

The Heroic Tragedy

Heroic Tragedy is a name given to the form of tragedy which had some vogue in the beginning of the Restoration period (1660-1700). It was drama in the epic mode – grand, rhetorical and declamatory at its best and often bombastic at its worst. Its themes were love and honour, and it was considerably influenced by French classical drama, especially by the works of Corneille and Racine. John Dryden thus defined it in the preface to *The Conquest of Granada* (1672) : “ An heroic play ought to be an imitation, in little, of an heroic poem ; and consequently ... love and valour ought to be the subject of it”. In these plays, as in an epic, the protagonist is a large-scale warrior whose actions involve the fate of an empire. A noble hero and an equally noble heroine are typically placed in a situation in which their passionate love is in conflict with the demands of honour and with the hero’s patriotic duty to his country. When the conflict ends in a disaster, the effect is a tragedy.

Heroic drama was staged in a spectacular and operatic fashion, and in it one can detect the influences of opera which, at this time, was establishing itself. The two main early works of this genre were *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656) and *The Spaniards in Peru* (1658) by Sir William Davenant who was virtually the pioneer of English opera and who promoted heroic drama. The main plays thereafter were Robert Howard’s *The Indian Queen* (1665) and those by Dryden. This kind of tragedy was satirized and burlesqued by Buckingham in *The Rehearsal* (1672) and much later again by Sheridan in 1779. Heroic drama was initially written in closed heroic couplet, and later in blank verse.

John Dryden (1631 – 1700) was the chief exponent of this dramatic form. *The Indian Emperor* (1665), *Tyrannick Love* (1669), *The Conquest of Granada* (1669-1670) and *Aureng-zebe* (1675) are his important works in heroic couplet. Being in course of time weary of “ his long-loved mistress, Rime,” as “ Passion’s too fierce to be in fetters bound, / And Nature flies him like enchanted ground”, he replaced heroic couplet with blank verse. His play, *All for Love or The World Well Lost* (1678) written in blank verse on the theme of Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* is considered to be his dramatic masterpiece. Although it was a daring thing to attempt what Shakespeare had already done, he did not copy it despite following Shakespeare very closely. His play is of distinctly different nature and high merit – his characters are well-drawn and vivid, and the style ,though not as forceful as Shakespeare’s, is grand and restrained. After the Revolution, he wrote *Don Sebastian* (1690), *Cleomenes* (1692) and *Love Triumphant* (1694). The last was a tragic-comedy and a failure, being of far less merit than the kind of Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*. And the other two were average and not attractive like *All for Love*. At various stages of his career, he attempted, in collaboration with Nathaniel Lee, to improve upon Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and *Troilus and Cressida* with results as lamentable as they were sure to be.

Thomas Otway (1651-85) is another name in the field of Heroic tragedy. His first play, *Alcibiades* was staged in 1675, and this play was followed by *Don Carlos* (1676), *The Orphan* (1680) and *Venice Preserv’d* (1682), the last one being his masterpiece. Although Otway came out with a heroic play in *Don Carlos*, its reputation was feeble. *The Orphan* was successful, and it struck the note of deep pathos, characteristic of Otway. The play has a calmness of tone and lacks in heroic rants. Otway’s finest work was *Venice Preserv’d* , a tragedy written on a grander scale than *The Orphan*. The characters are handled adroitly, especially those of Jaffier and Pierre. The play has rugged and sombre force, and reveals the playwright’s considerable skill

in writing out high drama. In the opinion of an authority on the drama, the play has been revived more often than any play outside Shakespeare's – an undeniable proof of its dramatic qualities.

The next name worthy of mention is Nathaniel Lee (1653 ? – 92) . In spite of the fact that Lee who had an unbalanced nature and whose short existence on earth was darkened by mental troubles and hastened by the excesses he committed does not preclude him from being admired as a Romanticist, remarkable for the individuality of his soul. He was a belated Elizabethan, inspired by the spirit of heroic tragedy. He wrote in blank verse, unusually indeed. Of his many tragedies, some important works are Nero (1674), Sophonisba (1676), The Rival Queens (1677) and Mithridates (1678). He also collaborated with Dryden in the production of two plays. In his own time, Lee's name became a byword to distinguish a kind of wild, raving style, which, in part at least , seems to have been a product of madness. But when he is tranquil, he writes brilliantly . He has a command of deep pathos, and all through his work he has touches of real poetic quality.

