of it, but for the benefit of the ignorant and superstitious Negroes. He is contemptuous even of the white Smithers, calls him a "pretty thief" whom he can put in jail whenever he likes. His is the pride of an upstart, of an adventurer who has freed himself from the shackles of poverty and slavery and risen high from a low and mean position. His is the pride of the lower instincts, which makes him copy the worst faults of the whites who had held him a terror an bondage for so many years. He is like the enslaved mankind to whom Prometheus had taught the use of fire. His first instinct is to despise all those who are still in bondage, to turn traitor to his own people and to enslave them, as he himself had been enslaved, by superior knowledge and trickery of the whites. He is symbolic of all those who suddenly find

themselves freed from old chains, and use their freedom to despise and destroy others, of all the snobs and new rich of the world.

Jones's pride and arrogance make him a tyrant. He exploits the natives and extorts money from them, till the repression becomes intolerable and they rise against him in revolt. Their revolt is the direct outcome of is pride and wrong-doing. He knew that the natives were bound to revolt against him sooner or later, and had carefully planned his escape from the island. On the fateful day, he ran away from the palace with great self-confidence, but to no avail. He is ultimately killed by the natives with a silver bullet, the symbol of his pride and greed. Thus, it is his pride that is responsible for this downfall and death. But he is not fully purged of his pride because it is a silver bullet alone that has killed him. So his death is not cathartic in the Aristotelian sense either. His is not purged of his faults.

The dramatist if more interested in the inner side of Jones rather than in his outer self. Throughout the six forest scenes attention is focused on what is happening to the soul of the emperor. He has hallucinations and sees his victims one after another. He sees Jeff and the Prison-guard both of whom he had murdered in a fit of rage. O'Neill goes even deeper into the unconscious of Jones. His racial memories crown in upon him and he has visions of the slave-auctions, of the gallery-slaves and, finally, of the Congo Witch – Doctor swaying and casting his spell. His spiritual disintegration and regression is total by the end of scene vii, and the real interest of the play lies in the internal action, in the psyche of the hero.

O'Neill has not exalted her hero. He has reversed the tragic process; instead of going up the spiritual ladder, Jones goes down. The regression of Brutus Jones is akin to Lear's stripping, but Lear gains spiritually what he loses psychologically. Instead of revealing the nobility and grandeur of the human soul, Emperor Jones shows that man is essentially a beast and we find that his progress in civilization had made him a bundle of nerves.

The themes in the Emperor Jones

A Complex Work of Art : Variety of themes

The Emperor Jonesis a complex and rich work of art. It has no one simple theme, but a multiplicity of themes. That is why it has been variously interpreted by various critics. A number of themes and ideas have been found prominent in the play. The shedding of false mask and attainment of self-knowledge, fall of man through prove, spiritual regression and

disintegration of a terror-stricken soul, the primitive forces' influence and working of man, criticism of western civilisation and racial theme of the Negro are some of the prevalent theories about the theme of ***The Emperor Jones***.

A Re-enactment of the Negro-tragedy

The play is the enactment of Jones' fears about the ill-treatment of the Negroes in the U.S.A. The play on the surface deals with the life of a Negro, who becomes an emperor and later on is routed by the natives because he is a Negro. Thus, racial discrimination is the theme of the play. But it is not easy to define the meaning of the play, or to explain what exactly the Negro's terrified journey through the forest means. In other words the theme of the play is the shedding of false masks acquired by the black man through his association with the white man and of his return to his primitive home. In this way, ***The Emperor Jones*** is a study in atavism (spiritual regression).

Fall of Man through Pride

Another theme of the play is the fall of man through pride. The sin of pride is responsible for the fall of Brutus and O'Neill hero in other plays too. Man commits a fatal error when he relies on his"conscious ego" too much in order to fulfil his needs, without acknowledging the power of the unconscious. Hence, the unconscious is viewed by O'Neill as the equivalent of the Greek gods. His play seems to preach the moral that for happiness man must find the golden mean between humility and pride, reconciling the unconscious needs with the conscious ones.

Attainment of Self-knowledge

A plat is a study in self-awareness. O'Neill's heroes attain this self-knowledge at the close of the play, and the consequences are generally ironical or tragic. The gradual disintegration of Jones' conscious ego, the revelation of his personal and collective unconscious and his flight from himself constitute the main theme. Jones's harrowing run in the jungle is a flight from self and eventually a journey towards self-understanding. **Doris.V.Falk**aptly remarks, "Jones" hopeless flight through the forest is not from the natives at all, but from himself—the fundamental self from which his blind pride and its self-image have so long separated him, and which, inevitably, comes into its own." The progress of Jones is a progress is self-understanding till one by one his affections drop off and he finds his real self. He retreats from the symbols of civilized success which he had won for himself to fantasies of primitive terror which lie deep within him.

A study of Heredity and Environment

S.K.Wintherbrings out the thesis that the irrevocable past of Jones asserts itself on him. In the forest"the forces of heredity and environment crowd is upon the consciousness of the Emperor until he loses his regal nature and tears away the trappings of his assumed grandeur. One by one they disappear, and as he becomes more and more naked, he becomes more and more a Negro criminal tortured by primitive fears of the dark. In the end he loses the battle, conquered, but not by the physical strength of the natives, for they did not even change their position. All they did while Jones circled wildly through the forest was to beat their drums. He was destroyed by the forces of his past. It was not the natives that bared his way to freedom; it was the strong medicine of his Negro heritage."

Indictment of Modern Civilization

According to **Edwin Engel**, ***the Emperor Jones*** is the story of the failure of science and materialism to supply a substitute for the withered God, In Jones' character we find a sharp criticism of modern materialistic civilization. Jones is Negro only in appearance. He has none of the characteristics commonly associated with the Negro, such as laziness or lack of initiative. By outlook and training he is an American white man. During the ten years in which he had served as Pullman cart-porter, he acquired the white man's cynicism, shrewdness, efficiency, selfishness and cupidity. All his actions are motivated by a greed for pelf and money. Jones tells Smithers:

You didn't pose I was holding down the Emperor job for de glory in it , did you? Dey wants de big circus show for deir money. I give it to 'em, an' I gits de money.

Another characteristic that Jones shares with the white man is his utilitarian attitude towards religion He feigns faith in both the Baptist church and the witch doctors of the island. He is a highly shrewd and cunning man, but his shallow materialistic grounding fail to save him from the ultimate doom. The white culture in the island is ultimately thrown away by the Negroid culture.

