

English (Hons) Part-I; Paper-II; Unit-1: Poems
TOPIC: Thought in a Garden; Lec-Seri-28.

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Thought in a Garden: Andrew Marvell.

'Thought in a Garden' is a unique poem written by Andrew Marvell, a poet whose poetry combines the clarity and grace of Ben Jonson with the metaphysical wit of John Donne. This combination is best shown in his poem 'To the Coy Mistress'.

His poem 'Thought in a Garden' foreshadows Keats by its sensuousness and Wordsworth by its optimistic and meditative mood. This poem is romantic in its expression, metaphysical in its word game and Classical in its music. It is romantic because it is about the 'nature' in subject and theme and it is the expression of poet's personal and emotional feelings.

The theme of the poem is that the 'Garden', which symbolises 'life', is the perfect place for the physical, mental and spiritual comfort and satisfaction, different from the society where pleasure is false and temporary. The poem focuses on the fact that the true and complete pleasure lies in the complete "garland of repose" in the nature, rather than having a garland of a few leaves in one's neck with the vanity of being victorious and prestigious.

In the second stanza, the speaker personifies the quietness and innocence in the nature and takes pleasures in the company of nature. He laments that he spent a lot of time in making company which went in vain. In one hand he expresses an odd emotion and attachment with trees by calling them "amorous", on the other hand he criticizes such lovers who used to cut the trees to write their beloved name. He further says that when men's "heart" of love and youth is finished, they turn to the nature. According to the speaker, even the God did this, when for example, Apollo and Pan changed their lovers in the trees.

Further, the speaker argues and gives his opinion when that the nature which provides sensual and physical pleasure is not as much worthful as mental pleasure which nature provides too. He claims that this pleasure in the lap of nature has a spiritual aspect. He romanticizes how he feels: he feels as if his soul is singing and gliding from tree to tree as bird, combining its feathers, and preparing for the eternal flight of salvation.

Before making the concluding remark, that there can be no question of genuine pleasure without the nature, the speaker compares himself with the lonely Adam in Eden; he also argues that being lonely was a second paradise for Adam before Eve

brought about the fall. Concluding the poem the speaker thanks God for creating a unique world of its own that is Garden. The Garden or the nature in general has its own time; the rush and hurry of the society does not apply here. Even the sun seems to have its own course. Thus, the Garden is therefore the only source of true physical, mental as well as spiritual satisfaction and repose.

As a metaphysical poem, the Garden uses conceit, wit, far-fetched images and allusions and a dramatic situation. The balance of emotion and intellect is also another metaphysical feature. The romantic myth about God Apollo and Pan is changing girls and enjoying the nature, the Biblical allusion of Adam "lonely" happiness are "heterogeneous ideas yoked by violence together within the context of the argument. The trees and the place of the garden is personified and even sexualized. The argument of physical pleasure is twisted into the argument of mental pleasure. At this point the poet brings the lonely metaphysical idea about the mind. He further extends the idea pleasurable experience by arguing that his pleasure is actually spiritual. There he goes on to create the imagery of his soul flying like dove and preparing

for the eternal flight of Slavation. The same idea of spiritual pleasure is also related to the Comparison with Adam in Eden. Another metaphysical element is the idea of sun-dial.

As a classical poem, the poem exhibits the qualities like the use of a different poetic diction, heroic-couplet, careful rhythm and rhyme, classical and educated allusion etc. The poem's main ~~idea~~ line of argument is not difficult to summarize. But there are so many difficult words and even ordinary words in 'unusual' sense. Many sentences have a Latin-like word order, with the verb at the end. There is a classical perfection in its meter and design and structure as a whole.

The main theme of the poem is that the peaceful life in the nature is more satisfying than social life and in human company.

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