John Crowne (c. 1640 – 1703?) was a voluminous playwright whose best known works are Caligula (1698), a heroic tragedy, and Thyestes (1681) also a heroic tragedy ,though written in blank verse. Crowne also wrote a comedy , Sir Courtly Nice (1685) which received good appreciation from the viewers, if not from the critics. Crowne was an average Restoration dramatist. The plays show some talent and a fair amount of skill in versification.

Nicholas Rowe (1674 – 1718) who, during his lifetime, was a person of eminence and who became Poet Laureate in 1715 wrote a number of heroic plays. The best known among them are Tamerlane (1702), The Fair Penitent (1703) and the popular Jane Shore (1714). Johnson says of him , “ His reputation comes from the reasonableness of some of his scenes, the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse.”

The Heroic Tragedy, an important genre of the form, occupies a silver shelf in the literary history of England. Although the *Mount Shakespeare* stood out overlooking the field, the dramatists could produce some works like *All for Love* and *Venice Preserved* which are still read with avid interest. The tragical faculty was dwindling all through the period *down the Shakespeare Lane* with characters becoming more stagy and situations acquiring the taint of horror more and more. This is an age of experiment though marked by a decline from the Shakespearian flight.

Latin influence

Latin influence on English language is perhaps the most important of all the foreign contributions that have enriched the English tongue. Latin contribution to English started long before the Anglo Saxons had come over to England. Latin influence on English language may be studied through three stages, the Pre-Christian stage, the Christianization stage and the Renaissance stage.

Pre-Christian Stage - Contact with the Roman Empire during several centuries had introduced the Germanic tribes to a number of Latin words before the Anglo-Saxons invaded England. To this early period, while the Anglo Saxons were still living on the continent, belongs the first category of Latin influence on English. This may be called the Pre-Christian period. These words were mostly related to military, governmental and trading terms, or names of materials new to the Germanic people. These words were related to commerce and travel (such as wine, cheap, mint, inch, and street), art of cooking (cook, kitchen, and mill), vessels and receptacles (chest, dish), plants and fruits (pear, peach, pea, pepper, and plum). The study of these words shows that these were short, concrete ones, picked up orally and easily assimilated. In their barbaric simplicity, the Germanic people had borrowed only these practical words. The big words form the bulk of later loans.

Interestingly, even before the formal introduction of Christianity, several Christian words had seeped into Anglo-Saxon vocabulary from Latin. The earliest loan words belonging to this sphere were church, minster, devil and angel, all coming from Greek.

Christianization Stage - A considerable number of new ideas and things were borrowed by the English with the introduction of Christianity into England at the end of the sixth century. The English borrowed the names of church dignitaries like Pope, archbishop, provost, disciple, etc. Besides, other Christian words were also introduced such as shrine, cowl, pall, mass, offer, altar, anthem, martyr etc. According to A. C. Baugh, "The Latin element of the second period was not only extensive but thorough, and makes the real beginning of the English habit of freely incorporating foreign elements into its vocabulary."

The second stage continued through the Middle Ages, mainly in the spheres of religion (e.g., incarnate, pulpit, rosary), law (e.g., legal, prosecute, custody), medicine (e.g., lunatic, ulcer) and alchemy, literary terms (e.g., allegory, ornate, simile) and a number of abstract nouns.

Renaissance Stage - The re-birth of classical scholarship, especially during the period 1550-1600, led to the enrichment of English language by a multitude of words derived from the classical languages which exercised great influence on the English tongue. The words, belonging to the third stage of Latin influence on the English language, embody abstract and scientific terms and ideas. These were adopted exclusively through the medium of writing. These words include words of Greek origin as well were words mixed up with the French loans, because French language was also under the classical influence.

