

ELIZABETHAN PROSE WITH REFERENCE TO BACON:

INTRODUCTION:

Elizabethan Age does not belong to poetry and drama alone. There were a few writers who wrote prose too. Bacon was the master of prose in this time.

FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626):

Francis Bacon was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He chose law as his profession. He was an ^{public speaker} orator also. He was knighted in 1603. Lord Bacon was involved in politics and he faced many problems. He started writing in order to give some moral teaching to the public. He wrote many subjects and his important works were "Advancement of Learning" and "Novum Organum". His essays were published under the collection titled "Essays or ^{advice} Counsels"; "Civil and Moral". His writing style is similar to that of the French Thinker Montaigne, but the matter and manner are entirely Bacon's. Bacon evolved the "Baconian Method" by which he wrote in an 'epigrammatic style'. He had an extraordinary insight and wisdom about life. His essays are loaded with Bacon's "Ripeness", "wisdom" and "experience".

Bacon's Style :

Bacon's style is marked by the use of metaphor, imagery, analogy and ornateness. He uses a lot of Latin language in his essays. Since he had the power of packing many thoughts in the smallest possible space. His essays are described as "Infinite richness in a little room". Some of his famous essays are : "of Truth", "of study", "of great places", "of friendship", "of marriage and single life".

ELIZABETHAN POETRY :

(i,ii) Wyatt, Surrey

INTRODUCTION :

During the Renaissance, William Chaucer was the most important poet. There was a revival of poetry starting from Chaucer. The poets of this period were influenced by Italian poets. They started imitating the Italian poets, but later on developed a style which was unique to themselves. These poets belonged to the Court of Henry VIII. The two important poets of this period are Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey.

Sir Thomas Wyatt : (1503 - 1542)

Wyatt was deeply influenced by Italian poetry. He wrote poetry that resembled the love poetry of Petrarch, the Italian poet. The Sonnet form he used was the Petrarchian Sonnet form consisting of an octave (stanza with 8 lines) and a sestet (stanza with 6 lines). There was a turn in thought at the end of the octave. This is indicated by a comma or a full stop. The sestet gives a resolution to the problem raised in the octave. This Petrarchian form was polished by Wyatt. Wyatt and Surrey are the chief poets represented in the collection called "Songs and Sonnets". This collection is known by

the name of its publisher as "Tottel's Miscellany". This book was published in the year 1557. Wyatt brought grace, harmony and nobility to English poetry. He introduced the personal or the auto-biographical elements in English poetry. He was also famous for the number of lyrics and songs that he composed.

Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey:
(1516 - 1547)

Surrey also wrote sonnets like the Italian poet but he was the 1st English poet to use the un-rhymed ten syllabled verse called as the blank verse. He translated the Italian epic called "Aeneid" into English. Surrey is a disciple of Wyatt. He made the Petrarchian form typically English by making it more expressive.

Conclusion:

Both Wyatt and Surrey were supported patronised by the King Henry VIII. Both of them prepared the platform for Shakespeare to write his poetry.

23/1/2020

(iii)

Edmund Spenser (1552 - 1599)

INTRODUCTION:

Edmund Spenser is called as "The Poets Poet" because all the great poets were indebted to him. Spenser's main poetical works are:

- * "The Shepherd's Calender" - A pastoral poem
- * "Amoretti" - A collection of 88 sonnets.
- * "Epithalamion" - An ode written on the occasion of his marriage
- * "Astrophel" - An elegy on the death of Philip Sydney.
- * "Four Hymns" - Poems on love and honour
- * "The Faerie Queene" - An epic (1589)

Spenser's finest poetry is characterized by sensuousness and picturesqueness. He is a painter of words. His contribution to poetic style, diction and versification is memorable. He introduced a new poetic form called as Spenserian Stanza. This stanza was later on used by many poets. Shakespeare's language was influenced by Spenser. Dryden called him as his master. Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron and Keats were his followers.

