

29 Aug  
Thurs

12.9.24

classmate

B. of Part II (Hon)  
Paper II

Q The two digression in Lycidas are more noteworthy than the elements in it —  
Dissus.

Ans Milton's Lycidas is a pastoral elegy — admittedly one of the greatest of its kind, by virtue of its style, the beauty and melody, its fine blending of mythologies — classical and christian, But it is inferior to Arnold's Thyrsis, to Shelley Adonais and to Tennyson's In Memoriam in a point of expression of sincerity of passion and perhaps in some degree to artistic unity & workmanship, owing to the incidencence of digression which undoubtedly disturbs.

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The organic unity of the poem. Like Arnold, Shelley and Milton Tennyson, Milton does not strictly limit himself to the subject matter but allows himself to be involved into digressions and meditations not ~~relevant~~ relevant to his topic. These digressions are: The poet reflects on the value of life spent in the pursuit of pleasure, contrasted with a life dedicated to self-discipline; The value and nature of poetic fame; The denunciation of English clergy through the Smother of St. Peter.

In presenting the elegiac elements, Milton follows the somewhat pastoral machinery — its traditional conventions and artistic devices e.g. (1) presenting external nature as overwhelmed with grief; similes

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- (2) Conventional enquiry into the death of Edward King in the guise of 'Shepherd'
- (3) Procession of mourners headed by Old Camus, and St. Peter
- (4) Employing classical imagery of Satyr and Faun as media for expression of poet's grief. Milton follows the ~~traditional~~ pastoral tradition strictly in the employment of classical imagery after the manner of Theocritus and Virgil. It is his use of pastoral machinery that gives his Lycidas an artificial air ~~in~~ in tone, expression and manner and ~~also~~ detracts from the sincerity of emotion which is defect of the poem.

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Examine

All these conventions are part of tradition handed down from the classical times. There is nothing original or creative about them.

The more remarkable of Lycidas constitutes two digressions, viz (1) Nature of theme and (2) The present state and fate of English elegy. These are digressions as they have little connection with the main subject matter. At their worst, they do disturb to a certain extent the even flow of the elegy and disrupt the arguable unity.

Note → To be continued.

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