A.Abramowasserts, "*The Emperor Jones* is a tragedy of the outcast whom capitalistic civilization has excluded from society." **Edwin Engel in** his book, The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill also say that the play is a criticism of the capitalistic civilization of the white man. **M. Manuel** opines that the basic theme of ***The Emperor Jones*** is a satire on the western man.

Racial Consciousness as the Theme of the Play

In The Emperor Jones the dramatist has also made use of Jung's theory of the racial unconscious or "collective conscious'. This opinion is held by Doris V. Falk. According to the Jungian theory, man's mind contains ideas from the collective unconscious which come to him simply by virtue of his membership in the human race, as well as ideas inherited from his own specific race, tribe and family. His mind contains, in addition, unconscious ideas and symbols arising from his unique personal situation to make up the structure of his personal unconscious. Finally, from this personal unconscious emerges his own consciousness, his ego. The play is a record of the gradual breaking down of Jones' conscious ego and the revelation of his personal and collective unconscious. The first two visions of Jeff and of the prison-Guard proceed from his personal unconscious, but the later hallucinations proceed from a racial memory. For Jones had never actually undergone the traumatic experience of being auctioned as a slave, nor have he a direct knowledge of a Congo Witch-Doctor. Yet under the influence of fear, when his veneer frightened visions and completely subjugates his conscious mind. Using Jungian theory of the collective unconscious, O'Neill reveals the persistence of the past in man's future on the earth.

Also the frequent reference to race differences at first lead us to think that the play is concerned with the encounter of the races as are other plays of O'Neill like ***The dreamy kid and All God's Chilum Get wings.*** Jones is always conscious of the fact that though he is a Negro, he is not only far above the Negroes of the island, but even above Smithers, a white man. Smithers cannot bear the thought that he has to be subservient to a black man even when he knows that Jones is the better man.

In spite of the emphasis that race consciousness gets in the play, the play is not on race problems. Rather the play presents a confrontation of the races to establish the point that underneath the surface differences of colour man is the same everywhere. Smithers has seen the inside of prisons as Jones had. They both speak a type of the English Language which is indicative of the moral corruption of society. Only at one level, the more obvious level, is the theme of the play the regression of a negro from a state of civilization to primitive savagery. The real subject of the play is the tumbling down, not particularly of a negro, but of a man and especially of western man, from a state of unstable culture equilibrium to earlier stages of savagery. Smithers appears in the play not merely as a foil to Jones, but as an essential figure in the dramatization of cultural degeneration, Smithers is

the degenerate white man whereas Emperor Brutus Jones is the ironic embodiment of the ethical and religious values of Western society which worship success.

Eternal Conflict of Good and Evil

According to Frederic I Carpenter, "The fundamental themes of the play are those of human life itself – the eternal conflict of good and evil, of sunlight and moonlight, of civilisation and savagery, of the clearing and the Great Forest".

Conclusion

Thus, the play has not one theme but a variety and multiplicity of themes. It is a rich work of art, rich in meaning, in message and motivation; it is also rich in images and symbols. The themes have been presented through expressionism and through a blend of expressionism with realism.

ALL MY SONS

Discuss *All my sons* as a family drama

Family in Arthur Miller's dramas plays a vital and major role. Miller regards family as a ***polis.*** He does not treat family merely as a means to delineate the affectional ties among the members of the family. Family to him means something wider is social context. Miller is concerned with the problem : "How man make for himself a home in that vastness of strangers and how may be transform that vastness into a home?" Almost in all his plays. Miller tries to find an answer to the problem: "How can man develop for himself a transitional ***polis***that may bridge and gap between the private home of the family and the public home of that new unity towards which he believes the world to be moving?. Affectional ties do not attract Miller. He says, "Sentimentalism is perfectly all right, but it is nowhere near a great challenge, and to pursue it --- is not going to bring us closer to the fated mission of the drama. " The mission of the drama is "to bring us closer to ourselves if only it can grow and change with the changing world".

Miller always sees the family as related to the larger group, the society in inseparable and life-giving ways. Miller does not use family as a mere microcosm. There is something beyond family,i.e society is to be treated as a larger family. To Chris Keller in *All My Sons*," There's something bigger than the family,' though for Joe Keller 'Nothn' is bigger'. There is larger idea of the family in these words of Chris:

“Once and for all you can know there’s universe of people outside and you’re responsible to it.

Miller sees the family as a group. He does not give any prominent place to any one character. However, in ***All My Sons***, it is the role of the father, that captures greater attention. The father is given excessive veneration by the sons and it is this excessive veneration that becomes the real cause of the tragedy. In the eyes of Chris, Joe Keller is not just a man, buy ‘good in decay’, Chris says:

I know you’re no worse than most man but I thought you were better. I never saw you as a man, I saw you as my father. I can’t look at you this way, I can’t look at myself!”

Larry also commits suicide because he idolized his father. When he came to know about the guilt of his father, his vision of an ideal father was shattered and he thought he would not be able to face the world. His words written to Ann are noteworthy:

It is impossible to put down the things, I feel. But I’ve got to tell you something. Yesterday they flew in a load of papers from the states and I readabout Dad and your father being convicted. I can’t express myself. I can’t tell you how I feel—I can’t bear to live any more. Last night I circled the base for twenty minutes before I could bring myself in. How could he have done that? Every day three or four men never come back, and he sits back there doing business …. I don’t know how to tell you what I feel…. I can’t face anybody….”

All My Sonsis a family drama somewhat like Shakespeare’s ***King Lear***whose theme is the ‘unnaturalness between the child and the parent’. It is a play of “the bond crack’d twixt son and father. In Miller’s play the son (Chris Keller) looks at his father (Joe Keller) for moral support. But the son’s world is ruined at the revelation of the corruption of his father. This revelation infuriates Chris so much that he loses his self-control and cries:“ Explain it to me or I’ll tear you to pieces!” Under another fit of agony he utters these words:

“Don’t you have a country? Don’t you live in the world? What the hell are you? You’re not even an animal, no animal kills his own, what are you? What must I do to you? I ought to tear the tongue out of your mouth, what must I do?”

As a result of his discovery about his father Chris suffers an emotional and moral shock. Joe Keller tries his best to justify his stand in the name of family. He keeps in his mind his family while taking decisions in his mind. He says to his wife Kate: “For you, Kate, for both of you, that’s all I ever lived for.” When Joe feels everybody going against him, he begins to fees a stranger: What am I, a stranger? I thought I had a family here. What

happened to my family?" But he fails to think beyond his family. He simply remembers that Chris is his son and he is Chris's father:"I'm his father and he's my son, and if there's something bigger than that I'll put a bullet in my head!.