Latin Influence on the English Vocabulary

a) Combined French and Latin Influences: Many words were borrowed may be due to either French or Latin such as grave, gravity, solid, position etc.

b) Latinized French Words: Many French words, already borrowed by the English, were now Latinized. For instance, "perfet" and "verdit" (Middle English French loans) were changed to "perfect and verdict by addition of "c", following the Latin rule. Similarly, "avis" and "aventure" changed to "advice" and "adventure", "Avril" changed to "April" and "langage" changed to "language".

c) French and Latin Loans existing side by side: In some cases, French and Latin forms co-exist, more or less differentiated in meaning. For example, complaisance (politeness) and complacency (self-satisfaction).

d) French Words and Latin Derivatives: French loans and their Latinized derivatives often have difference in vowel and/or consonant sounds. E.g., colour and discolouration, example and exemplary, machine and machination.

e) Pronunciation: Many words are used in English, which do not conform to rules of classical pronunciation or meaning. E.g., Lat. Propagate (stress on “pa”) and Eng. Propagate (stress on “Pro”), Lat. Enormis (irregular), Eng. Enormous (very large) etc.

f) Modern Coinages (Pseudo-Classical Words): In spite of adoption of many classical words, a number of new words were coined with Latin and Greek roots, more or less similar to Classical conventions in the field of science, art and culture. For instance, fixation, primal, climactic, classicism, realism, florist, scientist, eventual, fragmental etc.

g) Quasi-Classical Words: Many words were formed by authors on incorrect classical basis but these words were not used later by others. For example, Vocular examinations (Dickens), Andrometer (Tennyson) etc.

h) Hybrids: Latin influence on English language was also responsible for the origin of hybrids with Latin or Greek suffixes and prefixes. For instance: starvation, womanize, re-birth, inter-change etc

There are both advantages and disadvantages of Latin influence on English language. In Fact, the advantages and disadvantages are quite related to each other, more like two sides of the same coin.

Advantages: The Latin influence accounts for the huge increase of English vocabulary through loans, coinages and hybridization. Most of these words fill the gap in the native stock of words, especially in case of abstract nouns and adjectives. Additionally, the loan words have increased the synonyms which help in expressing subtle shades of meaning. The use of Latin words and expressions add sonority and gravity to English sentence.

Disadvantages: The large-scale borrowing of classical words has stunted the growth of native English considerably. Many of the borrowings sound superfluous and inharmonious to English tongue. For instance, English native coinage “birth-day” sound far better than Latin “natal day”. Many of the synonyms are purposeless. If these Latin words are not used with linguistic precision or competence, they end up making the language meaningless and bombastic. Tendencies like malapropism (mistake in using words), Johnsonese (unnecessary jargon) and Jouralese (undue sensationalism) crop up with over-use and abuse of Latin expressions. These words are neither universal nor democratic.

To conclude, we may say that Latin influence on English language had been a significant one but its benefits are clouded by its disadvantages. It is a help for the erudite and learned scholar but turns into a hurdle in the hands of the uninitiated and common speaker.

1. Why Old English Period is called Anglo -Saxon Period?

Ans. The Angles , Saxon and Jutes are the three Teutonic or Germanic tribe , who attacked England in 5th century A.D and settled there permanently .By their names the period is called Anglo -Saxon Period.

2. When and who fought battle of Hastings?

Ans. In 1066, The Battle of Hastings was fought between William, duke of Normandy, and Harold II of England.

3. What were the major prose of King Alfred?

Ans. 1. The History of the World

2. Consolation of Philosophy

3. Ecclesiastical History

4. Pastoral Care

4. Who were the major War Poets?

Ans. Major 'War Poets' are Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon, David Jones, Ivor Gurney, Rupert Brooke, Edward Thomas, and Isaac Rosenberg.

Account for and illustrate the elegiac elements and note of melancholy in O.E. lyrics.

OR

Write a note on O.E. elegies.

Ans. In the OE period a group of elegiac poems (like "*The Wanderer*", "*The Seafarer*", "*Wife's Lament*", "*Husband's Message*" and few others, all appearing in the Exeter Book,) brought the elegiac note to its highest. These poems are meditative in character, reflective, subjective, thereby much lyrical. These monologous lyrics bear the characteristics of elegies in their subjective note and pensive outlook. What really distinguishes them from the earlier Pagan heroic poems is their intensely personal note.

"*The Wanderer*" and "*The Seafarer*" are the finer artistic compositions, reaching real heights of sincere personal feeling. "*The Wanderer*" show a lordless disciple in search of a new lord. He laments over the nothingness and decay of earthly glory and beauty. The poem offers a universal note that suffering "*fills the realm of the earth*". So the wanderer goes on seeking mercy and comfort from the Almighty Father in heaven. In a lyrical pitch, it thus movingly expresses Christian consolation.

