

CHAPTER - VIIAMBIGUITY OF THE SEVENTH TYPE

The Seventh Type is the last type. It is the most ambiguous. Empson accepts this, and defines it as ".....When the two meanings of the word, the two values of the ambiguity, are the two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer's mind."¹ Though Empson's other types are based on logical ground, this last one is based on psychological ground. The definition gives importance to the context and 'total attitude to that context of the individual."² Contradiction in this type gives intensity to the subject. Two opposites are considered here. Empson explains this type in the light of Freudian theory of dream analysis. As "Freudian opposite at least marks dissatisfaction, the notion of what you want involves the idea that you have not got it, and this again involves the 'opposite defined by your context."³ Here conflict is expressed, it is one of the characteristics of the poetry and the seventh type covers much of this. The study of Hebrew language, English translations of Bible has influenced English language. Poets like Donne, Herbert, Jonson, Crawshaw

all were Hebrew scholars. Hebrew language possesses all the poetical advantages such as very unreliable tenses, extraordinary idioms, and puns. The early Egyptian's use of signs to express two opposite ideas at the same time. The words often expressed conflict. The seventh type involves the anthropological idea of opposite and psychological idea of context.⁴

The trumpet's loud clangour
 Invites us to arms
 With Shrill notes of anger
 And mortal alarms.
 The double double beat
 of the thundering drum
 Cries, heark the Foes come;
 Charge, charge, its too late to retreat.
 - Dryden (Song of St. Cealia's Day)

Here the mood of the poem is heroic, there is excitement, eagerness for battle. The final effect of the stanza is that we must fight and can't go out of the battle. Empson here explains these lines and states that how conflict feelings are expressed in these lines. "The thought that it is no good running away is an important ingredient of military enthusiasm; at anyrate in the form of consciousness of unity with comrades, who ought to be encouraged not to retreat,"⁵ at the same time terror excited in the mind of the enemy is also suggested by these lines. However, two opposites are brought together. The feeling of heroic vitality

and timidity. Though they are not going to leave the battlefield they have been encouraged with these words. Here "Dryden is not interested in the echoes and recesses of words; he uses them flatly; he is interested in the echoes and recesses of human judgement."⁶

In her youth
There is a prone and speechless dialect
Such as move men
Measure for Measure, Act I, Sc ii,

Let us see how two opposite meanings are resolved into one word. Here Empson's analysis shows it clearly. He writes "Prone means either 'inactive and lying flat' (in retirement or with a lover) or 'active', 'tending to', whether as moving men, by subtlety or by her purity, or as moving in herself, for pleasure or to do good."⁷ The word 'speechless' may be shy or sly. The lines are uttered by Claudio throw light on the character of Isabel. Here "he is making no moral judgement of his sister's character, and only thinking that as a weapon against Angelo she is well worth being given a try."⁸

Blood hath bene shed ere now, i'the olden time,
Ere humane Statute purg'd the gentle Weale;
Macbeth, Act III, Sc. iv.

The lines are uttered by Macbeth. The guilty conscious mind of Macbeth is revealed here, According



Empson interpretes the poem in the light of 'the seventh type'. He states, "Hopkins became a Jesuit, and burnt his early poems on entering order; there may be some reference to this sacrifice in the 'fire' of the sonnet."¹⁰ Being confronted with physical beauty of the bird he thought it as if it is opposite of his patient spiritual renunciation. Empson interpretes word 'buckle' as : "'they do buckle here' or 'come, and buckle yourself here' : and 'buckle' like a military belt, for the discipline of heroic action, and buckle like a bicycle wheel, 'make useless, distorted, and incapable of its natural motion.'"¹¹ The reference to Jesuit and bird is suggested by words 'here' and 'then'. Whereas personification of physical or spiritual activity is suggested by 'chevalier'.

In the first three lines of the sestet Empson points out Freudian use of opposites "where two things thought of incompatible, but desired intensely by different systems of judgements, are spoken of simultaneously by words applying to both : both desires are thus given a transient and exhausting satisfaction, and the two systems of judgement are forced into open conflict before the reader."¹²

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, P.192.
2. Ibid., P. 192.
3. Ibid., P. 193.
4. Ibid., PP. 195-97.
5. Ibid., P. 198.
6. Ibid., P. 199.
7. Ibid., P. 202.
8. Ibid., P. 203.
9. A.W.Verty, Macbeth ed. (Cambridge : University Press, 1945) P.132
10. William Empson, Seven Types P. 225
11. Ibid., P. 225.
12. Ibd., P. 226.

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