Thus ***All My Sons is*** a play of father-son relationship. So long as the ideologies do no come on opposite plains, this relationship exists. As soon as there is a cause of resentment or breach of trust the relationship comes crashing on the ground. In this play both father and son undergo a crisis of self-knowledge. Joe keller, unlike Wily Loman of ***Death of a Salesman ,***does not refuse to admit his failure ultimately; " But I think to him they were all my sons. And I think to him they were all my sons. And I guess they were, I, guess they were." Joe keller finally concedes his position to be untenable. He dies finally in order to make his son realise the validity of his values. The main purpose of the dramatist in the play seems to show what happens to a man when he loses the grip of the forces of life, when he cherishes wrong values wrongly nourished by society, when he fails to understand himself and his environment.

Discuss the theme of *All My Sons*

The plays of Arthur Miller have relevant social themes. Very often there are multiple themes in his plays. Miller is a strong critic of contemporary American society and its values. Therefore, Miller, his play, strongly argues in favour of certain positive relationship between the individual and society. He raises his voice against injustice, exploitation, competition and vested private interest. One of the important themes of his plays is to expose the human tendency to put one's self above all else, which causes confusion and suffering. In Miller's plays tragedy occurs when a man fails to recognise his place in society or when he gives it up because of false values. As a playwright, Miller's chief object it to point man toward " a world in which the human bring can live as a naturally political, naturally private, naturally engaged person". This type of world was the Greek polis. In this world, as Miller says, people "were ***engaged***, they could not imagine the good life excepting as it brought each person into close contact with civic matters…. The preoccupation of Greek drama with ultimate law, with the Grand Design, so to speak, was therefore an expression of a basic assumption of the people, who could not yet conceive, luckily, that any man could no longer prosper unless is ***polis*** prospered. The individual was

at once with his society; his conflicts with it were, in our terms, like family conflicts, the opposing sides of which nevertheless share a mutuality of feeling and responsibility."

Miller tragic plays deal with this major theme. His tragic characters are not 'at one' with society because they have sinned against it or have refused to assume their rightful place in it. These characters are unfortunately the representative products of the complex modern world, where man finds it difficult if not impossible to identify himself with society "except in the form of a truce with it." According to Miller, "The best we have been able to do is speak of a 'duty' to society, and this implies sacrifice or self-deprivation. To think of a individual fulfilling his subjective needs through social action… is difficult for us to image." However, man can retain his integrity of 'conscience" only if he is part of the world of 'feeling and responsibility' for others. Miller sees the loss of conscience in a terrible unconsciousness, unawareness of fundamental values and of what constitutes human dignity. In Miller's four great tragedies, ***All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, The Crucibleand A View from the Bridge***, there is seen this loss of conscience and the efforts to regain it.

In ***All My Sons,*** the main theme is the economic basis of social mischief. The central event of the play is a businessman, Joe Keller's evasion of social responsibility for a decision in war time which led to the loss of twenty one lives. Joe Keller, who has a contract for the manufacture of airplane cylinder heads, knows that he is guilty. But he tries to justify his guilty action by his typical American commercialism. Chris Keller, the son becomes Miller's spokesman. He is actually aware that capitalist society emphasizes competition over cooperation that it tends to overlook the need for human solidarity, mutual aid and support for the weak based on egalitarian principles. Sketching the competitive society, Chris says:

"This is the land of great, big dogs, you don't love a man here, you eat him! That's the principle, the only one we live by – it just happened to kill a few people this time, that's all. The world's that way, how can I take it out on him? What sense does that make? This is a zoo, a zoo!

Joe Keller talks of business. He says that he did everything for his family, indirectly implying his awareness of his guilt. He knew that he was committing a crime but he placed family above the society, When he tries to justify his action. Chris says furiously:

"Is that as far as your mind can see, the business?. What is that – the business? What the hell do you mean, you did it for me? Don't you have a country? Don't you live in the world? What the hell are you? You're not even a animal, no animal kills his own."

Chris is here condemning not only his father, but the short sightedness of the typical American businessman's creed. In fact, this theme of typical commercialism is related to the post-war disillusionment of both civilians and soldiers, those who survived after seeing the horrors of war as well as some of the splendid human qualities it brought out. These people expected a better social order to emerge from humanity's experience in war. This thought is expressed by Chris in these words which he say to his father :

" I know you're no worse than most men but I thought you were better."

When Kate Keller is in a dilemma as to what she and her husband should do, Chris uses very meaningful words which convey the idea that every individual is responsible to the society in which he lives and to the humanity as a whole. Chris's following speech is the final statement of Miller's chief motive in writing this play :

You can be better! Once and for all you can know there's an universe of people outside and you're responsible to it, and unless you know that, you threw away your son because that is why he died."

The major insight of the play comes to Keller at the end of it. He realised that all those who died were, in a sense, his sons. But this realisation comes too late. Rather than go on living, Joe Keller shoots himself. Through the death of Keller, Miller wants to point to our inescapable social responsibilities. In the ideal social order, any evasiveness or refusal is severely punished.

Another important theme in the plat is that of family relationship. In this plat, as in *Death of a Salesman*, family relations are predominant. Miller always sees the family as 'related to the larger group, the society, in inescapable and life giving ways.' Joe Keller forgets this and the result is his collapse. He lives only for the family--- "nothin's bigger" than family to him. While arguing with his wife, he goes to the extent of saying:

"I'm his father and he's my son, and if there's something bigger than that I'll put a bullet in my head!"

Joe Keller always thinks to his family. He himself could live on a quarter a day, but he got a family. So he could not miss a chance in business. Kate Keller is also worried about her family. When talking to George, she expresses her concern for children:

"Honest to God, it breaks my heart to see what happed to all the children how we worked and planned for you, and you end up no better than us."

It is on account of these family relationships that Chris also becomes 'timid'. His agony is caused by his realization that he does not have the courage to get his father sent to jail. He can only wish he could do it. He confesses to his mother:

"But I'm like everybody else now. I'm practical now. You made me practical."

Larry also commits suicide because the ideal image of his father in his mind is shattered. After the realization of his father's guilt, he would not be able to face the world as his father's son. So he decides to join the unfortunate twenty one pilots:

Thus All My Sons is a play of multiple themes and ideas. But the central theme is the relationship between a man's identity and the image that society demands of him. Here is the struggle of the individual attempting to gain his rightful position in his society and in his family.