"*The Seafarer*" is a superb dramatic lyric with much melancholy, where regret and self-pity are interfused. In this monologue, the old mariner remembers how –

*"Wretched I ranged the winter through,
Bare of joys and banished from friends*

Hung with icicles, stung by hailstones" At the same time, he also calls up the fascination of the life at sea. Of all counterparts, the poem is most original and modern in its sentiment. This poem must have influences on Byron, Tennyson, Newbolt, Kipling or in the modern pomes like "*Seafarer*" of John Masefield.

The dramatic monologue, "*Wife's Lament*" narrates the story of a languishing wife, forced to live in a forest separate from her husband. We've a fine expression of her poignant feelings of grief:

*"I was banished to this knoll knotted by woods.
To live in a den dug beneath an oak.*

Old is thin earthen room; it eats at my heart." She passionately longs for her husband. In a summer day, she dreams of her beloved and imagines him sitting "under the overhanging cliff, over-frosted by the storm".

A sequel to it is "*Husband's Message*", another dramatic monologue dealing with love. Through the use of 'prosopopeia', a piece of wood is here made to speak on behalf of the husband. He is an exile, who, through this wood, reminds his wife of his promises and explains how they were separated. Lastly, he makes a rapturous exhortation to her to join him across the sea. There is, however, not much melancholy.

"*The Ruin*" expresses no personal sorrow of a fictitious speaker. It is an epic description of ruin and decay of a city, probably Bath, "*Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe long ago*". "*Deor's Lament*" is a Saxon scop's lamentation over his present supplanted state, shorn of glory. He finds consolation in the all pervading transitoriness: "*His sorrow passed away, so will mine*". "Solomon and Saturn" mourns the same transitoriness: "*A little while the leaves are green;*

then, afterwards, they fade, they fall to earth,

and rot away, they turn to dust"

"*Wulf and Eadwacer*" is

the passionate yearning of a captive lady for her lover. It is unique for its extra-marital love-affair and passionate sex intrigue.

Old English prose writer to King Alfred's contribution.

Anglo-Saxon prose came as a pleasant relief from the complication of the archaic poetry of the age. Unlikely prose was rather modern and simple. Beside its striking similarity to modern English, it showed its great national appearance as the most dominant of its two specific features. With the start in the form of some laws, moral codes and historical records, it first showed some literary merit in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. But the real development took place during the reign of King Alfred. He turned it into the first connected history of a western nation, in a language, distinct from that of the modern age.

There can really be little objection to the claim frequently made for him that he is the father of English prose. He himself tells us in the preface to the "Pastoral Care" that he began his series of translations due to the lamentable state of English learning. It was largely the result of the depredations of the Danes. Even the knowledge of Latin was declining; so the king, i.e. Alfred, in order to encourage learning among the clergy, translated some popular books into his own tongue. But his real contribution was far more books.

Sometimes he translated word for word; at others more freely. Those passages which have the greatest value either for understanding the king or for their literary qualities are no less original, freely introduced by way of explanation or expansion. His important translations were "Pastoral Care" "History of the World" "Ecclesiastical History" (of Bede), "Consolation of Philosophy" "The Soliloquies" "Handbook" etc. But Alfred's claim to the translation of Bede is rather disputed.

However, Alfred's style is not a polished one. To defend, one can say, it was only the stage of development of prose as a literary form. For the most part, his is a simple straightforward style with no complete mastery over it, Alfred was an artist of considerable natural ability, we can feel "The Anglo Saxon Chronicle" was in all probability inspired by Alfred. He himself might have well dictated some of the entries, more particularly those dealing with his own campaigns. It's extant in several manuscripts. Local events and miscellaneous items are introduced into the various versions. They also exhibit clearly varying points of view in their attitude to events.

As it is to be expected, the style varies greatly from simple notices to long passages of narrative and description. But the most interesting are certain character studies, particularly that of the conqueror himself. The well-known descriptions of the horrors of Stephen's reign are worth noting.

