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BRITISH POETRY AND DRAMA: 17th AND 18th CENTURIES

BEGC-107

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Content

BRITISH POETRY AND DRAMA: 17th AND 18th CENTURIES

Question Paper–June-2024 (Solved)	1
Question Paper–December-2023 (Solved)	1-4
Question Paper–June-2023 (Solved)	1-2
Question Paper–Exam Held in March-2022 (Solved)	1-2

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i>	<i>Page</i>
--------------	-----------------------------------	-------------

BLOCK-I : JOHN WEBSTER: *THE DUCHESS OF MALFI*

1. The Jacobean Drama and John Webster : An Introduction	1
2. John Webster: The Playwright and His Dramatic Art	8
3. <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i> : Textual Analysis	16
4. <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i> : Character Analysis and Critical Perspectives	25

BLOCK-II : JOHN MILTON: *LYCIDAS,* *SONNET XIX, L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSOROSO*

5. The 17th Century: An Introduction	34
6. John Milton: Life and Works	46
7. John Milton: <i>Lycidas and Sonnet XIX on his Blindness</i>	56
8. John Milton: <i>L'Allegro, Il Penseroso</i>	69

S.No.	Chapterwise Reference Book	Page
-------	----------------------------	------

BLOCK-III : JOHN DRYDEN : *MAC FLECKNOE*

9.	John Dryden: Life and Works	78
10.	<i>Mac Flecknoe</i> : Reading the Poem	85
11.	<i>Mac Flecknoe</i> : Summary and Explanations	92
12.	<i>Mac Flecknoe</i> : Theme and Poetic Diction	100

BLOCK-IV : ALEXANDER POPE : *THE RAPE OF THE LOCK*

13.	The Age of Alexander Pope	112
14.	Life and Writings of Alexander Pope	121
15.	Analysis of Canto 3	131
16.	Character Analysis and Style	141



**Sample Preview
of the
Solved
Sample Question
Papers**

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

**BRITISH POETRY AND DRAMA:
17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES**

BEGC-107

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: There are three Sections in this paper : Section A, B and C. Attempt **Six** questions in all. Write your answer neatly.

SECTION-A

Q. 1. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Shakespearean Tragedy.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 2, 'Shakespearean Tragedy'.

(b) Sources of 'The Duchess of Malfi'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 17, 'Sources of the Play'.

(c) The Puritan Movement in England

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 34, 'Brief History of the Puritan Movement in England'.

(d) The Elegy

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 56, 'The Elegy'.

(e) The Popish Plot

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 79, 'The Popish Plot'.

(f) Significance of the title of *MacFlecknoe*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 100, 'The Title'.

(g) Genesis of *The Rape of the Lock*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 122, 'The Rape of the Lock'.

(h) Augustan Age.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 115, Q. No. 4.

SECTION-B

Note: Answer the following questions from this section:

Q. 2. Influences on Jacobean Tragedy.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 1, 'Introduction' and 'Influences on Jacobean Tragedy'.

Q. 3. *Lycidas* as a Pastoral Elegy.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 57, 'Pastoral Elegy' and '*Lycidas* as Pastoral Elegy'.

Q. 4. Biblical references in Milton's 'On His Blindness'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 62, 'Biblical References'.

Q. 5. Theme of *MacFlecknoe*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 100, 'Theme'.

SECTION-C

Note : Answer the following questions:

Q. 6. Comment on the structure of Webster's 'The Duchess of Malfi'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 16, 'John Webster's Skill in Plot Construction'.

Q. 7. Write an essay on the poetic style of John Milton.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 55, Q. No. 8.

Q. 8. Attempt a critical appreciation of *L'Allegro*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 75, Q. No. 3.

Q. 9. Write a short essay on the mock heroic elements in *Mac Flecknoe*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 103, Q. No. 4.

Q. 10. Make a character sketch of the Baron from 'The Rape of the Lock'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 141, 'The Baron' and Page No. 142, 'The Baron'.

Q. 11. Differentiate between the classical epic and the mock epic.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 131, 'Characteristics of a Classical Epic' and Page No. 132, 'The Mock Epic'.

Q. 12. Comment on the use of irony and satire in *The Rape of the Lock*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 136, Q. No. 4 and Q. No. 2. ■ ■

QUESTION PAPER

December – 2023

(Solved)

**BRITISH POETRY AND DRAMA:
17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES**

BEGC-107

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: There are three Sections in this paper : Section A, B and C. Attempt **Six** questions in all. Write your answer neatly.

