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In this presentation, let us examine two poems, sonnets of Michael Drayton, another Elizabethan poet. We will see the historical context and the literary context in which Michael Drayton wrote his poems. We will look at his sonnet collection called "Ideas Mirror" publish in 1594. For the purpose of this lecture, we will discuss two sonnets. Drayton has an interesting sonnet called "Introductory Sonnet" to the readers. We will learn about the kind of sonnet that he has written from this introductory sonnet.

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Michael Drayton was born in 1563, when Queen Elizabeth was the Queen of England and he continued his life in the second period, that is, Jacobean period as well, that is, King James was ruling the country. Again, after the death of King James, Charles I became the king. Even at that time, Drayton was writing and he was contributing to English poetry. So, Michael Drayton belongs to both Elizabethan poetry and early seventeen century poetry.

And this period had this complex game of courtly life. Elizabeth had a stable administration but after her there was some stability in the beginning but then, there were many disturbances due to the religious factions or fights between Catholics and Protestants. Michael Drayton found this courtly life to be too difficult, but then, he was able to manage to get some kind of patronage throughout his life.

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Literary Context

- Renaissance and Reformation
- All educated people from poor backgrounds could not succeed in life.
- ➤ Shakespeare and Drayton from the same Warwickshire area
- Writers with less educational backgrounds
- ➤ Being pages (attendants) and becoming pages (writings)

The literary context is all about Renaissance and Reformation: Renaissance in letters, Reformation in the church. It is a second one which led to lot of social changes, transformations particularly, in the realm of education. Many people were able to get education. However, all educated people from poor backgrounds could not succeed in life. Success at that point of time meant to become a courtier; to get a job in the government; some job or other; to get associated with some patron or finally to get the grace of Queen of England.

Interestingly, we find that Shakespeare and Drayton hail from the same Warwickshire area. There were many writers with less educational backgrounds including Shakespeare and Drayton. Here, we have a social practice of the time, that is, becoming a Page for some rich person or a person of social standing. A page means something like an attendant. Shakespeare

was a page and similarly Drayton also became a page and these two writers like others. They became pages, that is, attendants and then in course of time, they became writers who could write large number of pages for the English people to read, for anyone to read and enjoy.

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Michael Drayton was not only a poet he was also a playwright. Today, Michael Drayton is remembered more by historians, because he wrote historical books about England. He was a man of humble origin, but he had the gift to mingle with people of high society. Because of his ability to compose poems and dedicate them to patrons, he was able to receive support from many patrons throughout his life. Though the government changed, though the patrons changed, he continued to write; he continued to revise his own writings and publish them again and again. It was remarkable to see that, Michael Drayton attempted a wide variety of poems on different topics including religion, history, and geography.

One of the notable works of Drayton is this longest to poem "Poly-Olbion." It is called a topographical poem about England and Wales. It has an astonishing collection of 30,000 lines. However, in the literary circles, Drayton is known for his famous sonnet "Since there is no help, come let us kiss and part."

Ideas Mirror (1594)

- First edition with 51 sonnets
- Revised editions in 1599 (59), 1600, 1605, and 1619 (64)
- Title reduced to Idea in subsequent editions
- Platonic Idea/ love, little passion and feeling
- Personification of Idea as a beloved
- The sequence may have been inspired by Anne Goodyear, the daughter of his early patron, Sir Henry Goodyear

The sonnet sequence that Drayton wrote was called, Ideas Mirror. He published this volume in 1594. The first edition came out with 51 sonnets, but he went on revising this sonnet sequence throughout his life, nearly about 25 years. So, we have revised editions in 1599, 1600, 1605, and 1619.

Later on, Drayton reduced the title to "Idea." The reduction in the title, perhaps, referred to the platonic ideal love. Here, because it deals with the ideal love, it does not have much passion or feeling in this sonnet sequence. Drayton presents a personification of idea as a beloved. It is conjectured that, the sequence might have been inspired by a lady Anne Goodyear, the daughter of his early patron, Sir Henry Goodyear.

To the Reader of these Sonnets

Into these loves, who but for passion looks,		A
At this first sight here let him lay them by		B
And seek elsewhere in turning other books,		A
Which better may his labour satisfy.		B
5. No far-fetch'd sigh shall ever wound my breast;		C
Love from mine eye a tear shall never wring;		D
Nor in "Ah me's!" my whining sonnets drest:		C
A libertine, fantasticly I sing.		D
My verse is the true image of my mind,		E
10. Ever in motion, still desiring change;		F
And as thus to variety inclin'd,		E
So in all humours sportively I range:		F
My Muse is rightly of the English strain,		G
That cannot long one fashion entertain.		G

This is an introductory sonnet to the readers; he calls it "To the readers of these Sonnets."

