

sElizabethan Period

Q.) Assess the importance of the University Wits In the history of English drama. (2007 / 12)

Ans.) The University Wits were all men of academic training. Saintsbury calls them the 'mighty group of plonings who founded the English drama'. They had training at one of the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge. It was on account of their associations with the two universities that they were called University wits. They were fully undersea (= existing) the influence of the Renaissance that was in its full bloom during their time. They found drama most convened (= set up) to their tastes and temperament: and favorably sited (= placed) to their learning and training The group of University Wits consists of John Lyly, Thomas Kyd, George Peele, Thomas Lodge, Robert Greene; Thomas Nash and Christopher Marlowe. Now let us discuss their importance in the history of English drama.

John Lyly was the earliest of this group. He wrote eight plays. Unlike the rest of the group Lyly wrote for the court, not for the public theatres. Some of his plays are Allegorical and mythical in tone;

s7cime are realistir arid some are in nature>. Lyly greatly contributed to the formation of the

Romantic comedy. His comedies are romLr.t.L. well as witty. His influence was wide spread, and his

comedies were popular even Shakespeare took suggestions from them. Shakespeare's As You Like It is an admixture of prose and verse form which is followed after Lyly. The best and the most important of his eight plays are Campaspe, Endymion and The Woman in the Moon.

As the only exception among the University wits Thomas Puzi does not seem to belong to either of the two modesties. As most celebrated work: is his The Spanish Tragedy His Spanish Tragedy is full of strong external actions. Cornelia is his other surviving translation dramatic work. Kyd has managed the ge- effg-ct-, with artistic skill. The plot is weif-cdiristr),ted, the dialogues are forceful. The ciFlinciator c-f

character by Kyd is subtle (= If Marlowe was responsible for developing psycho-trauma (= an



Thomas Nash was the youngest of the University wits. He had the least genius of all the set but most inborn journalist. The dramatic work of Nash is of little significance. He finished Marlowe's Dido but his only surviving play is Summer's Last Will and Testament

Christopher Marlowe is universally acknowledged as the best and the greatest of the University wits. It has rightly been said about him that Marlowe paved the way, Shakespeare perfected it. He was a man of fiery imagination and immense thought content. He is the personality of ill regulated powers, which led him a wild Bohemian life. His tragedies reflected his coin image in dramatic format. Marlowe wrote four irnincirta tragedies; and they are Tamburiane The Great, Jew of Malta, Dr. Faustus and fdward li. in Marlowe's play the interest centers wholly on the personality of the tragic

hero The aesthetic pleasure which. watching that peisonaq'T, heroically against the heavy

odd', ;ise tthe circumstance that ce;-1ff-:': eecfr.f..e the conception of tragedy. Marlowe

is b./ far the greate :among Shakespeare's predecessid 75, e.r.r.: da d iv the grez,test of University wits.

The constellation of University wits made the i--.liz.abethar drarne more popular with Renaissance humanism and pride of patriotism. English drama for the first time in their hands recognized its

potentialities possibilities) and exuberance (= high spirits). They wrote classical plays, courtly comedies:. farces1 chronicle plays, melodramas etc. They gave thrill, action, sensation, humour and music. Tarnburfaire has boundless passion for power; Dr "austus has the rfinite passion for knowledge.

To conclude W. J. Long, "The Elizabethan drorno: 1.5 ;..kot 4.7,! Mineng7-like creation, springing full izmwr; from the ey 'hid many men bore the past',

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