How much Joe Keller's tragedy is the result of Amercan society and how much of it caused by himself?

All My Sons is a social tragedy. Much of Joe Keller's suffering and his ultimate death is due to the nature of American society. The American society is characterised by competition and commercialisation. Every individual is free to rise in life according to his capabilities and resource fullness in society. People of America have firm faith in "the great American dream" which is based on the doctrine of self-help. This doctrine assumes that a person endowed with sufficient initiative can rise from lower to a higher position. This doctrine can be seen illustrated by the career of such great figures as Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) and John Garfield (1831- 1881). Benjamin Franklin rose from a printer's boy to an ambassador and John Garfield went from log cabin to White House. In the play ***Death of a Salesman***, Willy Loman believes that a person can rise to a high position and can attain wealth by means of personal attractiveness charm and initiative. He applies this view to his son Biff also.

In All My Sons, Joe Keller also holds this opinion. He rises in his business by virtue of his persistent devotion. In fact, Joe is deceived by the American dream. He persists in believing in this American myth to the point of absurdity. But he cannot do otherwise. The social system of which he is a product has an iron hold upon him. Like most other Americans, he ardently believes in this law of success. The law of success teaches Americans that theirs is a great country and that there is no room for a man who proves a failure. In other words a man who cannot make use of the formula by which success can be

achieved has no right to live in America. Joe Keller is a man of business. His target is success in business. As a businessman he does not want to be a failure. When Chris argues with him, he tries to explain to him the mathematics of business:

" I'm in business, a man is in business; a hundred and twenty cracked, you're out of business, you got a process, the process don't work, you're out of business: you don't know how to operate, your stuff is no good; they close you up, they tear up your contracts, what the hell's it to them? You lay forty years into a business and they knock you out in five minutes, what could I do , let them take forty years, let them take my life away?'

For success in business, Joe Keller does not want to miss any opportunity. He grabs the opportunity as an when it comes his way. He says to his son Chris:

"I did it for you, it was a chance and I took it for you.I 'm sixty one years old, when would I have another chance to make something for you? Sixty one years old you don't get another chance."

Thus it seems that Joe Keller is a victim of typical American ideology of success. He is a victim of his environment and of the social forces in the play have a role comparable to that of Fate or Destiny in ancient Greek Tragedy.

Chris Keller makes a scathing attack on the typical American commercialism. When Joe Keller says that he did everything for the sake of business for Chris, Chris replies in burning fury:

"For me!– I was dying every day and you were killing my boys and you did it for me? What the hell do you think I was thinking of the golden business? Is that as far as your mind can see the business? What is that the world -- the business? What the hell do you mean, you did it for me?"

Chris's dilemma reaches a climax when he utters these words contemptuously:

"This is the land of the great big dogs, you don't love a man here you eat him! That's the principle; the only one we live by – it just happened to kill a few people this time, that's all. The world's that way, how can I take it out on him? What sense does thatmake? This is a zoo, a zoo!"

All this uncovers the ugliness of American commercialism. This view condemns the typical American business mentality which does not recognised human needs and requirements. This American mentality causes the tragic death of Larry who is ashamed of his father's act beyond earthly limits. It is the saddest state of affairs that a son should

embrace death in order to save himself from the ignominy of his father's treachery to the country.

So far Chris is concerned, he may seem to be exaggerating about the American situation, but the value of his exaggeration lies in the idealism which is its positive side. Hid idealism is related to the post-war

Disillusionment of both civilians and soldiers, those who survived after the horrors of war as well as some of the splendid, human qualities it brought out. They expected a better social order to emerge from humanity's experience in the war. Chris describes this feeling to Ann:

"I- there was no meaning in it here; the whole thing to them was a kind of a – bus accident. I went to work with Dad, and that rat-race again. I felt—what you said—ashamed somehow. Because nobody was changed at all. It seemed to make suckers out of a lot of guys. I felt wrong to be alive, to open the bank book, to drive the new car, to see the new refrigerator. I mean you can take those things out of a war, but when you drive that car you've got to know that it came out of the love a man car have for a man, you've got to be a little better because of that. Otherwise what you have is really loot, and there's blood on it. I did not want to take any of it. And I guess that included you.

Write a note on the dilemma of Chris Keller

Chris Keller, the son of Joe Keller, holds key position in ***All My Sons.*** He is a young man of high ideals. He is seen on the horns of dilemma when his high idealism is crashed to ground by his own father. His dilemma reaches its climax when he discovers that his intense love for his family comes into direct conflict against his instinctive concern for his fellowmen. In such a situation Chris Keller undergoes intense mental conflict.

Chris had been in war. The soldiers under him were quite affectionate to him. They affectionately called him Mother McKeller. His companions and subordinates laid down their lives for the sake of fraternity and mutual cooperation. They sacrificed themselves for their great principles. The created a new sense of responsibility. But he is highly disillusioned. His agony is related to the post-war disillusionment of both civilians and soldiers, those who survived after seeing the horrors of war as well as some of the splendid human qualities it brought out. The ugly rat-race of the post-war society shook Chris to his bones. He was greatly disillusioned after his return from the war. His feeling is described thus:

"And then I came home and it was incredible. I – there was no meaning in it here; the whole thing to them was a kind of a bus accident. I went to work with Dad, and that rat-race again. I felt-what you said—ashamed somehow,because nobody was changed at all. It seemed to make suckers out of a lot of guys. I felt wrong to be alive, to open the bank-book, to drive the new car, to see the new refrigerator. I mean you can take those things out of a war, but when you drive that car you have got to know that it came out of the love a man can have for a man, you've got to be little better because of that. Otherwise what you have is really loot, and there's blood on it."

Chris's dilemma is mainly due to his father's crime. He loves his father like a true son. He has no doubt that his father's hands are clean as far as the cylinder affair is concerned. But as soon as he comes to know about the reality, his illusion of an ideal father is shattered. At the back of his mind he nourishes a feeling that his father has been responsible for the plane crashes. He begins to feel that his father should better have been in the jail. But his dilemma arises out of his realisation that he does not have the courage to get his father sent to jail. He can only wish he could do it: "But I'm like everybody else now," he confesses to his mother, " I'm practical now. You made me practical." He feels highly ashamed. He is made yellow by his love for his father. The only way he can atone for his weakness is by "going away"

Chris is also much disillusioned to see the nature of the society. If it were a society where 'honour was real' making his father suffer for his crime would have some point. Chris is acutely aware that capitalist society emphasises competition over cooperation that it sends to overlook the need for human solidarity, mutual air and support for the weak based on egalitarian principles. Chris expresses his dilemma in these words: "This is the land of the great big dogs, you don't love a man here, and you eat him! That's the principle, the only one we live by – it just happened to kill a few people this time, that's all. The world's that way, how can I take it out on him? This is a zoo, a zoo!"