	"Into these loves, who but for passion looks,	A
	At this first sight here let him lay them by	B
	And seek elsewhere in turning other books,	A
	Which better may his labour satisfy.	B
5.	No far-fetch'd sigh shall ever wound my breasts;	C
	Love from mine eye a tear shall never wring;	D
	Nor in "Ah me's!" my whining sonnets drest:	C
	A libertine, fantastically I sing.	D
	My verse is the true image of my mind,	E
	Ever in motion, still desiring change;	F
	And as thus to variety inclin'd,	E
	So, in all humours sportively I range:	F
	My muse is rightly of the English strain,	G
	That cannot long one fashion entertain. "	G

Drayton tells us that, his verse is different from that of others, though he calls his sonnet sequence 'ideas.' 'My verse' he says, is a true image of my mind. He does not imagine and write something else according to some conventions. He is also very particular about his musing, his source of inspiration to be English muse and English tradition. And again, another characteristic of this English tradition is, it cannot continue with one fashion for a long time. Probably, why is sonnet sequence went out of fashion after Elizabethan period, we can understand from this particular characteristic of English poetry.

Idea 14

If he from heaven that filched that living fire	A	
Condemned by Jove to endless torment be,	B	
I greatly marvel how you still go free,	B	
That far beyond Prometheus did aspire.	A	
5. The fire he stole, although of heavenly kind,	C	
Which from above he craftily did take,	D	
Of liveless clods, us living men to make,	D	
He did bestow in temper of the mind.	C	
But you broke into heaven's immortal store,	E	
10 Where virtue, honor, wit, and beauty lay;	F	
Which taking thence you have escaped away,	F	
Yet stand as free as ere you did before;	E	
Yet old Prometheus punished for his rape.	G	
Thus poor thieves suffer when the greater 'scape.	G	

Next, we discuss the poem 'Idea 14.' It is a sonnet, here it goes.

	"If he from heaven that fliched that living fire	A
	Condemned by Jove to endless torment be,	B
	I greatly marvel how you still go free,	B
	that far beyond Prometheus did aspire.	A
5.	The fire he stole, although of heavenly kind,	C
	Which from above he craftily did take,	D
	Of liveless clods, us living men to make,	D
	he did bestow in temper of the mind.	C
	But you broke into heaven's immortal store,	E
10.	Where virtue, honour, wit, and beauty lay;	F
	Which taking thence you have escaped away.	F
	Yet stand as free as ere you did before;	E
	Yet old Prometheus punished for his rape.	G
	Thus, poor thieves suffer when the greater escape.	G

The epigram sums up his own understanding of life. We will examine the poem now.

Thematic Contrast

- Altruism and narcissism
- Lifeless and living human beings
- Crime and Punishment
- Prometheus stole fire from heaven for the sake of humanity but he was punished eternally.
- The beloved has stolen "virtue, honor, wit, and beauty" from heaven but escaped any punishment.
- Prometheus suffered for others but the lady has lived for herself

Let us look into that thematic contrast that is available in this poem. We can see altruism in the case of Prometheus, the classical character who went to heaven to steal fire from heaven for the sake of humanity and as a consequence he had to suffer eternally. On the other hand, we have the narcistic feeling of the lady who has beauty for herself, who enjoys her own beauty, but she is not punished at all.

This altruistic service to mankind, actually stealing fire from heaven, brought life to human beings. Lifeless human beings got life because of the fire from heaven brought by Prometheus. So, there is an element of crime and punishment. If we steal something, we are punished. So, Prometheus was punished. Prometheus stole fire from heaven for the sake of humanity, but he was punished eternally. On the other hand, the beloved has stolen virtue, honour, wit, and beauty, many things not just fire from heaven but escaped any kind of punishment. She has all these virtue, honour, wit, and beauty, she has stolen them from heaven. This is an imagination of the poet; you can see. This lady is not punished, Prometheus suffered for others, but this lady has lived for herself.