"The Faerie Queene" is an epic poem made up of six books and a portion of the seventh book was published after Spenser's death. He had a plan of writing

twelve books but he could not complete them. In the epic *The Faerie Queene* has an annual feast for twelve days and on each day a knight undertakes a particular adventure. Prince Arthur appears in every book to help the knight. He forms a link in all the books. There are giants, dragons, dwarfs, witches and beautiful damsels in the poem. The poem can be called as a didactic romance and also as an allegory. The knights stand for the twelve cardinal virtues. Spenser identifies true religion with Protestantism and the bad elements in the book are identified with Rome and the Catholic Church. "The Faerie Queene" celebrates the victory of good and the defeat of evil.

The Spenserian stanza consists of nine lines rhyming ababbcbcc. The last line made up of six iambic feet is called Alexandrine.

Thus Spenser has made an important and large contribution to English poetry and that is why he is called as "The Poets Poet".

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86)

Sidney was the most celebrated literary figure before Spenser and Shakespeare. His important writings include: "Arcadia", a prose romance, "Apology for Poetry", a collection of critical and literary principles and "Astrophel and Stella", a collection of sonnets. The sonnets are subjective in nature and are written in the Petrarchan model. Even his prose is ornate and poetic. Critics have praised Sidney for the versatile nature of his work that has given him the foremost rank among the writers of his time.

Literary Features of the Puritan Age:

The Puritan Age was marked by civil war, which divided the people into two factions—one loyal to the king and the other opposed to him. The puritans influenced the English middle classes during the reign of James I. The puritan spirit was fine and noble but hard and stern. Several laws were passed. Simple pleasures were forbidden and theatres were closed. Great literature could not be produced during this period. The only exception was Milton.

The spirit of unity, patriotism and nationalism that marked the Elizabethan Age is found missing in Puritan Age. Since the country was divided, literature was also divided in spirit. Literature was dominated by the critical and intellectual spirit. Even in lyrics and love poems, the critical and intellectual spirit only dominated. The language used in poetry was artificial. Puritanism led to the death of drama. Theatres were closed in 1642. So there is very little dramatic work in this period.

John Milton (1608-1674) - Scholar Poet

Latin, English

Milton represents the best of Renaissance and Puritanism. Though a Puritan, he was a classicist and a humanist. He had the religious zeal and moral earnestness of a Puritan. At the same time, he loved beauty and he did not hate stage and drama.

* Did MA in Christ College, Cambridge.

Milton's early poems, "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity", L'Allegro and Il Penseroso exhibit the spirit of Elizabethan literature. "Comus" is a masque written in Puritan spirit. "Lycidas" is a pastoral Elegy. He wrote many sonnets including "On His Blindness". Milton wrote his finest poetry when he became totally blind. Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes were written during this period.

Happy Man

Sad Man

shot - peace death

Innocent wa

Characteristics of Milton's Poetry:

"on his blindness"

i. Sublimity: According to Milton, poetry was sacred and sublime. Hence, there is majesty in his poetry. His poems reveal his noble mind, his knowledge and discipline in art. His poetry ennobles and elevates the readers.

ii. Love of Beauty: Milton loved beauty in all its manifestations. This found expression in all his poems.

iii. Puritanism: The Puritan element is dominant in Milton's later poetry. The subject of his later poetry was taken from the Bible. The aim of Paradise Lost is "to justify the ways of

2 books
epic

Repudience

God to men". *Paradise Regained* is about God's victory over Satan. The theme of *Samson Agonistes* is also Biblical.

iv. Classicism: Milton was a classicist. This is evident from the choice of forms such as epic, the Greek tragedy and pastoral elegy. He was fond of classical allusions. His epics are full of descriptions and similes.

v. Milton's Style: His style is called grand style. He packs his meanings in the fewest possible words and in the most musical language. There is compactness, force and unity of emotional expression in his style. His rhythm and diction are perfect.

vi. Versification: Milton's entire poetry is marked by a unique musical quality. He reformed the loose dramatic blank verse of Elizabethan dramatists and refined it into the English heroic verse without rhyme. This he used for *Paradise Lost*.

vii. Poetic Art: More than anything, Milton was a flawless poetic artist. He was never careless in his work. There is not even a single line in his poetry which is unpoetic. There is no even a single word which is unimportant.