Therefore, Chris is not ready to continue in his father's business. He refuses the suggestion that his name should figure on the company's sign-board. He feels highly sick and nervous at his father's plea that he had to cover up the cracks to save his business that he had built up for Chris and for his family. He is not able to understand the nature of the crime of his father. He wants to do something but he cannot do anything. He only wishes

his father to be in jail but he lacks the courage to send her father to jail. The only thing he feels like doing is going away from the scene.

Ann Deever plays an important role in giving moral strength to Chris. She assures him that there is nothing to be ashamed of his father's money. He should not have any hesitation about herself only. Chris opposes his mother who fondly nourishes the idea that Larry is alive. Encouraged by Ann, Chris decides to marry Ann even if his mother persists in her belief. He decides to begin a new life with Ann. When George arrives, he deals with him boldly and repudiates George's version of the cylinder episode. When his mother announces that Ann must go, Chris loses his self- control. He declares that Ann is his girl and that Larry is dead. But Kate says that if Chris marries Ann it would mean the Larry is dead and his father killed him; and no father kills his own son. But Larry's letter clears the vision of Chris. He furiously tells his father that family is not everything. There is a universe above that. Joe Keller pays the price of his sin. But Chris's conscience shines clear though he feels sad at his father's death.

THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

1.Christopher Mahon

Christopher Mahon usually called Christy, registers a rapid progress in the space of two days. His journey from his native place Munster to the nearly coastal village of Mayo may be taken as a symbol of his spiritual progress from being frightened and helpless to being independent and self-assertive.

Christy in Munster is a picture of idiocy. He spends his time tending his father's cattle. He is as dumb and timid as the animals under his care. His father, Old Mahon, says on a later occasion that Christy had never had the 'guts' to talk to girls. Whenever he saw a girl coming at a distance he hid himself behind a tree. He was not fit for any work. In Munster people called him a 'Looney' or an imbecile. The change in his character started when his Father asked him to marry a rich widow who was old enough to be his mother and who in fact had suckled him when he was a little boy. Christy refused to marry this woman who was a mother-figure for him. When his father's coercion mounted, he got wild and hit his head with a spade. The old man fell down unconscious. Christy was panic-stricken. He thought that he had murdered his father and so ran away from Munster to escape arrest. This is the past history of Christy.

He journeys eleven days and finally reaches Mayo. He is still frightened and spends the d ay hiding in a ditch on a hill. When night falls he trudges towards Michael's shebeen, hoping to get food and shelter there. The Mayoites are leading dull, humdrum lives. They are thirsting for adventure. They avidly listen to Christy's graphic account of his murder of his father because it satisfies their craving for adventure. The murderer appears to them as a great warrior. Christy is no longer a Looney. Pegeen and Widow Quin compete with each other to gain his favour. It is finally the young Pegeen who wins him.

Like the sunflower unfolded by the warm sum, Christy sheds her fear and develops into a dashing playboy, thanks to the warm adulation of Mayoites. Christy understands the weakness of the Mayoites. To arouse their admiration further and further, he adds more and more gory details to this narration. Thus at one point he says that, with his spade, he split his father's body up to the waist. This is a blatant exaggeration. But the Mayoites only marvel at his heroism.

Pegeen and the other village girls fall headlong in love with Christy. They express their love directly as well as indirectly. Pegeen shows her budding love by praising Christy's bodily features such as his handsome face and aristocratic legs. She is all praise for his family name 'Mahon' which, she says, is reminiscent of the names of noble families in France and Spain. The village girls are simply swept off their feet. They try to endear themselves to Christy by giving him such nice gifts as eggs, cakes etc. Middle-aged widow by name Quin also falls in love with him.

How does Christy respond to the declaration of love these women?. He reacts positively to Pegeen's hesitant approaches. He says that he Worships the roof under which she lives and the pebbles on which she walks. He says that the light emanating from her will illuminate his path when he walks to the pond in the dark to fish. Pegeen is very possessive and drives out the village girls and WidowQuin who try in different ways to draw Christy towards themselves.

The Tamil poet Bharati says that a woman's love boosts man.

Synge shows this happening to Christy. Under the influence of Pegeen, Quin and the village girls, Christy makes a clean sweep of all prizes at the village tournament. The Mayoites carry him in triumphal procession back to the shebeen, shouting slogans in praise of his achievement. This is the pinnacle of Christy's career.

The advent of Old Mahon marks a brief setback in Christy's career. The discovery of the old man, very much alive, shatters Pegeen' s image of his as a hero. She now views him as an ordinary man who hit father in a huff and then sneaked away stealthily. She turns her back on him. The infuriated Christy hits Old Mahon once again and stretches him down unconscious as he did in the past. Everybody thinks that the old man has been killed. The Mayoites who formerly idolized his murder now loathe it because it took place under their very nose. They plan to hand him over to the police to be punished for his atrocious deed. At this juncture Old Mahon comes back alive once again. He takes pity on his son who has been tied up and scorched by the ungrateful Mayoites. He asks Christy to come back with him to Munster. Now comes the crowning achievement of Christy. He who was hitherto commanded by his father now commands him as if he is her servant. The wheel has come full circle. Dragging his father, Christy sets out for Munster. He does not care for Pegeenany more. She is reduced to tears. But Christy walks out, fancy-tree. He has become manly and mature.

The use of the name 'Christy' warrants a comparison between Christ and Christy. Christ was crucified by the very people for those welfare he worked. Christy is scorched by the very Mayoites who had formerly admired him. The re-appearance of Old Mahon is a travesty of the resurrection of Christ.

2.<u>Shawn Keogh OR A contrast between Christy and Shawn Keogh as lovers of Pegeen</u>

Pegeen is loved by Christy and Shawn but neither of them marries her in the end. Shawn is a colourless character and intended to throw into bold relief the attractive personality of Christy.

