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Foreword

With this issue of *Pegasus*, we welcome the boys and girls of the new First Year English Honours class. We hope to spend a wonderful three-year period together. The results of the Part II Honours examinations were published on August 10. We congratulate those who graduated from our department. We also congratulate all those who secured First Class marks in B.Com. and B.Sc. Our best wishes to those who will appear in their B.A., B.Com. and B.Sc. Part One examinations.

Our previous issue – a special one on *Indian Writing in English* – was an immediate success and was sold out within three weeks of publication. We hope to publish a revised and enlarged second edition in a short while.

The Calcutta University under-graduate examination pattern has undergone yet another change. In the Part I examinations all Honours students will have to sit for two Honours papers. Two more will be examined in the Part II stage and the remaining four in the Part III. This redistribution of syllabus load is welcome, though we are somewhat alarmed by the additions to the syllabus. It will be a race against time as colleges such as Heramba Chandra have already lost a huge chunk of precious class hours this year because of the various university examinations which will continue till the Puja Vacations.

On 29 April a Seminar on *Macbeth* was organised by *Pegasus* and the English Department of St. Paul's Cathedral Mission College to commemorate the 400th year of the play at the *Abanindra Sabhagriha*. The Keynote Speech was delivered by Dr. Abhijit Sen of Viswa Bharati. The other speakers were Prof. Chhandam Deb (Purulia J. K. College), Dr. Sudeshna Kar Barua (Gokhale Memorial College and Calcutta University), Dr. Sanjukta Das (Presidency College and Calcutta University), Prof. Tilottama Roy Banerjee (Sivanath Sastri College), Dr. Lily Law (Heramba Chandra College) and Prof. Kausik Sarbadhikary (St. Paul's Cathedral Mission College). Three students of the English Department of St. Paul's also presented three papers. *Indian Writing in English*, a Special Issue of *Pegasus* was formally released by Principal Debesh Mukherjee of St. Paul's Cathedral Mission College. Principal Amitabha Basu of Heramba Chandra College released *To Times in Hope*, a publication of the *Subodh Chandra Sengupta Foundation* edited by Tapati Gupta and Salil Biswas.

The Seminar remembered Prof. Kajal Sengupta as a person and as an academic with deep affection and respect. *Pegasus* will be publishing all the papers presented at the Seminar some time soon in a special issue dedicated to her.

Unravelling *The Fly*

Debjeni Chatterjee

Katherine Mansfield's 'The Fly' is to me and most students a 'brain teaser'. It is a story that makes the reader most uncomfortable. Not the least matter for mental discomfort is its brevity. The first warnings of this likely bewilderment come in the introduction by Michael Thorpe, where one is warned of very many possible interpretations. And no sooner than one finishes reading than a host of questions come crawling out of the pages. Needless to say the puzzlement is necessarily related to the writer's purpose. What is Mansfield's objective in incorporating the fly episode? What in effect is the boss's relation to it? Is the boss's conduct quite in character? What have these factors to do with the writer's message if any?

As one grapples with these text-related questions, several other issues of the writer's life and times cry out for attention. One wonders whether Mansfield's own mental condition in the years before her death is hinted through the boss's secretive nature. The death of her brother in the First World War seems to have left a debilitating impact which surfaces again and again through her stories. Mansfield's uninhibited, free spirit chafed against what she called the "horror" of her illness, her confinement in sanatoria, the alienation of an invalid, fears of rejection and loneliness. The feeling of oppressiveness following the reminder of his son's death that the boss feels in 'The Fly' may have corresponded to the author's experience. Not only the boss, several other characters in Mansfield's stories seem to be looking for a means to escape from their 'boxed-in' state. Ironically enough, the above phrase is first used in connection with Woodfield who was so treated by his daughters and only allowed to 'cut back' to the city on Tuesdays. Yet another story – 'The Daughters of the Colonel' shows that Josephine and Constantia remain oppressed, vainly searching for a place to escape the shadow of their dead father's overpowering presence and the domination of Kate. In 'An Ideal Family', old Mr. Neave retreats to a room away from his family and still sees the vision of an 'ancient,' thin man climbing the stairs. Is it himself? Likewise is the fly the boss? Bludgeoned by the irrationality of fate, is he taking his chance to strike back? Again in 'The Life of Ma Parker', the 'grandmom', desperately searches for a little privacy – If only to mourn for her grandson. Laura, the daughter of the hostess in 'The Garden-Party' escapes from the party atmosphere at last and is struck speechless by death. Her thoughts run in this fashion:

He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane.