John Bunyan (1628-88)

Bunyan is called the pioneer of English novel. He wrote the two prose allegories, *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding*. Though Bunyan did not have any formal education, he knew the Bible by heart. Hence, he was able to use the right word and telling phrase. *The Pilgrim's Progress* has an interesting narrative, characters, dialogue, dramatic power and realistic quality. Hence this book is regarded as the forerunner of the novel.

The Metaphysical Poets

A new kind of poetry known as metaphysical poetry began with John Donne (1573-1631). It is characterized by intense feeling, harsh metres, and whimsical images called conceits.

Donne's poetry is classified into—amorous, religious and satirical. There is philosophy in his poetry. There is a combination of the homely and the sublime, the light and the serious elements. His images are far-fetched, unusual and striking.

George Herbert (1593-1633) is the most widely read of all metaphysical poets. His poems were published posthumously. There is concrete imagery in his poetry. He used simple language. His poetry expresses delicate feelings.

Richard Crashaw (1613-49) wrote both secular and religious poetry. The poems are known for their striking conceits and religious fervour. They are more emotional than thoughtful.

Henry Vaughan (1622-95) was a mystic at heart. He had a gift for fantasy. He had a great regard for nature and hence resembled Wordsworth sometimes.

Thomas Carew (1594-67) shows great lyrical talents in his poems. His style resembles the neo-classical poets.

Abraham Cowley (1618-67) is known as a classical scholar. He is known as a transitional poet of his period. He was the last of the metaphysical poets and a forerunner of the classical poets. His lyrics are sweet and graceful.

Two stars of Puritan Age: Milton & Bunyan.

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Ages / Periods

Chronological Order

- 500 - 1340 : Pre-Chaucer's Period
- 1340 - 1400 : Age of Chaucer
- 1400 - 1557 : Dark Age
- 1557 - 1625 : Shakespearian / Elizabethan Age
- 1625 - 1660 : Milton's Age
- 1660 - 1700 : Age of Dryden
- 1700 - 1745 : Age of Pope
- 1745 - 1798 : Age of Dr. Johnson
- 1798 - 1832 : Age of Wordsworth / Romantic Age
- 1832 - 1887 : Age of Tennyson } Victorian Age
- 1887 - 1928 : Age of Hardy }
- 1928 onwards : Modern Age

Unit - I

Origin and Growth of English Drama

Introduction :

English drama developed in many stages of growth.

Stage - 1 :

English drama began in the church. The priests were the actors. The drama was enacted in Latin language. The stories of the dramas were based on The Bible and they were moral stories. This kind of drama is called Mystery or Miracle plays.

Stage - 2 :

As drama became popular more people came to watch the drama. The church space was not enough and so drama was moved to the church yard. After some time even the churchyard was not enough, so drama moved to the street. At this stage common men started acting in the dramas. French and English were used but the themes were still moral.

Stage 3 :

In this stage Trading guilds started performing the play. The popular themes were :

* The flood

* Life of Jesus Christ

Abstract - can't see, feel.

- * Crucifixion, and Resurrection
- * The Last Judgement.

Morality Plays :

Morality plays were didactic story. The characters were personified abstractions. The devil was a permanent character. Later on Vice also became an important character. Some times Vice was given a comic representation. Later on Vice evolved into a clown character. The themes were more common in nature. Slowly the personified abstraction began to resemble real people. Morality plays evolved into Comedies.

Interludes :

Interludes are modified forms of morality plays. They are more satirical in nature. The themes are not very serious. John Heywood wrote many interludes including The Four Ps :

1. A Palmer, (Penance)
2. A Pardoner, (Priest)
3. A Pothecary, (Doctor)
4. A Pedlar (Sells goods)

Regular Comedy and Tragedy :

During the period of Renaissance drama saw a big development resulting in regular Comedies and tragedies. Greek Comedies were written by Plautus and Terence

5M: Write a note on 1st Comedy and Tragedy.

became the model for English Comedies. Greek tragedies written by Seneca became the model for English tragedies. The first English Comedy, Ralph Roister Doister was written by Nicholas Udall in 1550 and he wrote in rhyming couplets. The first English tragedy, Gorboduc was written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton in 1561 in blank verse.

