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Subject :- English [B.A, ~~Sem~~ Part-II]

Topic :- "Death Be Not Proud" :- John Donne.

* A critical appreciation of the poem "Death Be Not Proud", written by John Donne.

= Donne was a great metaphysical poet. He was very well-read. He was well-known for his love poems, but he was possessed of the new philosophy and other rationalistic developments also. In his old age, Donne transformed his vision completly. The sensetal Donne become the ecclesiastical personage who was purifying his soul and correcting his habits by strong devotion, hard work, mercy and sympathy for the poor and the down trodden. ~~The 'macabre' is a~~ Another trend of his mind is found in the macabre. The macabre is a preoccupation with death which haunts Donne especially in his love poem which are melancholic.

The given poem "Death Be Not Proud" also remarks this attitude.

It is one of the important sonnets of Holy Sonnets of John Donne. Like a metaphysical poet here also Donne treated Death in a different way. Death is generally supposed to be strong and dreadful, but in reality it has nothing to be proud of. In the very opening lines Donne openly challanges the death that he should not be proud that it is a destroyer;

"Death be not proud though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou are not soe

After this he gives a logical reason for his claim and says that those person whom he thinks that he has killed them, infact, are having rest and sleep. Rest and sleep are only pictures of death. The poet further says that this rest is ~~so great that~~ not fearful but so great that the best of our men die young. Death provides rest to their bodies and frees their souls from the bondage of their bodies. Thus in the first part of the poem, Donne has proved that death is neither mighty nor dreadful.

In the second part of the sonnet, he now ~~at~~ put a counter attack on Death and ~~sa~~ claims that death is a slave to fate and chance. He says the death follow the command given to him by kings, wicked murderers, poison, war, old age and sickness. Therefore it

cannot be regarded as glorious in anyway. Donne goes even further and compare it with Poppie or strong intoxicants which can induce better sleep and with a gentle effect. Therefore there is no reason for death to be proud of its power.

In the last two lines Donne points out the christian myth of the Resurrection Day or the day of Judgement when all dead person will wake up in the other world and live there eternally after a short rest. Then death will have no power on them. Thus, in reality death does not kill us; it is death itself which ultimately dies.

In Donne's poem it is irrelevent to find any scientific basis ~~behind~~ behind his parallellisms or comparisons. It is not the matter that is important in these poems. It is the manner which captures our attention, the manner in which he makes use of the common image, apparent similarities, scientific or psychological facts, religious myths or theological facts.