Katherine Mansfield's own writings around this time reveal interestingly enough her own sense of claustrophobic mental pressure and fears about her

own impending death. Saralyn R. Daly observes that from 1918 onwards Mansfield's notebooks and letters, short stories 'are sprinkled with images of flies' and that she felt as if she were a fly 'dropped into the milk jug and fished out again.' Daly attributes this mental condition to her 'losing conflict with ill-health, destiny, an insensitive father and even, since the fly is in the ink, the battle to meet short-story deadlines'

The writer's pre-occupation with an insect is not the only similarity the story 'The Fly' shares with Kafka's 'Metamorphosis'. While "The Fly" was published in 'The Nation' on April 29, 1922, Kafka's story had appeared in 1915. Both writers, Kafka and Mansfield, through the medium of the short story resented the then pervasive climate of oppression brought about by the war and the oncoming Great Depression. Eventually, the protagonists of both stories are looking for a means of escape. And escape from oneself, more often than not (and here one comes to the real likeness), leads to a kind of metamorphosis, and a new identity. Gregor Samsa, overburdened by his family's crushing debts and responsibilities *finds* a grotesque way out of the situation by becoming a huge, repulsive cockroach. The boss in 'The Fly', by shutting out the world, unmasks his latent aggressiveness (whether or not brought about by the vulnerability of his condition as emphasized by old Woodfield) on the unsuspecting little fly. He emerges as a bully and a sadist, but one cannot dismiss him totally as that. Why else would he feel such a 'grinding feeling of wretchedness'? Obviously here we can marvel at the open-endedness of the story. For somewhere in the assault the boss has shared an empathy with the hapless fly and in its death has foreseen his own. The twist of irony is unmistakable. He who wanted to frighten the puny little creature is frightened himself -by the emotion he feels, which cannot be all for the victim. As Elaine Showalter observes:

In the short stories of Katherine Mansfield the moment of self awareness is also the moment of self-betrayal.

Consciousness of a dual self, is but another kind of awareness regarding the level of paradox in life and now generally one that is accepted as a virtual trend in modern fiction. Distillation of this inherent paradox in life follows naturally from the complexity that distinguishes post-war writing. All the prominent authors responded to the war in their own way but all evinced a changed outlook. In Mansfield's own words:

I feel in the profoundest sense that nothing can ever be the same – that as artists, we are traitors if we feel otherwise: we have to take into account and find new expressions, new moulds for our new thoughts and feelings.

Among the avant-garde ideas that impressed early twentieth century thought was that of existentialism. Its believers saw man as bereft of choices, crushed relentlessly by circumstances which were willy-nilly foisted on him. Seen in this light, Gregor Samsa merely plays out his insect-role as he awaits death. However much the boss flaunts his newly acquired wealth, the fly's sudden capitulation reminds him of what lies in store for him. The line 'But such a grinding feeling of wretchedness' is also an artistically clever piece of suggestion and understatement, another no less important 'modern trait'. It belonged to 'the symbolic heritage' she shared with writers like Joyce from their reading – of Wilde, Pater, Symonds. The dual consciousness is hinted through the monologue – the statements of the boss when alone with the fly, Mr. Neave's thoughts when alone in the dining-room. In 'The Daughters of the Colonel', the two sisters' mental closeness is brought out by the author's remark that 'one knew instinctively what the other had to say'. In yet another story, 'The Garden Party', Laura cannot end her statement and is at a loss for words. However, in such close communication words do not matter. There is an understanding at a level below the conscious 'Isn't life, she stammered, isn't life ...'. But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood'. In Kafka's 'Metamorphosis', Gregor's thinking capacities remain unchanged though his appearance and speech are no longer human. This greater fidelity to the unconscious points to the impact of another modern 'movement' – that of surrealism.

Surrealism, a term invented by Guillaume Apollinaire in 1919, aimed to extend indefinitely the limits of literature by breaking the barriers between the conscious and the unconscious, according to David Gascoyne. The period of Surrealism's popularity was also the time when Freud introduced himself into twentieth-century thinking. Robert Humphrey notes that Freud's emphasis on the *id*, *ego* and the *super ego* paralleled how new authors began to characterize using not only spoken words but also by writing 'streams of thought'.

