

## **. APPRECIATION OF THE POEM 'DEATH THE LEVELLER'**

"Death the Leveller" is a brilliant poem by James Shirely. This poem reminds us that death is a force that haunts all human beings. It makes the readers think about their short-life on earth. Death levels everyone in this world. He treats all alike. Death is always hanging over us. The theme of this poem is that death is a reality that everyone should face in life. This poem makes the readers accept this reality without any defence.

In the opening lines of the first stanza, the poet reminds us the futility of the glories of war and triumph. Both the kings and the peasants are reduced to dust. Death is thus inevitable for all and it really serves as a great leveller. The glory, our birth and our condition are simply like shadows, not substantial, not concrete. They will not last for long. We cannot escape from the icy hand of death. He doesn't consider anyone as high birth or low birth. So we must be humble to accept the reality of life.

Some men fight courageous and capture lands, kills people and become victorious. But all their power is lost sooner or later. Ultimately they become the captives of death. The achievements and glories of one's life will remain only till the moment of death. The glory and pride of men end up in grave. Every earthly achievement is short-lived. People will remember only our good deeds and just actions. Those good deeds and actions are like flowers. Thus the poet indirectly exhorts the readers to do good deeds. Those who do good deeds will have sweet smell. The good actions blossom in the dust.

The poem has used fine imagery. There are figures of speech like personification as in "Death lays his icy hands on kings", and metonymy is used in "scepter and crown" and 'seythe and spade'. Oxymoron is used in 'victor-victim bleeds' and metaphor is used in the line, 'glories are shadows' and actions of the just to flowers. The poem employs a beautiful rhyme scheme ababccdd.

Thus all the images and devices used by the poet provide a lot of clarity for the readers to realize the message of the poem. It is applicable to everybody

to lead a good life doing good deeds. In my opinion, the poet has succeeded in making the point, "Death is the Leveller".