

"Lycidas" AS A Progression of Moods

The poem moves in successive waves of rising emotion, from each of which, as it breaks, the poet retreats to his pastoral ground. The changing moods of the poem necessitate a change in tone from section to section, turning the poem ~~into~~ into a grand symphony. The supreme excellence of the poem lies in the poet's handling of the different moods investing them at the same time with an impression of unity. "These undulations ~~are~~ are communicated to and by the verse which runs not in stanzas but in *laissez* of varied length, variously rhymed, with unrhymed verses and trimeters here and there, plastic to every change in the poet's mood." Mr. Tillyard observes that the very structure of the poem is meaningful. It has

What he calls plot-obliquity, the plot suggests many significant details. The different sections are so arranged that they imply many things. The poet has complete control over his emotions, he has a sense of "power". The first two sections express grief, diffidence, disappointment and indignation. The third section, which is in the nature of an interlude gives us a quite colourful description of flowers. The climax is reached in the speech of St. Peter, and the poet begins to recover from the sterner mood. There is an escape into a region of pure romance.

The fourth section strikes a note of calm and perfect joy. The conflict in the poet's mind is resolved and the obstinate questions have been provided with an answer that brings solace. He is assured that "the loss or

possible loss of human fame
is made good by fame in
heaven" the corrupt clergy
are balanced by

"All the Saints above
The solemn troops and
Sweet Societies!"

and the forebodings of St. Peter
are forgotten

"Through the dear might
of Him that walk'd the
waves!"

Mr. Tillyard thinks that the
plot suggests many things beside
the "power".

"The sudden plunge from bitter
actuality to Arcadia,
from contemporary politics
to utter escape, reveals a
mind both vastly capacious
and exquisitely aware of
different states of feeling.
But out of the whole poem,
not implied by the plot,
emerges one of the supreme
commonplaces. The poem
ends with the poet's
resolution to go on with

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his proper work."

The end.

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