In 'The Fly' too, we notice that once the boss is closeted in his room, his official personality recedes, giving way to fear, urges, and a ruthlessness that were not glimpsed before in his conversation with Woodifield. The reality of this hidden personality is established through 'the grinding feeling of wretchedness' which frightens the boss. However, the earlier authoritative persona assumes charge as he orders his office assistant Macey to bring fresh blotting-paper.

Unlike the other stories of Mansfield where her feminine voice that she called 'fluttery, gossipy, breathless' determines the tone, 'The Fly' further impresses the reader with its level of objectivity as Mansfield presents the boss's character without judgement or condemnation.

Mansfield's letters bear proof as to how much readers' responses mattered to her. Like Conrad she aspired to make the reader see. But at the same time she worried about the impact she left on her readers' minds. In a letter to Middleton Murry she wrote, referring to one of her stories:

Tell me if anybody says they like it, will you?...It's just a queer feeling – after one has dropped a pebble in. Will there be a ripple or not?" (Murry. ed. Letters, 628)

The reader of 'The Fly' has a fair share of them.

¹Daly, Saralyn R. *Katherine Mansfield*, Boston, 1965

²Gascoyne, David. *A Short Survey of Surrealism*,

³Head, Dominic. *The Modernist Short Story*, Lond. 1992

⁴Hormasji, Nariman. *Katherine Mansfield: an Appraisal*. Auckland, 1967

⁵Humphrey, Robert. *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, Berkeley, 1962

⁶Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*, UK, 1977

⁷Michael Thorpe. *Modern Prose*, Lond. 1968

⁸Internet: The New Zealand Edge:
www.nz.edge.katherinemansfield

Katherine Mansfield's (Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp) creative years were burdened with loneliness, illness, alienation which were reflected in her work. Mansfield expertly depicted trivial events and subtle changes in human behaviour.

Mansfield was born in Wellington, New Zealand, into a middle-class colonial family. At the age of nine she had her first text published. She went to London in 1903 and studied at Queen's College. Back in New Zealand in 1906, she took up music, and had affairs with both men and women. Katherine moved to England devoting herself to writing. Mansfield never visited New Zealand again. Unhappily married in 1909, Mansfield toured for a while as an extra in opera. She had an affair with Garnett Trowell, a musician, and became pregnant. In Bavaria, she suffered a miscarriage. Her satirical sketches of German characters were published in 1911 as *In a German Pension*. Her stories had appeared in *The New Age*. In 1910, Mansfield became ill with an untreated sexually transmitted disease which permanently weakened her health.

In 1911 Mansfield met John Middleton Murray who became her lover. Until 1914 she published stories in *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*. When her brother 'Chummie' died in World War I, Mansfield focused her writing on New Zealand and her family. 'Prelude' (1916), one of her most famous stories, was written during this period. In 1918 Mansfield married John Murray. In the same year she was found to have tuberculosis. In her last years Mansfield sought relief in southern France and in Switzerland. Separated from everyone, she wrote much about her own roots and her childhood. Mansfield's family memoirs were collected in *Bliss* (1920). In 1922, she did her best work the *Garden Party*. Mansfield's journal, letters, and scrapbook were edited by her husband.

Mansfield died of a pulmonary hemorrhage on January 9, 1923, in Gurdjieff Institute, near Fontainebleau, France. Her last words were: 'I love the rain. I want the feeling of it on my face.'

The Treatment of Time in E. M. Forster's *The Eternal Moment*

Lily Law

The author expresses freely her debt to 'The thematization of time in E.M. Forster's *The Eternal Moment* and Joyce's *The Dead*' by Silvana Caporaletti (Associate Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Lecce, Italy). [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0403/is_n4_v43/ai_20614545]

At the beginning of our century, a rather apocalyptic vision seemed to pervade Western culture, mainly because of the spread of Darwin's evolutionary theory and due to the enunciation of the second principle of thermodynamics in 1850. This projected a nihilistic vision that seriously challenged all claims to an axiological foundation of human life. Thus, human life appeared to be subject to impersonal laws that were utterly indifferent to man's presence in this world. Such a vision postulated by science not only threatened to nullify all moral tensions and deprive of meaning the very values on which human society rested, but seemed to foster the predominance of a selfish and insensitive materialistic ethos.

