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The Translation Processes: Theories and Practice	1
<i>by Y. Veniranda</i>	
Investigating Learners' Strategies in Reading	19
<i>by Concilianus Laos Mbato</i>	
Reciprocal Teaching to Foster Reading Comprehension Skills of EFL College Students in Expository Texts	35
<i>by Markus Budiraharjo</i>	
Parents' Expectations: A Case Study in an English Private Course in Yogyakarta	51
<i>by Christina Kristiyani</i>	
Puritan Verse and Its Significance in the Development of American Literature	69
<i>by Henny Herawati</i>	
Book Review: The Picture of Dorian Gray	81
<i>by Ouda Teda Ena</i>	

PURITAN VERSE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

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Abstract

Puritan verse is an invaluable and inseparable element of American Literature. The Puritan community, being one of many other groups of settlers throughout the New World dominated the writings during the early period or the colonial period. This paper intends to reveal the subject, purpose, style, and type of Puritan verse and attempts to identify its significance in the development of American Literature.

The ultimate purposes of Puritan verse writing are to educate, to glorify God, and to contemplate or meditate. The subject of their verse is also of religious spirit; those are man's relation to God and ways to glorify God. The Puritan theory of style is the Biblical style, which is the plain, clear, direct, and unadorned one. Puritanism forbade the use of allegory, imagery, and any other kinds of figures of speech for fear that they might generate evil passions. Yet, the Puritan poets found their own way to make a distinction. The most common forms of Puritan verse are rhymed statements, long didactic poems, historical verses, personal, reflective, meditative and lyrical poetry, as well as funeral elegy, in the model of anagrams-acrostics and epitaphs. The Puritan verse has a significant position in the development of American Literature. It is the pioneer as well as the root of the later forms of poetry. Moreover, the invention of anagrams and acrostics is a one step forward in the American literary development.