SECTION-A

Q. 1. Write short notes the following:

(a) The Classical Epic

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 131, 'Characteristics of a Classical Epic'.

(b) Marlowian Tragedy

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 2, 'Medieval and Marlowian Tragedy'.

(c) The Puritan Revolution

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 37, Q. No. 1 and Q. No. 2.

(d) The Shakespearean Sonnet

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 65, Q. No. 8.

(e) The scientific revolution in 17th century England

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 41, Q. No. 1.

(f) Illusion

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 106, Q. No. 12 (d).

Also Add: Illusion has played a significant role in British poetry, often serving as a means to explore themes of reality, perception, and the complexities of human experience. Poets use illusion to create deceptive or dreamlike imagery, question the nature of truth, and engage readers in a deeper reflection on their own perceptions.

(g) Poetic Diction

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 106, Q. No. 12 (b).

(h) Romanticism

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 117, Q. No. 1.

SECTION-B

Note: Answer the following questions from this Section.

Q. 2. Write a short note on the Cave of Spleen in *The Rape of the Lock*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 142, 'The Sylphs' and Page No. 147, Q. No. 6.

Q. 3. Discuss the role of the cardinal in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 26, 'Cardinal' and Chapter-2, Page No. 15, Q. No. 3.

Q. 4. *Lycidas* is a blend of pagan and Christian images. Comment.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 60, '*Lycidas* : Substance, Critical Analysis'.

Q. 5. Give a brief summary of Pope's 'An Essay on Criticism'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-14, Page No. 121, 'An Essay on Criticism' and Page No. 123, Q. No. 1.

SECTION-C

Note: Answer the following questions.

Q. 6. Examine *The Rape of the Lock* as an example of the close relationship between Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 147, Q. No. 4 and Page No. 143, 'Picture of Society'.

Q. 7. How far has Dryden been successful in making of fool of Shadwell without using "opprobrious terms"? Discuss.

Ans. John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* is a masterful example of refined satire, where he successfully ridicules Thomas Shadwell without resorting to direct insults or "opprobrious terms." Instead of using crude language, Dryden employs mock-heroic elements, irony, hyperbole, and literary allusions to expose Shadwell's poetic mediocrity. The entire poem functions as an elaborate parody, presenting Shadwell as the rightful heir to the throne of dullness, a kingdom where lack of wit and talent reign supreme. By using the framework of an epic coronation, Dryden exaggerates Shadwell's importance, only to undermine him by making his dullness his greatest qualification

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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BRITISH POETRY AND DRAMA: 17th AND 18th CENTURIES

BLOCK-I : JOHN WEBSTER: *THE DUCHESS OF MALFI*

The Jacobean Drama and John Webster : An Introduction



INTRODUCTION

Jacobean Drama was written and performed during the age of Queen Elizabeth and her successor, James I. Some of the famous playwrights and poets of this era are William Shakespeare and John Webster. After James I took over the throne which is totally based upon the right of descent. He lost interest in ruling England. His bad ways of living, wrong policies, and unpleasant choices made him dislike by many in the society. Corruption increased during his reign which inspired playwrights to use it as their plots in the dramas. R. Sundra Raju says: "These political setbacks affected the society in England which are presented in its almost all the forms of the literature prose, poetry and drama". James I was against the concept of democratic state policy and supported the government of the Church by Bishops.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

INFLUENCES ON JACOBEAN DRAMA

The court of James I lost the beauty of the earlier courts and rulers. It was taken over by disappointments, defeats, failures and corruption, etc. Nobles influenced the upper classes of society. The brilliant-minded people in the court were replaced by the average-minded people. A large number of writers like: Bacon, Shakespeare, Daniel, etc. contributed immensely through their master works to take English tragedy to the greater heights.

Webster was influenced by the work of Italian philosopher and dramatist, Seneca. The theme 'Revenge' ruled the era. Seneca provided the plot of 'Revenge' to the early Elizabethan tragedians like: Kyd, Marlowe,

and Shakespeare. He describe the act of taking revenge using most dramatic, influential and moralizing speeches.

Kyd wrote *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587), Thomas Sachville and Thomas Norton wrote *Gorboduc* (1561), Marlowe wrote *The Jew of Malta* (1590) and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1599) are some of the inspired works of this age. The theme 'Revenge' became the favourite theme of the writers and got success in attracting audiences.