Thus, it was hardly surprising that in the general ethical bewilderment resulting from the disappearance of divine authority and the scientific forecast of ultimate universal annihilation, a number of authors undertook the task of counterbalancing this dangerous tendency by affirming in their work, the human need for ethical values that would encourage the individual to transcend personal interest. They tried to affirm it in human terms, and in order to do so, it was necessary to redeem human existence, at least in part, from the contingency to which the linear conception of time as an endless, destructive flux seemed to reduce it.

In *Time and Free Will* (first published in French in 1888), Bergson draws a distinction between two different kinds of time: the measurable, mathematical time where external events take place one after another in regular sequence, and what he calls *duree reelle*, the interior, subjective domain in which psychological life unfolds, following individual, unpredictable rhythms. He calls the first kind of time *espace* because, according to him, it is not a real dimension but a conceptual artefact, generated by the arbitrary extension to time of properties that apply only to space. Real time, *duree* (duration), is to him a spherical dimension where past, present, and future coexist and continually interact, shaping each other. Whereas *espace* is measurable and homogeneous, quantitative in character, duration is irregular and essentially qualitative. Contrary to objective time, whose movement, governed as it is by physical laws, is unidirectional and irreversible, this circular dimension, ruled by imagination and memory, allows free movement in all directions of time. In *Matter and Memory* (first published in French in 1896), Bergson makes another important distinction, between normal memory, a faculty

purely instrumental to the act of remembrance, and *memoire reelle*, a form of unconscious memory where past events are preserved in their original intensity. From this spiritual reservoir, such events can suddenly emerge into the present and fuse with it, acquiring new and deeper significance. Bergson's theories, then, seemed to offer the possibility of a solution. As *duree*, time ceases to be an irredeemable destructive force and becomes a preserving element, a form of continuity out of which, through *memoire reelle*, the past can be called to a new life. It is possible therefore to achieve in *duree* a form of permanence that can redeem individual existence from ephemerality.

What most characterizes European literature at the beginning of the twentieth century is precisely a deep reflection on time. Proust's *Recherche* is deeply informed by Bergson's philosophical theories, and his concept of *memoire involontaire* seems modelled on Bergson's *memoire reelle*. Like Proust, Pirandello, Dorothy Richardson, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Joyce, and E. M. Forster pay particular attention to psychological time and tend to analyse and explore it, implicitly contrasting the possibilities of this subjective medium with the restrictions of objective time. In most of their works, objective time is diminished in importance and becomes what Bakhtin calls 'collateral, nonfundamental time,' a mere background to external events. The events that matter, those that transform and transfigure and are the real becoming, take place in the idiosyncratic temporality of individual consciousness, where the rigid partitions of physical time are continually disintegrated. In *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster theorizes the double temporality that governs human existence, distinguishing between 'life in time,' which develops in a linear direction and is ruled by the eroding entity that we call objective time, and 'life by values,' which follows the irregular rhythm of an enriching time and is scanned by the spiritual and emotional intensity with which some particular moments are lived. Measured by intensity 'life by values' is a psychological dimension is clearly similar to Bergson's *duree*, and the word 'value' that defines it seems to imply an ethical sense in Forster's distinction.

E. M. Forster's short story *The Eternal Moment* (originally published in 1905) is paradigmatic of the new sensibility about time, as the contrast between 'life in time' and 'life by values'. Almost all the