Aelfric and Wulfstan are the other distinct figures in the respect. The grammar-fanatic, Aelfric was a churchman. Several of his works are extant Catholic two series of sermons suitable for delivery by priests, and a third series "The Lives of the Saints" He translated from scriptures. Aelfric's flowing and vigorous style shows remarkable skill in the art of putting complicated thought into narrative form. It is as natural, and is often alliterative.

Wulfstan was also a church figure several of his signed homilies survive. There are many more which are believed on good evidence to be by him. His most famous is "The Sermo Lupi ad Anglos". It is typical for its sheer force and vigour, its repetition of ideas, and the alliterative nature of its style. It is fluent and powerful-indeed, Wulfstan must have been a most brilliant preacher.

Discuss about the Old English Poetry.

Anglo-Saxon Heroic Poetry is a narrative verse that is elevated in mood and uses a dignified, dramatic and formal style to describe the deeds of aristocratic warriors and rulers. It is usually composed without the aid of writing and is chanted or recited with the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. The heroic poetry can be considered to be the mirror of the contemporary conventions and ideas of a society as well as temperament of a particular community. So, Anglo-Saxon literature frequently look up the theme of fights and hostilities in which the nobility of a character was brought out through the display of courage, valour, loyalty to the lord and the community and a thirst for glory. The heroic poetries of the Anglo-Saxon period are *Beowulf*, *Widsith*, *Waldere*, *The Fight at Finnsburh*, *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Battle of Maldon*.

1. Beowulf: It is one of the earliest sagas of the world and probably the only extant epic poem written in an ancient Germanic language. Structurally, the poem is divided into two parts. In the first part we have Beowulf's fight with the monster Grendel which is followed by another combat with Grendel's mother. In both these struggles Beowulf emerges victorious. The second part however takes place fifty years later, when Beowulf is the ruler of the Geatas. He fights a fierce fire dragon, slays it, but he himself is mortally wounded in the struggle. The ends with an account of Beowulf's funeral amid the lamentations of his warriors. The poem lacks larger epic conception of the *Odyssey* or even the finer polish of *Aeneid*. But the poem throws a splendid light on the way of living in those days. It carries us successfully ours a splendid into the heroic world where the men of rank were received and dismissed with great courtesy, the rulers were generous in handling out gifts and they were loyal. We also come to know that, Hearst, the large hall of King Hrothgar was the center of singing and merriment, ceremonial talk and elaborate rituals. The underlying message of the poem is the sense of shortness of life and the parking away of the fame that a man leaves behind all the things except the fame that a man leaves behind.

2. Widsith: This is preserved in the Exeter Book. It consists of 143 lines and was probably written before the Anglo-Saxons migrated to England. It was probably re-written in the 7th or early 8th century. Though not exactly an epic poem, Widsith is the song of a wandering minstrel who tells the stories of the heroes and rulers he has known. The poem is of special importance from a historical point of view, but poetically it is of little merit.

3. Waldere: This consists of two fragments of 63 lines in all. It tells the story of Hildegund and Walter who while escaping from imprisonment by Attila the Hun, are attacked by the King of the Franks and his followers including Hagen. The poem ends on a happy note as they are finally married. The first fragment is part of a speech by Hildegund encouraging Walter and the second one contains the end of a speech, probably by Gunther, and Walter's reply to it. Both fragments ring with the spirit of undaunted heroism. The manuscript is preserved in the Royal library of Copenhagen.

4. The Fight at Finnsburh: This is a hopelessly mutilated poem of 48 lines describing a fight at Finnsburh. The manuscript is now lost. The fragment deals with the treacherous attack made by Finn upon his Danish guests. Critics are troubled by the inconsistency between this story and that of Finn as told in *Beowulf*. The fragmentary poem is nevertheless impressive in grandeur.

5. The Battle of Brunanburh: This is included in four manuscripts of **The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle**. It celebrates the victory of Athelstan, King of Wessex and Mercia, against Constantine, the King of the Scots and his allies, the Welsh and the Danes in 935 at Brunanburh, the site of which remains unknown. The poem is heroic in spirit and rings with a highly patriotic note. It is full of savage irony directed at the fleeing invaders. Tennyson's translation of the poem is well-known. However, it fails to create any great impact.