2/19. Elizabethan Drama

Introduction:

During the Elizabethan Age two kinds of drama became popular.

1. Classical drama; 2. Romantic drama, Each kind had its own characteristic features.

Classical Drama:

Classical drama follows certain rules framed by Greek and Roman dramatists. They are:

① In classical drama comic and tragic actions should not be mingled. Hence, a drama should be either fully comic or fully tragic.

② In classical drama there is very little dramatic action. Many events are not shown on the stage but they will be reported.

③ classical drama strictly follows the three unities: Unities of time, place and action. According to the Unity of time, a play should start and end within 24 hrs. According to the Unity of place, the action should happen only in one or two locations. According to the Unity of action, there should be only one main plot and no sub-plots.

The most important writer who wrote classical drama was Ben Jonson and he followed all the rules of classical drama framed by Aristotle.

Romantic Drama :

In Romantic Drama comic and tragic actions are mingled. All the actions are shown on the stage. Wars, battles, murders and important incidents in the play are shown and not reported. Unities of time, place and action were not followed. The story runs over many months or years and the scenes may change from one country to another. Sub-plots were also there. Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe were the two important dramatists who wrote romantic drama.

UNIVERSITY WITS

13/12/19. INTRODUCTION :

A group of dramatists who studied in Oxford and Cambridge Universities wrote dramas. These youngmen had academic training and that is why they were called University Wits. They are :

1. John Lyly
2. Thomas Kyd
3. George Peele
4. Thomas Lodge
5. Robert Greene
6. Thomas Nash
7. Christopher Marlowe

Serica - The first person to write tragic plays in Greek

They were predecessors of Shakespeare. They introduced the flexible form of Romantic Drama and Shakespeare was able to follow this model.

(i) John Lyly : (1553 - 1606)

Lyly is famous for dramas like Eupheus and Endymion. These dramas were performed at the court. The dramas were known for plot, situation and characters. Shakespeare followed the model of Lyly when he wrote his early comedies.

(ii) Thomas Kyd : (1558 - 1694)

Thomas Kyd wrote a famous play called The Spanish Tragedy. He also translated some French plays into English.

(iii) George Peele : (1558 - 1698)

George Peele was educated in Oxford. He wrote a historical play on King Edward The First and a satire called The Old Wives Tale. He wrote in blank verse.

(iv) Thomas Lodge : (1558 - 1625)

Thomas Lodge was a physician and dramatist. He wrote pamphlets. His famous dramas are A Looking Glass for London and England, The Wounds of

Civil War.

(v) Robert Greene : (1558 - 1692)

Robert Greene studied in both Oxford and Cambridge. He wrote four plays among which Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay was the best. His dramas are known for their humour.

(vi) Thomas Nash : (1567 - 1601)

Thomas Nash is considered as the greatest of all the Elizabethan pamphleteers. He wrote a drama called Summer's Last Will and A Masque called Testament. He also co-authored ^(dance & songs) a play with Ben Jonson.

(vii) Christopher Marlowe : (1564 - 1593)

Marlowe was a big influence on Shakespeare. Shakespeare's blank verse resembled Marlowe's. His famous plays are Edward II, The Jew of Malta, Dr. Faustus. His Edward II was a model for the historical plays and his Dr. Faustus was a model for tragedies. Marlowe was known for his fiery imagination and his adventurous life. He was killed in a drunken brawl. In his short life he made a great influence on his following dramatists.

BEN JONSON
(1573 - 1637)

INTRODUCTION:

Ben Jonson was a contemporary of Shakespeare. He joined a theatre company called Lord Admiral's Company as an actor and dramatist (playwright). During the period of King James I, Ben Jonson wrote many masques which became popular.

Ben Jonson's Style:

Ben Jonson tried to revive the classical style. His plays can be divided into Comedies and tragedies. He did not combine the elements of Comedy and tragedy. He followed the Unities of time, place and action.