characters in *The Eternal Moment* reflect this essential temporal dichotomy, and their positive or negative moral connotation is strictly connected with the temporal modality prevailing in their existence. They are not distinguished as good or bad according to their behavior, but as 'living' or 'dead in life' – as those who live in duration and remain spiritually alive, capable, in spite of the passing of time, of intense and genuine emotions, or those who are shriveled inside by a repetitive and materialistic existence, spent in the isolation of their own selfishness. Creatures of a present completely separated from the past, the characters in the text display an alienated personality, an impoverished sensibility. Developing in *espace*, their lives are ruled by the monotonous urgency of today, and their conduct, controlled and rational to excess, reveals coldness, calculation, selfishness. They are what Bakhtin calls 'actors of life' because their identity coincides with their social mask. Such characters are not infrequent in early twentieth-century literature and are emblematically represented by T. S. Eliot's emotionally sterile *Hollow Men* and even more by Conrad's Pilgrims in *Heart of Darkness*: barren and dull creatures whose existence, spent in a state of spiritual inertness and physical inactivity, appears even more negative than that of Kurtz, who lives his destructive energy with moral awareness. The positive characters, in contrast, have values of a spiritual nature. Their present, enriched by memories of the past, is a form of *duree*, so they live with greater fullness and insight. The moments that they once lived with high emotional intensity can suddenly come back to their present, coagulating into instants so saturated with time that a mysterious temporal leap can take place in them and annihilate the barriers of physical time. These moments of temporal transcendence are of an epiphanic nature: like Proust's fragments of 'pure time,' Pound's 'vortexes,' Eliot's 'images,' Virginia Woolf's 'moments of being,' and Huxley's 'moments of vision,' Forster's 'eternal moments' and Joyce's 'epiphanies' allow a glance into the atemporal word of values.

The very limited, almost stifling space in which the plot of *The Eternal Moment* develops seems intentionally conceived to throw into relief the temporal extension of the narrative. Time is an extraordinarily strong, pervasive presence in the text but more than being the organising principle of the plots, a mere structural element, it assumes a subtler narrative function. It is thematised; and in its accentuated dichotomy of *espace* as posed to *duree*, it becomes a metaphorical ingredient, a vehicle of significance. Objective time, a fleeting present whose repetitive and pressing rhythm regulates everyday life, is associated with separation and absence, death and spiritual paralysis. Subjective time, which impregnates private life with its irregular, secret drives and in whose circularity present, past, and future simultaneously coexist, is in contrast associated with

spiritual vitality and values of human communion and understanding.

Thematically speaking, *The Eternal Moment* stems from a certain ethical preoccupation: to denounce the dangerous emotional bluntness that the continuous flowing of time inevitably induces in people, and to shake them out of their spiritual numbness. The contrast between 'living' and 'dead in life' is expressed through a surprisingly analogous temporal movement involving a sudden shift from objective time to *duree*: The initially sharp distinction between past and present is transcended at the narrative climax in an epiphanic moment of temporal simultaneity and dissolves, at the end, in a unifying cosmic vision. In this short story, memory occupies a central position, as the evocation of the past seems to be a vivifying, mysteriously thaumaturgic energy. The repository of memory is a woman whose spiritual vitality, still intact notwithstanding the passing of time, is vividly contrasted with the insensibility and materialism of the other characters. Miss Raby in *The Eternal Moment* lives in *duree* and is able to recapture an intense moment of her past, reliving it with the same emotion as before. Her power of recollection is a reviving spiritual force. In *The Eternal Moment*, Miss Raby feels that the awakening of memory would be the only possible antidote to the spiritual desolation of Feo Ginori, the man who fell passionately in love with her 20 years before.

The time span covered by the plot is very limited in the external chronology of the story – three days in *The Eternal Moment* – but it is expanded by flashbacks and flashforwards to include almost the entire existence of the protagonist. The narrative present describes a public event, apparently of little significance in its banality: in *The Eternal Moment*, the return to Vorta of Miss Raby, a middle-aged writer who, by setting her famous novel in the little mountain village, has turned it into a fashionable holiday resort. The relevant event, that which produces a change both in the sensibility and the life of the protagonist, is of a private nature, so subjective and intimate that its importance is hardly perceived by the other characters and can easily be overlooked by the less attentive reader. It resides, in fact, in a fleeting moment of vision that allows Miss Raby a deep insight into her true self. Her epiphanic experience is generated by a sudden intersecting of present and past that allows her a perspective from which she can contemplate her whole existence at a glance and evaluate herself. This essential moment of self-knowledge is what imparts a new orientation to her life. Although the text remains open-ended and unresolved, it is possible to discern with sufficient clarity that the life of the protagonist will take a new course.