Shawn swears by religious conventions. He cannot do anything which may be objected to by the distant Roman Church and the local priest Father Reilly. Shawn is shorn of independent volition. In the respect he is similar to the Christy who lived in Munster. Christy was tied up to In the same way Shawn cannot free himself from Father Reilly's domination. In the opening Act of the play, Shawn is asked by Pegeen's father Michael to spend the night with her so that he can attend Kate Cassidy's wake. Shawn would very much like to avail himself of this opportunity. But he has been brainwashed by Father Reilly. So he considers it a sin to stay with Pegeen even though he had been betrothed to her.

When Christy is appointed pot-boy and Pegeen is entrusted to him, the conventional-minded Shawn is horrified. He freely objects to leaving a girl under the custody of a self-confessed murderer. But his objections are brushed aside by Pegeen because she has fallen in love with Christy at first sight and is eager to be left alone with him. Christy is not religious. He is not bound by any taboos. So, when Michael deputes him to guard Pegeen at night, he gladly accepts the job.

Shawn is cunning. He does not hesitate to adopt indirect methods toachieve his ends. On more than one occasion he uses Widow Quin as his tool. When it is decided to leave Pegeen with Christy, Shawn foresees their falling in love. To prevent this development, Shawn proposes to send Widow Quin to the shebeen to erect a barrier between the young people. Later, he tries to drive Christy away from Mayo by bribing him with a brand new hat and a suit of clothes. Christy accepts all these gifts but refuses to leave Mayo. Widow Quin comes forward to help Shawn. She offers to marry Christy herself to enable Shawn to pair off with Pegeen. For this service, she demands from Shawn a passage across his rye field, a red cow, a mountain ram and a loan of dung at Michaelmas. Shawn readily accedes to her demand. But all the cunning tactics of Shawn fail disastrously. Christy does not yield to Quin's temptation. He makes it clear that he will marry Pegeen and Pegeen only

Shawn is very happy when Christy's lies are exposed at the end and Pegeen turns her back on him. He miscalculates thatPegeen will re-unite with him. But Pegeen boxes his ears and sends him away wailing. This is the miserable end of Shawn. Pegeen rejects Christy also. But he walks out buoyantly and manfully.

3. **Old Mahon**

Old Mahon is merely mentioned in the first half of the play and makes his appearance only in the second half. He represents the majority of fathers who tyrannize over their sons.

We have contradictory versions about the character of Old Mahon. Christy says that his father is a drunkard who moves about naked in the garden in the dark, throwing stones blindly. But in actuality he never appears in a drunken state in the course of the play. Another charges levelled by Christy against his father is that he commanded him to marry an old lady who had suckled him (Christy) during his childhood. When Mahon appears later, no mention is made of this compulsion. Mahon tells Widow Quin that his son hit him for a trivial reason. So Christy's charge seems to be a baseless one.

There is no doubt that Old Mahon is violent and vengeful. He comes to Mayo in order to trace Christy and punish him for hitting him on his head. After Christy wins laurels at the village tournament, Old Mahon meets him. He cannot repress his anger. He beats Christy to pulp.

But Old Mahon undergoes a total change when he sees Christy brutally manhandled by the Mayoites. Thinking that Christy has murdered Old Mahon, the Mayoites tie his legs. Pegeen goes to the extent of scorching him with a piece of burning turf. Though he came to Mayo to punish Christy, Mahon sympathazes with Christy now. He unties Christy and asks him to leave the ungrateful Mayoitesand come with him back to their native place. To separate him from his deadly enemies, Old Mahon is prepared to make any sacrifice. So he readily agrees to Christy's condition and becomes meek. He gives up his domineering habit and behaves in a submissive manner as if he is Christy's servant. This episode illustrates the general truth that after a certain stage is reached; the father-son relationship is reversed. The erstwhile tyrannical father submits to the son and the son occupies the driver's seat.

4. **Pegeen Mike OR The fluctuations in Pegeen'slove for Christy**

Pegeen Mike, generally called Pegeen is the daughter of Michael James Flaherty, the owner of a public house in Mayo. Unlike her father who gets drunk in season out of season. Pegeen is a very responsible girl. She runs the shebeen almost singlehandedly as her father is interested mainly in boozing with his boon companions. When the play opens, she is seen listing the things that she needs for her proposed marriage with Shawn Keogh. This is the duty of her father. He has neglected it as he is busy collecting friends to go to Kate Cassidy's wake.

Pegeen does not hesitate to criticize her father to his face. She says that the environment is infested with hooligans daring to lay hands on unprotected girls. Even this sharp statement does not awaken his conscience.

Pegeen is very passionate. Unfortunately the village of Mayo does not provide any outlet to her passion. Like the teenage girls of our time losing their hearts to the action heroes of films,Pegeen is pining for adventurous men. But there are no adventurers in Mayo. It has only timid people, living humdrum lives. Her fiancé Shawn Keogh is one such man. Even though the betrothal ceremony is over, she is looking for something dramatic to happen which will break the betrothal. The coming of Christy is the dramatic incident she wished

for. Christy's claim to have killed his father withone stroke of a spade thrills her, as she has been thirstingall along for such unusual deeds.

Pegeen falls in love with Christy at first sight. But she does not make herself cheap by declaring her love with unseemly haste. She hints at her inclination by praising his attractive bodily features such as his face and legs. To find out whether he had any affairs in the past she asks him about the women of his native place and of the women he might have met on his way to Mayo. Christy says that the women of his village were indecent and beneath his native and that he never told his story to any girl on the way to Mayo. Only now are Pegeen's fears of a possible rival to herself are allayed.

Another aspect of Christy that attracts Pegeen is his poetic talk. For example he talks of the holy light emanating from her body guiding him wherever he goes and of the thatched roof of her cottage and the pebbles on her path made precious by her touch. Excited by this spirited outpouring, Pegeen says that he talks like the poets of Dingle Bay. She says frankly that she does not like Shawn because he is incapable of such poetic talk.

Pegeen is very possessive. She does not like the village girls rubbing shoulders with Christy. She keeps them away by telling Christy that they are irresponsible girls and might inform the police about his murderous deed and lead to his arrest. Similarly, she degrades Widow Quin whom everybody admires for her having knifed her husband to death. Pegeen says that the husband died not because of the stab but because the knife was rusty and poisoned his blood.