Jacobean Drama was also influenced by the work of Machiavelli which is '*The Prince*' (1532). This motivated Webster to create character which are highly manipulative and mysterious. *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* are the best examples to support the influence of Machiavelli's characters over Webster's writings. Webster tried to introduce the new set of values by replacing the old themes. He gave world a tragic vision. Life is full of sufferings which takes away the happiness and deeds are weighed on sins and at the end of life one gets justice. In the Final Couplet of '*The White Devil*',

*Let guilty men remember their black deeds,
Do lean on crutches made of slender reeds.*

Webster defines the truth which gives shape to the drama. Webster glorified virtue, morality and justice, and disapprove sinful and vicious courses of life in his dramatic works in general. He specifies morality in religious terms and saw life as a struggle between wrong and right in which right had the final triumph.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRAMA AND TRAGEDY BEFORE WEBSTER

From the 11th century, Dramas written in all parts of the world, specially Greece, Rome and France were conveying the truth and beliefs of their religion to the masses. The miracle or mystery play came into existence where dramas were controlled and performed

2 / NEERAJ : BRITISH POETRY AND DRAMA: 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

by the Church. The performers were the priests. And they use Latin as a medium of language. The plot of the plays were taken from the *Bible* and were totally connected with the religious ethics and policies.

Morality plays were having a purpose of teaching moral but its characters were specific concepts which were not taken from the *Bible* or from the legends of saints. Morality plays were short with Satiric touch. They were less serious in approach.

Both morality and miracle plays attracted the attention of the audience. The moralities had mystical characters and paid more attention to the plot. Comic scenes were introduced to wash away the seriousness of the medieval problem plays. Few examples of morality plays are: *Town Tiler and his Wife*, tragedy and morality in *King Canbyses* and *Apilus and Virginia*, history and morality in *Bales King Johan*.

Medieval and Marlowian Tragedy

Christopher Marlowe is the greatest figure in pre-Shakespearean Drama. His four greatest tragedies: *Tamburlaine*, *Dr. Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta* and *Edward II* shows his marvellous work of literary. His tragedies have one main figure which is possessed with lust for power, beauty and knowledge. He introduced the element of struggle or conflict that makes the individual a hero. His tragedies were based on a moral. He added poetry to the drama. He made new changes in the concept of tragedy writings which were appreciated by the masses. This gave a new shape to the medieval concept of tragedy. The use of poetry excellently to tragedy gave star-shinning to his work. In place of rhyming lines, he introduced and perfected the blank verse. Marlowe hasn't written drama of love. The emotions and sentiments related to love were not his cup of tea. Dr. Faustus's desire for beauty beyond human reach is a form of the soul's desire for power. It is not based on the physical pleasure but to attain which is not possible to achieve with brain. In short, it can be said that Marlowe tragedies are the plays revolve around the one main character. Firstly, the character gets the impossible through his qualities, which causes him sufferings and pains and takes him to his doom.

The Senecan or Horror Tragedy

The Greece and Rome literary master pieces were studied and translated into English in the Elizabethan era. The influence of Seneca predominated on the famous playwrights in England. The first tragedy of Senecan School to written in England is *Gorboduc* or *Ferrax* and *Porrexin* in 1562 of Thomas Sachville and

Thomas Norton. The following are the features which gave rise to the trend of the 'Revenge' theme:

- (a) A lot of images are used with little action and explained narration.
- (b) Crime is the main idea of dramas.
- (c) Chorus is explaining the sequences.
- (d) Monotonous tragedy.
- (e) The motif behind crime is 'Revenge' but finally gets divine punishments for the crime done.

The most popular English tragedy is '*The Spanish Tragedy*' by Kyd in 1587.

SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

Tragedies like – *Othelo*, *Hamlet*, *Kinglear* and *Macbeth* are highly acclaimed literary work of Shakespeare till date in the whole world. His tragedies are the tales of suffering leading to death that are not due to fate but by the irresponsible deeds of the tragic hero. He framed his characters in such a way that his character perform mistakes after mistakes which decide his doom. Shakespearean Tragedy are named 'the apotheosis of the human spirit'. His tragedies are not melancholy but it is soft and courageous. The credit of adding supernatural elements goes to him. Supenatural creatures like ghosts, and witches are introduced in the tragedy closely connected the character. He hasn't done any poetic justice in his literary work of drama. Both Elizabethan and James I periods witnessed the fine work of Shakespeare.

