

B.A. ENGLISH HONS PART I

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMA

Miracle plays:-

By the time of the Norman conquest a form of religious drama evolved out of the church had already established itself in France and gradually it soon found its way into England. Its purpose was purely didactic. As it was the work of ecclesiastical authors who used it as a means for instructing the unlettered masses the truths of religion. The dramas were under the complete control of the church, so the performances were given in the sacred buildings. The priests were the actors and the language employed was Latin but as the mystery or miracle play as it was called increased in popularity and on great occasions larger crowds gathered about the church, it became necessary to remove the stage from the interior of the building to the porch. Later it was taken from the porch into the churchyard and finally from the church to the village green or the city street. Laymen at the same time began to take part in the performances and they superseded the clerical actors entirely.

and the vernacular was substituted from the original Latin to the French and then to the English. The religious drama reached its height till the fourteenth century in England. Miracle plays were represented all the large towns in connected cycles to exhibit the whole history of the fall of man and his redemption. Each of the drama begins with the creation of the world and the fall of man, the flood, the sacrifice of Isaac, Resurrection and closes with the last judgement. These religious performances lasted till the sixteenth century.

Morality Plays:- A later stage in the evolution of drama the next to come is morality plays. This like the miracle play was didactic, but its characters, instead being taken from the sacred narrative or the legend of the saints were personified abstractions. The rise of the form of drama was immensely popular when allegorically poetry was in vogue. All sorts of mental and moral qualities appeared in types - Science, Free Will, Five Senses seven deadly sins Good and Bad Angels. As the morality play was not, like the miracle play, obliged to follow the prescribed lines of any given story, it had greater freedom in the handling both of plot and characters.

Interlude:- Interlude is known as the late product of the dramatic development. There is some confusion regarding the proper use of this word. Many so called interludes are only modified forms of the morality. In more specific sense it seems a short dramatic piece of satire rather than a religious or ethical character and in tone and purpose less serious than the morality play.

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B.A. English Hons Part I

History of English Literature

'The University Wits'

A group of dramatists coming just before Shakespeare prepared the way for him. They are known as University Wits. As this implies they were men of academic training or university graduates, and were in touch with the new learning. They are John Lyly 1554-1606. Thomas Kyd 1557-95 George Peele 1558-97 Thomas Lodge 1558-1625 Robert Greene 1560-92 Christopher Marlowe 1564-93 and Thomas Nashe. Each of them contributed to the evolution of the drama into the form which Shakespeare was to follow. Two of them exerted great influence upon Shakespeare. They are Lyly and Marlowe.

Lyly who is widely known as the author of a prose romance called *Euphues*. His dramatic work consists of eight comedies. Among them the best are *Campaspe*, *Engdymion* and *Gallathea*. These all were written for the performance at the court. Lyly helped to give comedy an intellectual tone, in his continual use of puns, conceits and all sorts of verbal fireworks he anticipated Shakespeare, whose early comedies, such as *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* obviously much to this examples. From Lyly Shakespeare

also learned ~~how~~ how to combine a courtly main plot with episodes of rustic blunders and clownish fooling. In these things Lyly set a fashion which others, including Shakespeare followed.

Christopher Marlowe :- Marlowe's historical importance is even greater. A man of fiery imagination and immense though ill-regulated powers, who lived a wild Bohemian life and while still young was killed in a drunken brawl, by nature he was far more a lyric poet than a dramatist. His Tamburlaine the Great, Dr. Faustus, The Jew of Malta and Edward II give him the place of pre-eminence among our pre-Shakespearean playwrights. In these plays he really fixed the type of tragedy and chronicle play for his immediate successors, and in them also he introduced blank verse.

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The Rape of the Lock (Alexander Pope)

(B.A. Part I Hons) Paper, 1st

The Rape of the Lock was written by Alexander Pope and first published in 1712, then reworked and published again in 1714. The poem is a mock-epic that satirizes the upper-class in London at the time. The story focuses on the central character Belinda whose lock of hair is cut off at a social gathering.

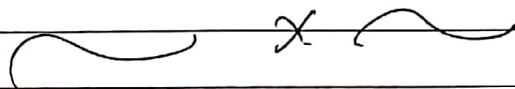
The poem became a trivial story of the stolen lock of hair as ~~was~~ a vehicle for making some thoroughly mature and sophisticated comments on society and humankind. The entire poem is written in five cantos, making use of the popular, rhymed iambic pentameter verse, along with balance, antithesis, bathos and paradoxia.