James Joyce's short story *The Dead* (published 1907) which bears a peculiar thematic resemblance to *The Eternal Moment* is nevertheless different in artistic conception from Forster's story. In Forster, the moment of sharpened vision restores

Miss Raby to a full awareness of her inner worthiness and redeems her from an obsessive sense of guilt. At the same time, though, it also discloses to her the spiritual shallowness of the people around her, so that, in withdrawing from it, the woman isolates herself from the others. The overall movement of the narrative moves from a present that initially seems to promise her union and solidarity, Forster's Miss Raby moves toward a future of separation and existential loneliness. In contrast Joyce's Gabriel, who at the beginning appears isolated in a present of selfishness and hypocrisy, and is initially projected toward the East in a symbolic rejection of his personal and national past, turns in the end toward the West, yielding to the sense of universal communion that unites the living and the dead. *The Eternal Moment* thus expresses a more pessimistic vision than *The Dead*. It emanates a sense of closure and ultimate incommunicability, rather unusual in Forster and his idea of 'only connect'. The conflict between two moral worlds that, in his other works, Forster exemplifies in terms of spatial opposition (London and Monteriano, Sawston and Cambridge, England and Italy or India), is expressed in this story in terms of temporal opposition, through the dialectic contrast that is established between the present Vorta and the Vorta of 20 years before. As the custodian of memory, Miss Raby is the temporal consciousness in the tale. She continually superimposes the village of her youth upon the present one, whose beauty, though apparently unchanged with the passing of years, is revealed by comparison as deeply corroded and corrupt. In the fictional world of Forster, the dichotomy between a present charged with negativity and a past rich in positive values is very pronounced: Once an idyllic little village, Vorta is now defaced by coarse neon lights and invaded by tourists whose intolerance has suffocated the natural joyfulness of people and enforced silence on the church bells. Material affluence has irremediably deteriorated, almost destroyed, all human values.

The living emblem of new Vorta is Feo Ginori, a mean, insensitive character who has carved his way into life through slander and defamation. This hotel concierge, fat and affected, is what is left of the athletic mountain guide who, 20 years before, fell in love with the young Miss Raby and, disregarding all social conventions in the intensity of his passion, declared his love to her. Of that passionate young man no trace remains in the present. Feo is profoundly changed not only in body but also in soul, and his spiritual death is symbolically expressed through his loss of memory. The episode on the mountain, the splendid moment that raised the highest 'pinnacle' in the interior life of Miss Raby and remained for her a constant source of light and inspiration, has been totally effaced in Feo, who, living only in *espace*, is now so seared inside as to have lost even the memory of ever having been able to love. Miss Raby knows

that the only possibility of redemption is to awaken in him an emotional memory of his past and so reconnect him to his own self of 20 years ago. She tries to do so by pointing out to him 'that other fire, which she discerned, far back in the traveling distance, high up the mountains of youth,' because she feels that then 'he would become alive'. However, Feo's distance from his past is by now unbridgeable. The man is spiritually dead and when in the end he is finally forced to remember, he can feel only dismay and fear because he dreads that the revelation of his old transgression may endanger his present respectability. Thus the last, burning question of Miss Raby, whether he had ever really been in love with her, remains unanswered.

Miss Raby, then, fails in her attempt; but when her hopes are shattered she does not respond, as she did in a preceding episode, with despair and foreboding of death. The recollection of the past kindles in her a moment of vision. With a sense of temporal dislocation she suddenly transcends the contingent moment, and for a few instants past and present become simultaneously present for her, equally alive and equally real. It evoked a complete vision of that same man, as he had been twenty years before. She could see him to the smallest detail of his clothes or his hair, the flowers in his hand, the graze on his wrist. In their short parallel coexistence, past and present shed light on each other, disclosing to her a new perspective that allows her to evaluate positively herself and her life. She realised that 'the incident upon the mountain had been one of the great moments of her life – perhaps the greatest, certainly the most enduring ...' Her life, then, develops in *duree*, it is lived as a continuum, and this new awareness can restore her to a full sense of her own dignity. The contrast between the two characters is the contrast between a man who has lived a 'life in time' and a woman who has been able to live a 'life by values': Losing contact with his own past and surrendering to the flow of linear time, Feo has been unable to preserve anything from corrosion, and as a result his reality is made up only of today's reality. Keeping memory, alive, anchoring herself to a moment of sublime intensity, Miss Raby has established a continuity in time and enriched her present with her past. Whereas Feo is only what he is today, Miss Raby contains within her the entire history of her existence; and whereas Feo is the product of change and transformation, she is the fruit of permanence within change. Thus, the temporal dynamics of the story metaphorically express two opposite, hardly reconcilable modes of living, between which Forster does not seem to see any possibility of communication. The end of the story is pessimistic, negative even for Miss Raby, the only bearer of positive values. Her words to Feo, addressed as they are to a concierge, and in public, are a transgression of social rules. This loses her the affection of Leyland, the elderly travelling companion with whom she had hoped to spend her