Poetic Devices

- **Allusion:** Prometheus myth
- **Alliteration:** filched fire, men to make
- **Epigram:**
  ➢ "Thus poor thieves suffer when the greater 'scape"
- **Diction:** mythological and contemporary
- **Syntax:** complex structures in the first 13 lines and a statement of complexity in the last line standing apart from the whole poem
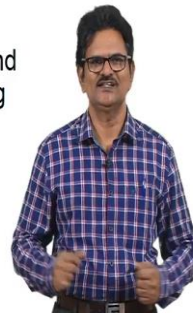
Quite a few poetic devices can be noticed in this poem. First, poetic device is allusion; it is very prominent; the whole poem is centres around the 'Prometheus myth.' We also have alliteration in the case of "fliched fire, men to make." The beauty of this poem lies in the epigrammatic line at the end, "thus poor thieves suffer when the greater escape." We also have the diction appropriate to the mythological story and also the contemporary life. The syntax is quite complex. We notice that, there are many complex structures in the first 13 lines. And in the last line, we have a statement of complexity which stands separately from the first 13 lines.

Structure, Rhyme, and Rhythm

- Three quatrains and a couplet
- **Volta:** in line 9 (But)
- **Rhyme:** ABBA CDDC EFFE GG
- **Rhyming words:** *fire*, be, free, *aspire*, kind, take, make, mind, store, lay, away, before, **rape**, **escape**
- **Meter:** Perfect iambic pentameter
  ➢ "Where virtue, honor, wit, and beauty lay"
- **Contrast in rhythm and syntax:**
  ➢ If he from heaven that filched that living fire

When we look into the structure, rhyme and rhythm in this poem, we find there are three quatrains and a couplet. It also has a volta in line nine through that conjunction, but we have the rhyme scheme ABBA CDDC EFFE GG. The rhyming words are fire, be, free, aspire, kind take, make, mind, store, lay, away, before, rape, escape. Look into those words: fire, aspire, kind, mind, rape, escape.

We have interesting connotations; these words coming together making suggestions for us to understand the fire of aspiration, the imagination of aspiration, the mind having kindness and people using this idea of rape, that is, in this poem we have to understand this word 'rape' is used differently to refer to stealing or filching as the poet uses in the first line. Here rape does not refer to what we understand today.

So, stealing something and escaping that is idea that is brought into this rhyme in this particular poem. We have the perfect iambic pentameter in this particular line where, "Where virtue, honor, wit, and beauty lay." And we can contrast this with the rhythm and syntax in the first line. If he from heaven that filched that living fire. It is not so smooth as we have in 'where virtue, honor, wit, and beauty lay.' However, we have this common iambic pentameter running throughout the poem.

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Overall Impression

- Life is a mystery, a puzzle.
- God's ways are inscrutable.
- Those who help others selflessly are punished.
- Those who help themselves are free.
- Does the poet ironically criticize or genuinely admire the lady for her escape?
- How would women readers respond to Drayton?
- How does the situation generally apply to the human condition?

Let us have a picture, whole picture of this poem now. Life is a mystery; it is also a puzzle. We say, God's ways are inscrutable, we can not examine and find reasons for what happens why. Those who help others selflessly are punished. It is a common phenomenon that we see for ourselves. Those who help themselves somehow, they are free. So, there is a question for us. Thus, the poet ironically criticizes or genuinely admire the lady for her escape. How

would woman readers respond to Drayton today? We have one more question relating to our world Human Condition. How does a situation generally apply to the Human Condition?

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Idea 61

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part.	A
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;	B
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,	A
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.	B
5. Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,	C
And when we meet at any time again,	D
Be it not seen in either of our brows	C
That we one jot of former love retain.	D
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,	E
10. When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies;	F
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,	E
And Innocence is closing up his eyes –	F
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,	
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!	

Now, we are going to the second poem, Idea 61. This is the most famous poem of Michael Drayton found in many anthologies of English poetry.

	"Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part.	A
	Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;	B
	And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,	A
	That thus so cleanly I myself can free.	B
5.	Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,	C
	And when we meet at any time again,	D
	Be it not seen in either of our brows	C
	That we one jot of former love retain.	D
	Now, at the last gasp of love's latest breath,	E
	When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies;	F
	When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,	E
	And Innocence is closing up his eyes-	F

Now if thou wouldst, <u>when</u> all have given him over, G

From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!   G

We have the rhyme scheme here.

Thematic Contrast

- A separation or farewell poem that also remotely hints at union. Love's power to bring the dead to life
- Lovers may break up with a good understanding, even if it means death for one or both.
- Introduction: Let us separate.
- Progression: You get no more of me;
    Shake hands for ever,
    Cancel all our vows,
    Pretend there was no love between us
    When he is by deathbed
- Conclusion: thou might'st him yet recover
- Separation and union; glad and sad; life and death

This poem has a thematic contrast in the very idea of the whole poem; this can be called a separation poem or a farewell poem. But it also hints at some kind of union at the end. It suggests that love has a power to bring the dead to life. Lovers may break up with a good understanding even if it means death for one or both. We have a clear picture of this separation or farewell in this poem.