JOHN WEBSTER: A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

He gained a respectable place in the English literary work with few work of his. Not much is known about him. He may be the son of Johannes Webster and was recorded to have been admitted to the Middle temple in 1598. His way of tragedy is little different from Shakespeare as his tragedy is individual whereas Webster's tragedy is social and the characters are portraying, the Webster's concept of life. His works *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* show a great knowledge of human character and keen sense of problematic issues of human life. "An act can disturb human's happiness and life because it was a sin, but actually a interference in the laws of God who created man." This is what he believes and wrote in all his dramas keeping it as a moral of the tragedies. Webster had a view that neither sins nor sinful person could escape punishment.

He was immensely appreciated by the Romantics. David Cecil once praised him with the words by saying that he was a child of his age where he introduce new

set of values in his work. Webster sees life as good and evil. He was a religious person and believes in its morality. He sees the world as a corrupt place where it is not necessary that every beautiful thing brings happiness, it can be evil with snare or a delusion. He was praised by Ford who describe him:

*Crown him a poet, whom Rome, nor Greece,
Transcend in all theirs, for a master-peace.*

He took the couplet from *The Duchess of Malfi* which printed in 1623.

Literary Achievements of John Webster and His Age and Influences

His career of literary work and achievements started from 1602. He even collaborated with Heywood, Middleton, Marston and especially Dekker. His two greatest work of all time were produced between 1611 and 1614. As per Vaughan, his literary activity divides into three periods.

First Period : Collaboration and Apprenticeship (1602-1607)

He did not produced independent work as he was in collaboration with Middleton and others in writing of two plays *Caesar's Fall* and *The Two Harpes* which do not exist today. He wrote '*Lady Jane*' in collaboration with Dekker, Heywood and Wentworth. In 1607 he had produced two citizen comedies, *Westward Hoe* and *North-ward Hoe* in collaboration with Dekker.

Second Period : Two Great Tragedies – Achievements

He produces his original and world famous works between (1610-1619). These works were, '*The White Devil or Vittoria Corombona and The Duchess of Malfi* (1612) and it was first staged in 1614 by the *King's Men*, Shakespeare's *Company*. It firmly established him as a genius dramatist. Both these plays are based on the material drawn from the court-life of Italy. He framed a character named Vittoria who is actually the White Devil. She is fascinating, beautiful and brainy. He crafted her on the basis of an idiom 'beauty with brain' which is a rare combination. She is courageous enough to face desperate situations. She knows how to defend herself by using her own effects of beauty and sex appeal. Here, Webster set her meet her fate that is death due to her sinful acts throughout her life. Her last words are: "My soul, like to a ship in a blank storm, Is driven, I know not whither". In *The Duchess of Malfi* again a female character was framed who did crime on the basis of morality. It is because her brothers didn't approve of her life partner who was a steward. She took revenge in sobre manner and was innocent and good by nature.

Third Period : Tragic-Comedies

Total five plays were produced by Webster out of which only three could survive. The two last ones are *The Guise* and *Late Murther of the Bonne upon the Mother*. They were written in union with Ford and published in 1624. But none of the plays could reach the heights of excellence like his two master pieces: *The White Devil* and *The Duches of Malfi*. He composed a number of poems, an Elegy and a Pageant.

JOHN WEBSTER AND HIS WORKS

Chronology:

A. Writings of John Webster:

1. *The White Devil* published in 1612.
2. *The Duchess of Malfi*, performed in 1614 and published in 1623.
3. *The Devil's Law Case*, staged in 1620 and 1623.

B. Partly by Webster:

4. *The Malcontene* collaborated with Marston.
5. *The Famous History* of Sir Thomas Wyattcollaborated with Dekker.

6. North-Ward Hoe collaborated with Dekker.

7. A Cure for Cuckold collaborated with Rowley.

8. Appius and Virginia collaborated with Heywood.

C. Plays conjectured to be that of Webster:

1. The Weakest Goeth to the Wall.

2. The Thracian Wonder.

3. Additions to the Spanish Tragedy.

4. The Revenger's Tragedy.

5. Anything for a Quiet life.

6. The Faire Maide of the Inne.

D. Lost Plays:

1. Caesar's Will.

2. Christmas Comes but Once a Year.

3. The Guise.

4. The Late Murder of Whitechapel.

E. Non-Dramatic Writings

1. Commendatory verses to Munday's Translation of Palmer in England.

2. Ode Prefixed to Harrisons' Arch's of Triumph.

3. Commendatory verses prefixed to Heywood's Apology for Actors.

4. New characters of several persons, in several qualities.

5. A Monumental Column.

6. Monuments of Honour.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. What do you understand by the term Jacobean Drama?