Comedy of Humours:

Ben Jonson wrote comedies based on the concept of humours. The word 'Humour' means an individual is dominated by one particular characteristic. Hence, his characters are types but they were likeable.

His famous Plays:

His early comedies are
Every Man in His Humour (1598),
Every Man Out of His Humour (1599).

His later comedies are, ^{Goodly} Volpone or the Fox (1605), Epic One or the Silent Woman (1609) and The Alchemist (1610). In the last phase he wrote two historical tragedies Sejanus (1611) and Catiline (1611). These tragedies are written in the classical models and show the power and variety of the author. He wrote many masques and Anti-masques.

The Greatness of Ben Jonson:

Ben Jonson was a great artist and a reformer. According to him drama could be used to teach morals to the society and he did that through his plays. He was a man of learning and he used his knowledge of the world to make his commands about the society and its manners. Among the dramatists of his time, Ben Jonson was the greatest. Later on, his greatness was overshadowed by the greatness of Shakespeare. There is a remark about him in his epitaph that reads "Orare Ben Jonson." From this we can understand the greatness of Ben Jonson.

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

His Life:

Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire. He was a son of a tradesman. When he was 19 years old he married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. Shakespeare started his career as an actor. He later became a playwright. He attained name and fame in the next twenty years. He was a shareholder in "The Globe" and "The Blackfriars". In 1612 he retired in Stratford where he bought a big house. He died on 23rd April 1616.

Shakespeare's Works:

Shakespeare has written 154 sonnets, 2 narrative poems and 37 plays. His sonnets deal with love, friendship and the power of time. Even though Shakespeare was not a trained scholar like Bacon and Ben Jonson, he had a wide miscellaneous knowledge about many things. His plays are well known for their characterization and universal appeal. His creative activity extending for 24 years is divided into 4 periods.

First period - 1588 to 1593

- This is a period of apprenticeship and experimentation
- His early comedies are "Love's Labour's Lost", "The Two Gentleman of Verona", "The Comedy of Errors" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream"
- He wrote the Historical play "Richard III" and the tragedy "Romeo and Juliet"
- In this period his treatment of life is superficial. There is little depth in character and he used a lot of puns and conceits in dialogue

Second Period – 1594 to 1600:

- This is the period of Great Comedies and Historical plays
- Historical Plays of this period are – "Richard II", "King John", Henry IV Part I & II and Henry V
- Comedies of this period are – "The Merchant of Venice", "The Taming of the Shrew", "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night"
- The plays of this period show development in power and technique. His characters have become deep. His humour is mature. His blank verse is free and flexible

Third Period – 1601 to 1608:

- This is the period of great tragedies and bitter comedies.
- Shakespeare's dramatic powers are at their highest. He has portrayed the darker side of human experience. The sins and weaknesses of human beings form the plot of his plays.

The four great tragedies – “Hamlet”, “Othello”, “King Lear”, “Macbeth” were written in this period. Roman histories like “Julius Ceasar”, “Antony and Cleopatra and dark comedies – “Measure for Measure”, “All’s Well that Ends Well”, “Triolus and Cressida” belong to this period.

Fourth Period – 1608 to 1612:

- This is the period of Dramatic Romances. These plays show the decline of Shakespeare’s dramatic powers. There is evil in the plays but it is conquered in the end. These plays are also called as tragic comedies.
- “Cymbeline”, “The Winter’s Tale”, “The Tempest” belong to this period.

Characteristics of Shakespeare’s Works:

- Shakespeare’s plays constitute the greatest single body of work ever written. The most important feature is their astonishing variety. He was an original thinker. He was free of dogmatism of any kind. His variety and vitality of characterization is unparalleled. He had a great command over English Language. He is believed to have coined around 15,000 words.
- His plays are remarkable for their interpretation of human nature. He wanted to satisfy the expectations of the entire audience, and so sometimes his humour is coarse.
- His two narrative poems “Venus and Adonis” and “Lucrece” reflect the spirit of classicism. It is often said that even if he had not written dramas his sonnets would have made him immensely popular. These are the paramount qualities which have given Shakespeare the first place among the world’s dramatists.