

CHAPTER IVAMBIGUITY OF THE FOURTH TYPE

Empson defines the fourth type, as " when two or more meanings of a statement do not agree among themselves, but combine to make clear a more complicated state of mind in the author."¹ This definition covers much of the third type as Empson states because in the third type two ideas are given by the word simultaneously, where context is important and one can explain these ideas easily where as in this type we have more meanings of a single statement and those meanings do not agree among themselves and more complicated state of mind of the author is revealed by that. In the third type verbal subtleties are more important where as in the fourth type modes of judgement are important. A single line of the poem can be an example of the third type, but in the setting of the poem it may become example of the fourth type. Because in the context of the entire poem that line gives us various meanings and those meanings do not agree among themselves, this enables us to probe deep into the mind of a poet. Here setting of the poem gives us clue to trace the mind of a poet. Though definition of the fourth

type covers much of the third type the distinction is clear.

In the fourth chapter of the Seven Types , Empson discusses much about third and fourth type together so as to bring out the distinction clearly; by giving examples and analysis. The following example shows clearly the concept of the fourth type:

A VALEDICTION : OF WEEPING.

Let me pour forth
My teares before thy face, whil'st I stay here,
For my face coins them, and thy stampe they beare,
And by this Mintage they are something worth,

For thus they be
Pregnant of thee,

Fruits of much grief they are, emblemes of more,
when a tear falls, that thou falst which it bore
So thou and I are nothing then, when on a diverse shore.

On a round ball,
A workman that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afrique, and an Asia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, All,

So doth each tear
Which thee doth weare,
A globe, yea world by that impression grow
Till my tears mixed with thine do overflow
This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven
dissolved so.

O more than moone,
Draw not up seas to drown me in thy spheare
Weep me not dead, in thine armes, but forbear
To teach the sea, what it may doe too soone.

Let not the winde
 Example finde,
 To do me more harm, then it purposeth,
 Since thou and I sigh one anothers breath,
 Whoe'er sighs most is cruellest, and hasts the
 other's death.

- John Donne.

The plain meaning of the poem can be stated as follows :-

1. Let me shed tears in your presence while I am still here. My tears contain an image of your face and as such they bear your stamp. Just as the coins bearing the sovereign's stamp are worth something. So my tears bearing your stamp are of some value. My tears are round and large like pregnancy and they are just your creation. They are the tokens of past and future, sorrows and symbols of more griefs. When a tear falls, you also fall with it because it contains your images.

2. Just as the cartographer by making on a globe continents like Europe, Africa and Asia turns nothing into something, in the same way each tear from your eyes is like the world. My tears combined with your will make the great flood which will destroy both of us.

3. Like the moon, the lady can make tides.

By your weeping the tides will rise high and drown me,
even while I am within your arms. Please prevent the
sea from doing havoc. Do not encourage the sea storms
by your sighs which do more harm to me. Since I and
you sigh, it is but proper that one who sighs hastens
the death of the other.

The poem contains beautiful images, coin, stamp,
round like pregnancy and globe suggesting tears. Where—
as in the last stanza The moon that causes the tides.
Thus we see that here in the poem one image leads to
other.

Empson's analysis of the poem shows that the
poem expresses various meanings. In the first stanza he
points out the metaphor of coin and explains it as her
beauty and worth are both royal. He makes other deductions
from the same stanza as his presence is more important
because he can shed valuable tears only in her presence.
The shift of the metaphor suggests that 'tears as molten
metal which must be ' stamped ' with her value to tears
themselves as the completed coins' and states that she is
so fruitful of happiness and makes the most bold
interpretation that she is not really such a queenly
figure but ' public mercenary and illegal ' ². Tears are

valuable because they will reflect her face and they are epitomes of her as they are born of sorrow and indicate there is more sorrow to come after.

The image of pregnancy is beautifully interpreted by Empson, pregnant because they are round and like her they fall and are emblems of grief. When they are shed in her presence they bear reflection of her.³ Empson further points out the obscure sense that he (Poet) is getting rid of her or satisfying her. The falling of tears suggests her fall, her unfaithfulness and negation, when they are separated.⁴

The second stanza contains image of cartographer's ball where various countries (i.e. maps) are carved. Empson explains the grammar and states, " ' In the same way each tear that wears you, who are a whole world yourself or at least copy of one, grows into world' or 'and so does every tear that wears you; each tear, that is, grows, so as to include every thing, or to produce a great deal more water.' "⁵ 'Which thee doth weare' suggests normal meanings that her tears are jewels and she is 'wearing' them.