Ans. Jacobean Drama became famous in the reign of King James I. The changing taste of the society expected real characters and traits in the dramas. The satirical presentation of Drama in the Elizabethan Age led by Shakespeare gave the real picture of the society to the audience. The common theme or plot of Jacobean Drama were sufferings of the individuals, lust of power, fateful death, sinful activities, sickness, corruption, revenge and crime, etc. Some of the famous Jacobian dramatists are: John Webster, Ben Johnson, Thomas Middleton, Shakespeare, etc. The dramas are generally tragedian with ultimate fate of death. The dramas were full of gruesome crimes with barbaric ends. Seneca and Machilavelli influenced the Drama of this age. The plot of revenge was inspired from Seneca's work. Some dramatists introduced an individual as one-man hero in their dramas and gave them qualities and course of life which they themselves believe in. Marlowe, Kyd and Shakespeare contributed into the immense success of Jacobean Drama. Shakespeare added the element of supernatural creatures in order to give new touch to the literary writing for the audience. The one-hero concept was added by Webster which is directly influenced from the common man of society. Webster and other people of society believe in the ethics of religion where every act in life is categorised on the basis of good and evil.

Jacobean Drama throws light on the human's morality and vision of life. Webster's writing of this period makes the world a tragic place to live in. The new set of values were introduced in Jacobean Drama Age. That ideology were based upon the theory of domination of evil over good.

Jacobean Dramas were spectacular and attracted audiences to the theatre. The audience relates their lives to the plots of the dramas where a great individual having to face downfall because of a central error and his fate. Some plays have both elements like tragedy and comedy. Comedy scenes were introduced in the plays to lesser down the pains and sufferings of the serious scenes.

Jacobean Drama is the dark form of drama which show a cynical and pessimistic outlook of like.

Q. 2. What do you think is the origin of Tragedy?

Ans. Tragedy requires a tragic hero who generally performs deeds after which the hero luck suffers a decline and resulted to death. The tragedy is a mixed composition of corrupt characters mingled with feeling of power, lust and domination. These qualities have become his ambition. Tragedy often includes satirical comedies showing the hypocrisy of society. It is a

dramatic poem or play in native language and mostly ends with unhappy endings.

Italy and Rome influenced the early Elizabethan tragedies to write exciting and interesting work. So it can be said that English literary contributors got influenced from them and framed their works totally inspired from their master pieces. Their master pieces were started studying and translated into English. The whole credit goes to them. The influence of Seneca was already dominated in the Elizabethan Age. The early playwrights like Kyd, Marlowe and Shakespeare introduced the plot of revenge. Revenge as a theme is the birth of Seneca. The playwrights gave birth to new concepts and values by mentioning and explaining them in their dramas Seneca's plays were mostly based on Greek mythological stories and showcased formal characteristics of Greek drama. Seneca provided the model of tragedy to the dramatists in England.

Q. 3. Name some of the prominent Jacobean dramatists and attempt critical analysis of their works.

Ans. Some of the prominent Jacobean dramatists are:

- (a) Shakespeare
- (b) John Webster
- (c) Christopher Marlowe

Critical Analysis of Shakespeare work: His work is highly acceptable and acclaimed by the world. He has a habit of introducing a character in the drama which suffers a lot, struggles endlessly and approached his death due to his error making nature. One can easily related oneself with his characters. Although his dramas were not totally gloomy but soothe the society. His characters perform comedy but satirically. He introduced supernatural elements in his dramas which are always closely knitted to the characters. People in those days were extremely superstitious so he wanted the society to relate the character with themselves. Comedy scenes were added to release their sad emotions for the characters. Comedy was taken into consideration to give something new to the audience in this era and people enjoyed the twist. The use of poetry in the dramas was limited. This makes him different in writing from others. Even Webster followed this and gained success in Post-Shakespearean Era. His revenge theme in *Hamlet* and *Ghosts of Prince of Denmark* has bombastic speeches and are totally the style of the playwright Seneca. Shakespeare was successful in combining native and classical strains. His dramas are the best examples of