The story is relatively simple in Canto 1, the reader finds Belinda (representing Miss Fernald) asleep but awakened about noon by her lapdog Shock. Before she awakens, she dreams about Ariel, a sylph who whispers praises in her ear and warns her to beware of jealousy, pride and especially men. When she finds a love letter on her bed and after reading it, quickly forgets all the advice that Ariel had given her. She has been invited to sail up. She devoted much time to her cosmetics and hair in preparation for the trip.

The Baron, a suitor, is seen admiring a lock of her hair and vowing that if he would

In Canto 4, a bad dyer named Umbriel takes advantage of the Chaucer and Chaucer to increase the weles by flying down to the Cave of Spleen to get more weles to dump onto Belinda, with his trusty key "Spleenwort," in his hand of Spleen.

The "Rape of the Lock" is what is known as a "mock heroic" epic in that it follows many of the conventions of epic poetry while simultaneously Epic. This happens when the text pokes fun at the idea of an epic hero or heroic literature.



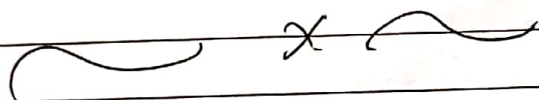
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cut her hair, an act symbolising the loss of virtue, even chastity. The leader next sees the crew sailing up the Thames, with everyone but Ariel apparently pleased with the state of affairs. Unwinded, Ariel summons his helpers, Slyphs and reminds them of their duty in helping to protect Belinda, one especially to guard her fans, one her watch, another her lock, and Ariel himself her dog. A host of slyphs are assigned to guard her petticoat, a literal device of amor in older times protecting the female's sexuality.

After the cruise of on the Thames, Canto 3 sees Belinda, the Baron and the rest of the party arriving at the palace. There Belinda decides to play a Spanish card game called Ombre with two of her suitors. During the game, coffee recently introduced into England by Queen Anne in order to help with the alcohol problem, is served and fumes from the hot liquid open the ~~an~~ rational mind of the Baron, providing him with new stratagems. With the help of a female crony named Clarissa, he manages to cut off the lock of Belinda's hair during the card game. At this rape, Belinda cries out in horror, and the Baron cries out in triumph. Ariel weeps bitterly because he was not able to prevent the deed.

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Q: Show your acquaintance with the poem, "A Little P:1

Learning" by Alexander Pope. (B.A Eng. Subsidi. Part-I, Paper-I)

Ans: Alexander Pope is one of the greatest of English poets. He is the nearest approach to a classical poet in English language. As an artist, he studied perfection with a rare singleness of purpose. Satire was in his vein.

The present piece, "A little Learning" is an extract from his satirical work, "An Essay on Criticism". In this poem the poet criticises the critics themselves for their superficial and shallow knowledge. In these lines he states clearly and emphatically that a little knowledge of anything is highly dangerous. He advises man either to drink deep from the spring of knowledge, or not to taste its water at all. He explains that knowledge is also a kind of wine. But the difference between the wine of knowledge and other ordinary variety of wine is much, when a man drinks more of ordinary wine he gets intoxicated, but the first few draughts of the wine of knowledge intoxicate one. As one goes on drinking more and more of the wine of knowledge, he becomes sober due to maturity of thought.

In the next six lines the poet gives us an example - that of young critics. They have gathered some knowledge no doubt, but that makes them highly boosted up. They feel themselves qualified to judge all varieties of arts. They even dream of reaching at the top of the mountain of knowledge. This is because they are ignorant. They look at the mountain from the level ground, and feel its height to be negligible. Hence, the poet informs these shallow critics of the vastness of knowledge.

He tells them indirectly not to consider themselves p: 2
as competent and experts. The last eight lines deal with
the same idea. The image of climbing over the mighty
Alps is carried in all its details. The inexperienced
mountaineer mounting over the valley thinks that he
has reached the highest peak, and that the sky is
quite near at hand. But his illusion soon vanishes,
and he faces the hard reality.

Thus the poet makes it quite clear that to acquire
complete mastery in anything is a pretty difficult
task. To master all the branches of knowledge is
almost an impossible affair for anyone. So, one
must not give himself airs by cultivating only
a little knowledge.

The beauty of the poem lies in the precise nature
of the poet's saying. The idea has been brought home
with the help of vivid images. It is a highly in-
structive poem. Although the idea is common place,
the manner of presenting it has given it a new
meaning. Thus Pope's skill lies chiefly in clothing
ordinary ideas in an attractive manner.

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