old age. Leyland feels that by exposing her inner life to a man of another class, she had degraded herself and her equals. So, at the end of the tale, the woman silently walks away from the others toward a future of exclusion and isolation. The spiritual distance that separates her from the others is symbolically reflected in the immense spatial and temporal distance that seems to separate her from the valley. The glance that she casts into the profundity of space is also a glance into the depths of time, and her refusal to turn to an improbable call, her choice of silence, is an acknowledgment of the incommunicability of her vision.

As in *The Eternal Moment*, the contrast between a sterile and repetitive present and a past full of emotional vitality is crucial in *The Dead*. Here too the external time of the story, a stagnant present hardly varying from that of the preceding stories in *Dubliners*, is the segmented course of daily routines and conventions, whereas the past, the time of memory, is the vital dimension of affections and emotions, where personal wholeness and authentic human communion are achieved. Yet the situation created by Joyce is much subtler and more complex than that conceived by Forster.

At the end of Joyce's story, in the closing image of the snow that softly falls 'through the universe ... upon all the living and the dead' as in Forster's narrative, space and time dissolve and dilate into a cosmic vision that encompasses eternity. Yet the final silences that seal the two stories are charged with a very different suggestion. Joyce's short story avoids the schematism and the didactic intention

perceptible in Forster. Where *The Eternal Moment* conveys a sense of incommunicability and isolation, *The Dead* suggests a sense of reconciliation and communion. In spite of this, the fictional world of Forster's appears unproblematic, while the world of Joyce, so full of nuances retains an essential ambiguity. Perhaps this is why *The Eternal Moment* transmits a clear message to its readers, whereas *The Dead* communicates a subtle emotion. Beyond such differences, the two short stories are strikingly analogous in their dualistic rendering of time, in their metaphorical significance and the particular narrative function that they explicate.

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‘A Tale Told By An Idiot’: The Fool and his Folly

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Medieval theologians often argued that Man, by his very nature, was caught up in the web of folly. The word ‘folly’, if taken in all its connotations, can be very confusing. If we go through the complete paradigm of the word, it includes, paradoxically, even wisdom. Our actions are, therefore, always open to interpretation as folly.

The term ‘folly’ is the noun for foolish behaviour. We can say that the actions of a fool can be called folly. However, ‘fool’ is a multi-faceted word. It may mean one who indulges in foolish behaviour, but it also means much more. If we take the interpretations offered by the Renaissance humanist scholar Desiderius Erasmus the lover, the religious man and even the wise man are all fools in one way or another. Thus, the term ‘folly’ can be justly applied to all humanity. The idea that the world was peopled with fools had great vogue among the theologians and satirists of the middle ages and the Renaissance.

The term ‘fool’ remained a term of opprobrium or condescension on one hand, but on the other hand,

it had become a term of praise. One could say of an idiot that he was only a fool because he was not ‘wise’; but one could also say of a wise man that he would be wiser if he were a fool.

In the *Structure of Complex Words*, William Empson makes a convenient table of the meanings attached to the word ‘fool’. He is: i) a person who is simple-minded or lacking common sense; ii) a clown or professional jester; a knave or vicious and stupid person; iii) a weak-minded person, or an idiot. In short, he is anybody who deviates significantly from the basic code of conduct established by humans living in society.

