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Question! - Briefly discuss the style of 'Lycidas'.

Answer! - 'Lycidas' is an important poem of the early period of Milton's poetic career. It therefore illustrates some of the characteristics of his early poetry. But at the same time it supplies us with instances of those features which are characteristic of Milton's style in general. Generally, Milton has got two kinds of style (i) the classical style and (ii) the simple and beautiful style. 'Lycidas' is a fine illustration of both kinds of style. In the words of Prof. Cazamian, it is "an example of supreme perfection of style, imagery and versification." There are lines in which Milton's classical style is reflected. There are allusions both classical and biblical. References have been made to the seat of Jove 'Sister of the Sacred Well' and 'rough Satyrs' and fauns. Milton alludes to the

'nuptial song' at the marriage of the Lamb as given in 'Revelation'. References to the stormy 'Hybrides', 'Alpheus' and 'fountain Arethuse' reflect the learning of the poet.

But there are lines in the poem where Milton rivals even the Romantic poets. He has got a rich evocative imagination and with the help of the melody and magic of words he can make things appealing. He is good at the use of poetic devices like a literation, personification, similes and metaphors. Alliteration can be noted in expressions like, 'Swart Star sparsely looks and 'flames in the forehead'. The cowslips are personified and described as flowers drooping their heads in a pensive mood. A living image should be noted in the lines:

"The air was calm, and  
on the level brine  
Sleek Penope with all

her sisters played."

'Lycidas' being a pastoral poem, provided Milton enough scope to give evocative images. The verse of 'Lycidas' owes much to Milton's study of Italian poetry. Though he does not employ the canzone, yet his handling of the verse-paragraphs and of varying line lengths clearly derives from the canzone. We find neither couplets, nor stanzas, but rhymes variously and flexibly interlaced and occasionally unrhymed lines. Rhymes follow no fixed order. In short, Milton has got such a command over the use of language in verse that he can write free verse obeying no law but his own. At moments he created fine music too. Echoing sounds have been repeated as often as six times like the sound 'ear' in the opening lines. He can use even sonorous proper

named as in the line:

"LOOKS toward Hamarlock  
and Bayona's hold."

The result is, to quote from  
Cezemian, "a marvel of  
liquid blended harmony, wh-  
ence monotony has been  
expelled!"

Milton's style is thus the  
vehicle of a cultured and  
cultivated mind. It is the  
expression of the loftiest tho-  
ughts and the sublimest sen-  
timents. "His name", says  
Releigh, "has become the  
mark, not of a biography or  
theme, but of a style, the  
most distinguished in poetry."  
Three qualities distinguish  
Milton's style - opulent all-  
usiveness, intense evocative  
power and wonderful melody.

The end.

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