The last but one line in the stanza suggests 'flow excessively' or 'flow into each other', as to spoil each

others shape; with single word 'overflow'. The last line is interpreted by Empson in the following manner ' In the same way the necentities of this, the real, world have dissolved by precious heaven by means of, or into, tears'.⁶ ' we produce more and more tears till be drown the world altogether, and can no longer see things like ordinary people, or 'my tear reflects you and so is a world till one of the tears fall on it, spoils its shape and leaves only a splash; it is she who has made the 'world' which is the 'heaven' and she who distroys it'.⁷

The third stanza contains image of moon. As the moon causes tides on the sea so also beloved is like a moon and she causes 'tides' and 'storms'. Empson interpretes this stanza and his interpretation is fairly long. He writes " She is ' more than Moon ' because she is more valuable to him than anything in the real world to which she is being recalled; because she has just been either the earth or the heavens and they are larger than the moon."⁸

'In thy spheare' is explained as " don't drown me, whether with my tears or your own, now that I'am still fairly happy and up in your sphere besides you; dont't trouble to draw up the seas so high, or be so cruel as to draw up the seas so high, that they drown me now, since tomorrow they will drown me easily, when I am thrown down

in to the world."⁹

... Weep me not dead suggests do not make me cry myself to death, do not kill me with the sight of your tears; do not cry for me, as for the man already dead, when in fact, I am in your arms, and with a different sort of feeling, " do not exert your power over the sea so as to make it drown me by sympathetic magic."¹⁰

Empson thinks that the poem is written before Donne's first voyage with Essex, which he said he undertook to escape from ' the queasy pain of loving and being loved'. While reading Empson's interpretation and his bold analysis of this poem we doubt that whether the poem is addressed by Donne to his wife Anne More or some one else. Empson states at the end of his analysis, " This poem is ambiguous because his feelings were painfully mixed and because he felt that at such a time it would be ungenerous to spread them out clearly in his mind."¹¹

Relating Empson's analysis of this poem with Eliot's declaration that " heterogeneity of material is omnipresent in poetry". Helen Gardner points out " Prof. Empson, who was highly successful in obeying Mr. Eliot's injunction to modern poets, to be difficult, displays Donne as meaning more than one thing at once."¹²

The following example is the abstract taken from Wordsworth's famous poem 'Tintern Abbey', Empson states that Wordsworth though famous for his simplicity some times uses ' what may be called philosophical ambiguities.'

For I have learnt
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often times
 The still sad music of humanity
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far, more deeply interfused
 Whose dwelling is the light of the setting Suns.
 And the round ocean and the living air.
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.
 A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things.

- William Wordsworth.

The poem is autobiographical and it shows the development of Wordsworth's love for nature. Wordsworth says that his attitude to Nature is not the same as during his youth, when he was thoughtless (immature). Now he has sorrow and sufferings of human beings, and the sound of human suffering and pain makes effect on his mind. This has made him thoughtful. So now he traces the spiritual meaning in Nature. This Divine Spirit arouses in him thoughts which gave him joy. That spirit is dwelling in

all objects in Nature, and it is moving force of all creation.

Empson points out grammatical subtleties in the poem "It is not certain what is 'more deeply interfused' than what. It is not certain whether the music of humanity is the same as the presence; they are separated by the word 'and' and a full stop."¹³ Further Empson writes, "This version only conceives God as immanent in his creation, and an affecting the poet in the same way as he affects everything else; or as only imagined by the poet as immanent in creation, in the same way as the music of humanity is imagined immanent."¹⁴

Thus Empson points out the muddle state of Wordsworth's mind by giving long explanation of these lines.

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Empson explains these lines focusing on the word proper. The first obvious idea expressed is 'the poison'. The word 'proper' here suggests 'It is suitable for rats' as well as it is the suggestion of 'right and natural'. The image suggests, "The eating of poison corresponds to the fall of man and it is drinking water, a healthful and natural human function which it is intolerable to avoid, and which brings death".² Here 'proper bane' suggests water as well as poison.

Empson observes that this form of ambiguity was fairly common in the nineteenth century. The Romantic poets often used this type in their poems. Here is the example from Shelley's famous poem, "To a Skylark."

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight,
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight

Thou art unseen, but yet I here thy shrill delight

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.
All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud,

The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

As the skylark flies through the purple atmosphere (i.e. in the sky), it seems to be dissolving and making way for it. It is invisible like the heavenly stars, which on account of bright light of the sun can not be seen during the time of day. But its presence is felt by the poet some where high in the sky by the sweet music.

Just at the dawn the rays which are issuing forth from the moon become dim on account of the brighter light of the sun, but we feel that moon is still there in the sky, in the same manner we mark the presence of the skylark by the sweet notes produced by the skylark, though it is invisible in the sky. ;

The whole atmosphere is resounding on account of the sweet song of a single skylark; just as the night when the sky is clear, the moon, though covered by a lonely cloud, still issues forth rays and thus floods the whole sky with light. The skylark is invisible like the moon hidden behind a lonely cloud, but the sweet notes of its songs fill the whole atmosphere with music.