It is the ‘natural’ fool or the so-called idiot who is the prototype of the fool-figure. Other sophisticated versions are based upon this figure. The people of the middle ages were familiar with the ‘natural’, the idiot or the mad man. Such people were mostly left free to roam about the streets at their will. The name ‘fool’ was coined for them from the Latin form of ‘bellows’, either because their heads were supposed to be as empty as a pair of bellows or

because their talk seemed meaningless and airy. There was no organised system to care for such people. Ordinary citizens of medieval society understood only this much, that fools were different from themselves. Fools lacked any rational thought and were therefore not responsible for their actions. The attitude of society towards the fool was often ambiguous. He could be mocked and persecuted, but he was also given a modicum of respect. His deviation from normal social behaviour could lead to mockery. Sometimes he would be pitied for his inability to conform to normal rules of behaviour. Occasionally he was venerated, because his problem was confused with madness, and mad people were supposed to be touched by God. It was perhaps for this reason that his presence was tolerated. The 'natural', the poor witless person lacked any sophistication or guile. His innocence made him child-like and simple, and therefore closer to God. It is by this very logic that wise and sophisticated people were thought to be caught in folly. Their very sophistication supposedly alienated them from God.

Of all fools, only the mentally challenged was called a 'natural'. The jester and the clown, who were also often called fools, were people possessed of normal intelligence mimicking the senseless actions and speech of the idiot. They were just imitators of the 'form' of foolishness, so to speak. The born fool was 'natural' because what he thought and did came naturally to him. Without having to worry about propriety, he did what he wished. Because of his lack of rational faculties, he did not have to fear social ostracism, excommunication or other forms of punishment. He was tolerated because it was understood that his mockery of social norms was not intentional, that he was simply being his natural self. The license a fool enjoyed in saying and doing whatever he pleased must have led to his being consciously imitated by the 'artificial' fool or jester.

The earliest use of court fools has been recorded in ancient Egypt. In Imperial Rome, wealthy

households kept fools and any deformity, physical or mental, fetched high prices. The figure of the jester was well known, often famous, during the Renaissance. To the Renaissance man who had newly learned to take pride in his humanity, the fool was a reminder of his own insignificance before God. The fool was such a popular figure that many ceremonies grew up around him. These ceremonies were semi-religious in nature. In medieval Europe, one such celebration was held by the lower clerics of the church during the Yule. On this occasion, they assumed the authority of their superiors and elected a bishop, archbishop, even a Pope, of fools. The newly elected leaders would preside over several days of merriment in this festival, the famous 'Feast of Fools'; normal religious services were burlesqued, accompanied by drinking, riotous processions and acting of farces. Many of the customs observed during this festival were derived from pagan rituals. There would be a mock king who led the revels. Later, he became the 'Lord of Misrule'. Such a carnival whose rituals often defied Christian norms would escape censure because in a 'Feast of Fools', rational and conventional behaviour was not expected.

It is very natural that a figure as colourful as the fool, whether half-wit or jester, should appeal to the literary imagination. His superficially innocent humour had an appeal for most people, and the 'traditional freedom from punishment' could be utilised by the author in making bold social comments. The fool-figure could also be used in allegory. No wonder then that 'fool-literature' became almost a separate genre. The lowly fool-figure had become a comic-figure with a purpose. He was a striking in his parti-coloured coat, usually green or blue and yellow, his cap with donkey-ears or a cock's comb and a stick with an empty bladder or a carved fool's head on it. In his 'motley' coat, the fool-figure dominated much of Renaissance literature, making us laugh at his antics before we realize that we are laughing at ourselves in a distorting mirror.

The New Syllabus for English Honours Part I

Paper I - History of English Literature: GROUP A - Old English (Epic and Non-Epic Poetry; Beginnings of Prose); Middle English (Chaucer, Langland, Beginnings of Drama, Metrical Romances); GROUP B - (Elizabethan and Jacobean Period, Civil War and Restoration, Eighteenth Century Literature); GROUP C - Nineteenth Century Literature, Twentieth Century Literature upto 2000); History of English language: Latin, Greek, Scandinavian and French Influences; Native Resources; Shakespeare and the Language of Poetry

Paper II - Philip Sydney: 'Loving in Truth'; Edmund Spenser: 'One day I wrote ...'; William Shakespeare: 'That time of year ...'; 'let me not ...'; 'Shall I compare ...'; John Milton: *Paradise Lost* Book I; John Donne: 'The Good Morrow'; Andrew Marvell: 'To His oy Mistress'; John Pope: *The Rape of the Lock* (Three Cantos); Gray: 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'; W. Cowper: 'The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk'; William Blake: 'The Tyger' and 'The Lamb'

Four Literary Terms related to Poetry (16 marks); Scansion (10 marks)