Pegeen's somersault at the end of the play is difficult to understand. Old Mahon appears in Mayo. Christy's claim to have killed him is found to be a lie. The image that she has built up Christy as a brave murderer crumbles. She turns her back on him for having cheated her by telling a lie. When the infuriated Christy makes a second attempt at murdering Old Mahon, Pegeen only revolts at this deed committed under her very nose. She ties him hand and foot and even burns his legs with a piece of burning turf. She wants him to be handed over to the police to be punished for his misdeed. So great is her anger at Christy shattering of her dream.

Pegeen's life becomes empty at the end of the play. Christy ceases to love her because of her cruelty towards him. He walks out gallantly with his father. She continues to be contemptuous towards Shawn. She dismisses him with a box on his ears. She bursts into

tears, saying that she has lost the only playboy of the Western World. The vacuum that has arisen in her heart cannot be filled by any other person.

5. **Widow Quin OR WidoQuin and Pegeen – a contrast**.

There are some marked differences between Widow Quin and Pegeen. Pegeen is in the prime of youth. Quin is, on the other hand, a middle- aged hag.

Like Pegeen, Widow Quin also falls for Christy because he has murdered his father. As Quin does not have the charms of Pegeen, she tries various other methods to draw Christy towards herself. She says that though her cottage is small compared to Pegeen'sshebeen, it is far safer from the police. She says that he can spend his time discussing philosophy with old visitors and, in intervals, hugging her. Even this salacious temptation fails to have any effect on Christy. He swears that he will marry Pegeen and Pegeen only. So Quin sides with Christy and offers to help him marry Pegeen if, after marriage, he donates to her a red cow, a mountain ram, a path across the rye field and a load of dung at Michaelmas to be used as manure in her field. Quin's move is not mercenary. It only shows her practical-mindedness and common sense.

Quin's love for Christy is self-effacing. She does not want Christy to be exposed by Old Mahon. So she makes him believe himself mad and think in terms of leaving Mayo. Unfortunately, her plan goes awry, as Old Mahon does not depart but comes back to the shebeen the beats up Christy, creating a train of unpleasant incidents. Even at this critical moment Quin tries to help Christy. She goes out to bring a doctor who can declare Christy to be mad and therefore fit to be put in a mad house. Quin plans thus in order to lift Christy safely from the angry mob which is bent on dragging him to the police to get him punished for his second attempt to murder Old Mahon. This plan also miscarries. Christy leaves Mayo with his father. Both Pegeenand WidowQuin are left disconsolate.

The General Essays

The Significance of the title, the Playboy of the Western World

The Play ***The Playboy of the Western Word***is about a young man winning recognition for himself both as a womanizer and as a star sportsman in Mayo in Western Ireland, usually known as the Western World. Thus the title accurately reflects the content of the play.

Christy Mahon begins as a nondescript under the tyrannical control of hisfather Old Mahon in a small village called Munster. The father is an unimaginative man riding

rough-shod over his son's delicate feelings. It appears that the father compelled Christy to marry a widow who was old enough to be his mother and who had in fact suckled him when he was a little child. The father fixed the marriage only because the widow was rich and Large quantities of money could be wheedled out of her. In a clash that broke out between the two, the son worsted the father by banging him on the head with a spade. The father was badly injured but not killed. But the son, terrified, thought that he had murdered his father and ran away from the spot to save himself.

It is only after reaching Mayo in the Western World that a great change takes place in Christy's life. The arrant coward becomes an admired playboy.

The people of Mayo are leading humdrum lives. They are thirsting for sensational developments. Even misdeeds such as attacking the police and maiming innocent animals thrill them. It is these perverted people who regard Christy as a great hero. His patricidal act is an admirable feat for them. An ever-increasing number of Mayoite girls throng round him and listen with rapt attention to his narration of how he split his father's body up to the waist with a single stroke of his spade. He adds more and more new details to make the narration spicy. The narrative gift is acquired by him in a few minutes. This is most spectacular.

Another gift acquired by him is the ability to describe the beauty of women with poetic glow. He was a stutterer in Munster. But in Mayo words flow out of his mouth spontaneously as water does from fountain. Thus he talks of the heavenly light radiating from Pegeen's body illuminating dark places and pebbles and thatches being divinized by her Midas touch. Pegeen, enraptured by his poetic talk, says that he talks like the poets of Dingle Bay. In his capacity for romancing, Christy proves a great playboy.

Christy is also playboy in the sense that he blossoms overnight into a dashing, smashing sportsman. He never played any games in Munster. But in the Mayo tournament he ranks first in all sports and games. This is due to the inspiration of Pegeen who is present at the sports meet, boosting him with her eyes.

The advent of Old Mahon, instead of decelerating his progress accelerates it still further. The Old Mahon who formerly controlled him now becomes his stooge. Pegeen grieves over his departure but not Christy. He leaves Mayo, bragging that he will

…… go romancing through a romping lifetime from this

Hour to the dawning of the Judgement Day.

2. **Fact and Fancy in *The Playboy of the Western World***

It is said that the story of ***The Playboy of the Western World*** is based upon an incident which an old man in one of the Aran islands had told Synge when the later was staying there. A man in the island killed his father with the blow of a spade in a fit of rage. After committing the dastardly murder, the man fled to another Aran island and begged for protection. The natives developed a liking for him and met all his needs. The police came to that village to catch hold of him. But the kind villagers hid him safely and, after the police had gone shipped him to America. This incident from actual life forms the basis of Synge's play. In his ***Journal*** Synge observes that this wish to love and protect criminals is deep-rooted in the psyche of the people of Western Ireland.

Let us see how fact and fancy form the warp and woof of ***The Playboy.*** Christy of Munster disagrees with his father who tries to marry him against his will to an elderly sapless widow. In the course of the clash, Christy gives a violent blow with a spade on his father's head and, fearing arrest flees to Mayo. Up to this point, Synge's play is based upon facts.

The villagers of the Aran Island admiring the murderer and protecting him in faithfully reflected in ***The Playboy***. Michael the owner of a shebeen in Mayo, appreciates Christy's patricidal act and unhesitatingly appoints him pot-boy in charge not only of his shop but also of his daughter. The daughter Pegeen, fed up with her humdrum existence and thirsting for an adventurer, falls headlong in love with him. So do Widow Quin, a replica of the very widow whom Christy's father tried in vain to foist on him, asks him to marry her and settle down in her cottage safe from the police. She temptingly offers to 'hug' him to while away their leisure. She paints a most pleasant picture of an idyllic rustic paradise.