The three stanzas can be paraphrased in a way mentioned above. Here Empson's fairly long analysis gives new dimensions to the poem. Empson begins his analysis by giving T.S.Eliot's observations on the poem. Eliot states

that the word sphere is ambiguous; but Empson writes that one can take it to be the star. Further he explains the word sphere as, "the moon; both moon and star are made fainter by the morning".³ And points out that the two syntaxes of the verse as ; " your delight is as keen as are the arrows of the sphere ' and ' though the arrows of the sphere are so keen (as to carry a long way), yet even when we are so far off as to be out of shot, we still feel the presence of its beauty".⁴ The last line of the second stanza 'Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there' is interpreted by Empson as, "we feel your delight is there for a long time, until infact we hardly see you', or 'whose lamp narrows till we can scarcely be said to see it".⁵ Empson points out the relation of the above line with the simile used in the first stanza where skylark's notes are compared with 'star', "which is spherical and whose light is silvery, out of sight in the day time but still faintly sounding the music of the sphere".⁶ The simile suggested by the word arrows gives us more implications and here Empson, explains how that simile lies half way between two things when author is moving from one to another as he states in the definition of this type; because Empson explains that arrows may be bird's separate piercing notes, and the star's separate

twinkles, this may be conceived by Shelley as searching the poet's heart or as rays drawn on an optical diagram.⁷ In this simile it is suggested that from day light to dawn as skylark becomes smaller so also a star and poet who is rapt into an ecstacy and faints from the full clarity of beauty.⁸

In the third stanza the poet compares skylark with the 'moon', either just emerging from the cloud when sphere is becoming less visible or behind the cloud so that is darkness and the light as the edges of the other clouds appear as if overflowing. Empson further explains the word 'bare' as empty suggests moon even though not in sight, sky glimmers into the moon light. It is mysterious like the poet or the principle to beauty.

Empson points out that the arrows those suggest series of the shot suit to stars, than to moon, because moon can not twinkle, but the moon suddenly appearing from the cloud give brief illumination. Hence Empson traces another implication in the simile and that is Diana as huntress whose beauty is unattainable.

Empson observes that the poem may be written under the influence of Keats' "Ode to the Nightingale". It again indicates that the skylark is a symbol of a

poet. So also the cloud is poet and moon behind it is inspiration. The bird stands as the symbol of Shelley's view of the poet. It is symbol of the spiritual life.⁹

The Rose was sick and smiling died;
 And, being to be scanted, died,
 About the bed there singing stood
 The sweet and flowery sisterhood :
 Some hung the head, while some did bring,
 To wash her, water from the spring.

- Herrick, " The Funeral Rites of
 the Rose."

Empson points out that in the verse comparison with maids of honour is not worked out in any detail. Fetching water from the spring indicates that water is fresh and the place is pastoral. Where as the word 'spring' suggests the season spring or spring time. When one considers the cycle of the nature in the year. Spring is supposed to be morning of the year; the dews of morning. They are flowers of the spring, as they wash her with the dews of their own freshness, they are indeed died before her; and they have experienced it. But Empson further explains that water as dew by which they wash here are actually tears.¹⁰ The simile here expresses various possibilities.

Empson observes that Swinburne used this type of ambiguity in his poems for the sort of mutual comparison. Following example of his poem illustrates the point.

Night falls like fire; the heavy lights run low
 And as they drop, my blood and body so
 Shake on the flame shakes, full of days and hours
 That sleep not neither weep as they go.

- Swinburne (Laus Veneris)

The poem indicates the approaching night and the darkness. Empson explains these lines as ' the coming of night is like the falling of fire ' as the sun becomes red ball glowing on the horizon. The description indicates the setting sun falling of dusk and approaching night. ' Flames shake ' indicates lighting up time of evening, the flames of candles and lamps. Then flames may be symbolically candle the flowing wax in the socket and the last struggle of the flame indicates that it is like throbbing of swooning of headache leaping and threatening shadows on the wall. The word "full" suggests it has all ended the time. Here Empson observes 'in the story this mood is fixed into an eternity, outside the human order, in which tears are pointless and peace even of death unattainable.'¹¹

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REFERENCES

1. William Empson : Seven Types of Ambiguity P.155.
2. Ibid. P.155.
3. Ibid. P.157.
4. Ibid. P.157.
5. Ibid. P.157.
6. Ibid. P.157.
7. Ibid. P.157.
8. Ibid. P.157.
9. Ibid. P.158.
10. Ibid. PP.162-163.
11. Ibid. P.164.

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