First the poet introduces the idea of let us separate. Then he explained how they will separate from each other: 'You get no more of me' he tells her. 'Shake hands forever; Cancel all our vows,' Love… Is there any love without vows to remain together forever? 'Pretend there was no love between us' When the love is lost only pretension remains. 'When he is by deathbed' in the last days of his life what happens? So, the conclusion of this poem is this: "thou might'st him yet recover." It is possible for the beloved to recover this love, the man, from death; it is possible through love.

Both these ideas of separation and union are brought together. Similarly, feelings of joy and sorrow are brought together. And again, both life and death come together in this poem of separation and perhaps of union.

Poetic Devices

Irony: And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart
Personification: Love, Passion, Faith, Innocence
Anaphora: when
Repetition: and (2), when (3), now (2)
Syntax: imperatives

Some poetic devices can be seen in this poem. Irony seems to be very predominant in this poem. Here we have a line, 'And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart.' Is the poet really happy, glad to separate from his beloved? We also have personification in the case of love, passion, faith, innocence. These are all good qualities that go together in this farewell poem and actually create a stark contrast to the feeling felt by the poet or the speaker. We also have this poetic device called, anaphora: 'when' is repeated several times, and 'when' begins other lines.

Similarly, we have repetition in the case of 'and,' and 'now' also. The whole poem consists of many imperatives in terms of syntactical structure. Cancel all our vows, that is the kind of language we have in this poem.

Structure, Rhyme, and Rhythm

Three quatrains and a couplet

Volta: 11th line; we can unite again

Rhyme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG (Shakespearean)

Part, me, heart, free, vows, again, brows, retain, breath lies, death, eyes, over, recover

Separation is equal to death, but it is ok.

The couplet has an eye rhyme, not a full rhyme.

Clear flow in octave, and hesitation in sestet

Dash at the end of line 13 dashes off all hope.

The structure rhyme and rhythm, again, we have three quatrains and a couplet. Volta, in this case is found in the eleventh line, where there is a hint of 'we can unite again,' there is a change in the thought process. At the beginning we have the whole thought of separation, but at the end there is an element of union as well. The rhyme scheme is this, ABAB CDCD EFEF, and GG. This is a Shakespearean sonnet structure. The rhyming words are part, me, heart, free, vows, again, brows, retain, breath, lies, death, eyes, over, recover.

This poem seems to suggest separation is equal to death, but the poet accepts the fact. Though, he has a lingering feeling of love, for his beloved, who, he wants to imagine that she would come, and bring him back to life. The couplet has an eye rhyme and it is not a full rhyme; over and recover. There is a clear flow we have in octave but more of hesitation in the sestet, obviously indicating the poet does not want to separate. We also have a dash at the end of line 13, probably dashing all hopes of the poet.

Overall Impression

- The compounded complexity of chaotically confused life of love
- We desire others but destroy ourselves.
- The poem looks simple due to its conversational tone.
- It is a complex poem of intricate relationships between people, especially male and female in a hierarchical and capitalistic society.
- Drayton was supporting his large family all through his life and remained single.

Actually, the poem deals with the compounded complexity of chaotically confused life of love. This is so much complex or chaotic, confused because, people tend to desire others or things which finally tend to destroy the people who desire. So, we can say, we desire others but destroy ourselves.

The poem looks simple due to its conversational tone, but it is a complex poem of intricate relationships between people, especially between male and female in a hierarchical and capitalistic society. We have to remember that Drayton was supporting his large family all through his life and he did not marry and so remained a single man.

Summary

- Historical Context
- Literary Context
- Michael Drayton
- *Ideas Mirror* (1594)
- Three Sonnets
- Introductory Sonnet
- Idea 14
- Idea 61

In this lecture, we discussed the historical context, literary context in which Michael Drayton lived and wrote his poems. We examined Ideas Mirror published in 1594, with reference to two major sonnets. But we also saw the introductory sonnet in which Drayton says, 'my verse is a true image of my mind' and thereby distinguishing himself as sonneteer in the Elizabethan period. Idea 61 is one of the most famous sonnets of Drayton. Which goes like this, 'since there is no help come let us kiss and part.'

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We have some references for you. You may try to collect them and refer to them if possible and enjoy the poetry of Michael Drayton. Thank you.