That the people of Western Ireland have an innate love for adventure is also seen in the boisterous sports meet that is described towards the end of ***The Playboy***. Inspired by Pegeen, Christy routs all his competitions and bags all prizes, to the immense delight of the rustic onlookers, particularly of his sweetheart Pegeen.

In the original story, the police come in search of the criminal. In Synge's story of Old Mahon, the father injured by Christy and given up for dead comes to Mayo to catch his runaway son and punish him suitable for his crime. In the beginning, Mahon appears as an implacable revenger, determined to retaliate against his son, without paying any heed to

Widow Quin's diversionary tactics. But when he finds his son suffering hell-torture at the hands of the villagers, his heart melts with sympathy. He unties Christy and takes him back to Munster. But the relationship between the two changes upside down. The erstwhile tyrannical father becomes Christy's submissive slave carrying out his son's commands. This past of ***The playboy***is a deliberate departure from the original story. It is out and out a figment of Synge's fancy.

Thus ***The Playboy*** is a happy blend of fact and fancy.

3. **<u>The Playboy of the Western World as a Tragicomedy</u>**

In a tragedy the protagonist dies or gets killed causing immense mental pain to those near and dear to him. This is what we find in Shakespeare's tragedies. In tragi-comedies, there is no death but there is a great deal of dislocation and mental suffering. ***The Playboy of the WesternWorld*** belongs to this genre.

In The Playboy there is much talk of death but not actual death. Christy gives a blow on his father's head with a spade because the latter compels him to marry a widow who is old enough to be his mother and who had actually suckled him in his childhood. The Old Mahon falls down unconscious. Christy runs away from the spot, thinking that his father is dead. After eleven days of wandering, he reaches a shebeen. He is covered with dust and is deathly tired. He narrates how he split his father's body up to the waist with a single stroke of the spade. The immediate effect of this narration is that the adventure-starved Mayoites glorify him as a re doubtable warrior.

Michael, the owner of the shebeen, is so much impressed with his daredevilry as to appoint him guardian not only of his shop but also of his daughter, Pegeen. An Affair develops by leaps and bounds between Christy and Pegeen. A widow by name Quin completes in vain to draw Christy towards herself.

Old Mahon considered deed turns up at an unexpected moment in Mayo. The people who admired Christy thinking that he had murdered his father, cease admiring him because he has not done any such deed. He seems quite an ordinary fellow. Pegeen is sore with him. She says that he has cheated them all by telling a lie. To drive out his father who has caused all this reversal in his fortune, Christy once again hits him with his spade. Old Mahon is once again stretched unconscious on the ground. He is once again considered dead. But this second murder evokes a different response from the people around him. The second murder does not evoke any admiration as the first murder did. Instead, the

people are only disgusted now, as this 'murder' had been committed under their very nose. An awakening dawns on them. They realize that murder is not something glorious but a horrible deed (This awakening is comparable to King Asoka's on seeing the massacre at heKalinga battlefield). The Mayoites decide to hand over the murderer Christy to the police. Towards this end they tie Christy hand and foot. At this time, Old Mahon bursts upon the men for the second time. He pities his son for the miserable state he is in. He releases Christy and takes him back home. Now, the relationship between the two is reversed. The father becomes submissive and the son domineering.

Pegeen's loss is irreparable. She laments that she has lost the only playboy of the western word. This is the only tragic development in the play which is otherwise full of funny developments. There are many comic characters in ***The Playboy***. Shawn Keogh is conceived as a comic character. His running away, leaving behind his coat in the hands of Michael who compels his to say with Pegeen, is first-class comedy. His bribing Christy with a new hat and a set of clothes to make him give up Pegeen is another comic touch. And so is Widow Quin's bargaining with Christy. She agrees to help him marry Pegeen provided he gives her a red cow and a mountain ram. These people think that love is a thing that can be bought and sold or affectedthrough bribery. Michael's doings are most comic. In his hurry to go to Kate Cassidy's wake to consume liquor, he does not mind entrusting his daughter to a self-confessed murderer. What an irresponsible father! Old Mahon going naked and throwing stones and Michael returning home very late tottering, are drunkards. They are presented as buffoons.

Thus The Playboy is brim-full of comic touches. It ends on a heart-breaking note so far as Pegeen is concerned. The pathetic element is mitigated to a certain extent by the comic touch of boxing Shawn's ears for stupidly offering to substitute Christy.

A Brief outline of the Story of The Playboy of the Western World

The Playboy of the Western World tells the story of an young man by name Christy who, in a clash with his father, has hit him with a spade. The old man falling down unconscious. Christy jumps to the conclusion that his father is dead. Fearing arrest, Christy flees from his native place. Wandering for ten days, he finally comes to shebeen(a wayside tavern) outside a village near the wild coast of Mayo. Instead of condemning Christy for his parricidal act, the people in the shebeen admire him for his bravery. Among the admirers are Michael James, the owner of the shebeen and his young daughter Pegeen Mike. The

only person who dislikes Christy is a fellow called Shawn to whom Pegeen is engaged to be married. Michael appoints Christy pot-boy to assist Pegeen in running the shebeen. A widow by name Quin is also enamoured of Christy who, however, is attracted more towards Pegeen than towards the old hag.

Quite unexpectedly, Christy's father, Old Mahon, appears on the scene. He had been given up for dead. But he had survived and come in search of Christy to punish him for having tried to kill his father. Christy hides himself. In an attempt to protect her lover, Widow Quin engages Old Mahon is a conversation. Old Mahon reveals that Christy was very shy, lazy and good –for-nothing in the past. At the sight of young girl advancing towards him, he used to hide himself. He was branded a 'looney'. Nobody liked him. In short, he was quite the contrary of his present self. Thanks to the misleading information given by Widow Quin. Old Mahon goes away. Though she has done good to Christy, he is drawn only towards Pegeen.

Encouraged by the adulation of the village girls, Christy takes a part in sports and emerges victorious. Pegeen decides to marry Christy. At this moment, Old Mahon re-appears. He is once again hit on the head with a spade by Christy and once again falls down, seemingly dead. Pegeen and the others are revolted at this cold-blooded murder in their very presence. Pegeen goes to the extent of tying up Christy and scorching his leg with turf. Now comes another surprise. Old Mahon reappears for the third time and proposes to release his son and take him back to his native place. Christy agrees to this proposal on condition that in future he will be the master and Old Mahon his subordinate. The roles are reversed. Christy leaves the place driving his obedient father. Pegeen breaks into tears as she has lost her lover, the playboy of the Western World.