6. The Battle of Maldon: It describes the battle between the English and the Danes fought at Maldon in Essex in 991 A. D. The invading army which was separated by a river was allowed by the magnanimous 'English chief Byrthnoth to cross over, and the English were completely defeated by the Danes. The vanquished rise to heights of heroism, making the poem more heroic in spirit than any other Anglo-Saxon poem. The manuscript was destroyed in the fire in the Cotton Library in 1731, and the poem survives only in a transcript.

Restoration Comedy of Manners: Defining and Expanding

Introduction: During the Restoration period the chief dramatic mode was comedy. In spite of the prohibition of play acting during the commonwealth, comedy had still been performed from time to time, chiefly in the form of droll. Immediately after the Restoration, there was an eager recurrence to the Johnsonian tradition which is evident in 'The Cheats' by Wilson. The comedy of intrigue did not win popularity until the 18th century. Many of Restoration comedies contain the element of intrigue.

The Comedy of Manners: The comedy of manners has made the restoration rich in drama. The skeleton of this type was however, produced much earlier but it found a rich flowering in the hand of **Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar**. 'Manners' means a quality acquired by a person from free social intercourse with cultivated men and women. The Comedy of Manner always seeks to give a real picture of one section of contemporary life, high in social stature with all its sophistication, conversation and an emphasis on careless gaiety. The purpose of this comedy is to give a criticism of social life with skilful satiric touches. The successes of comedy of manners depend on the dramatists' capacity to present the unemotional treatment of sex. It is rich with wit and satire and gives the image of the time. The heroine is more important and interesting than the hero in a comedy of manners. The hero of this type of comedy is well born, well dressed and capable of contest of wit. The heroine too, is a paradox of virtues and affectations, and is as self-possessed and witty as her male opponent. They are surrounded by a set of fools, wits, half-wits, who carelessly laugh at social and moral codes. The Restoration comedy of manners aimed at presenting the life of the age. But in doing this, it overstepped the bounds of decency.

Sir George Etherege (1635-91): The first comedian of manners is Sir George Etherege. He has left three comedies- 'Love in a Tub', 'She would if She could' and 'The Man & mode' which represents the first true comedy of manners. It deals with a particular type of people who seem to live upon the surface of life. The poet is slight. The dialogue is full of speaking wit. Etherege was concerned with moral and not with manner. His plays carry none of the social criticism implicit in the comedy of

molier. He is important historically as having helped to set the mode of Restoration comedy.

William Wycherley (1640-1715): Wycherley remoulds the comedy of intrigue and the comedy of manner into a refreshing original type. His fame depends on his four comedies, 'Love in a wood', 'The Gentlemen Dancing Master', 'the country wife' and 'The plain Dealer'. These plays are extremely witty with all their coarseness. Wycherley impresses the reader by sheer Vehemence of language and the energy of characterization. He has the first satirical power of Johnson. The atmosphere of 'The plain Dealer' is that of the puritan rather than the Restoration comedy of manners.

William Congreve (1670-1729): Congreve once took the comedy of manner to its proper channel. He wrote five comedies '**The old Bachelor**', '**The way of the world**' etc. Of these, '**The way of the world**' is considered the flower of Restoration comedy. The plot of the comedy is developed skillfully and love scenes between Mirabelle and Millamant have been treated with tenderness and sensitivity. The construction and grasp of characters he steadily improve with each play. But from the very first he showed his capacity for height and witty dialogue. In 'The way of the world', Congreve deals with a serious theme of sexual relationship through a variety of characters and situations. He shows the affections and conspiracies and sexual hypocrisies of the age, but there is true love between Millamant and Mirabelle. The proviso scene shows his wife and rational attitude to love and marriage. Here also we find the strength of newly developed English prose.

Sir John Vanbrugh (1661-1726): Vanbrugh and Farquhar kept of sparkling alive something of the spirit Restoration comedy of manners after Congreve. Vanbrugh wrote mainly three comedies – '**the Relapse**', '**The Provoked wife**' and '**The Confederacy**'. Vanbrugh's plays lack the art and elegance of Congreve's but they are full of energy and genial humour. In construction, characterization and dialogue his plays are admirable and he has a sheer genius for farcical situations.

George Farquhar (1678-1707): Farquhar wrote seven plays which bear upon them the imprint of his good humoured, happy-go-lucky personality. His best work is contained in his last two plays, '**The Recruiting officer**', '**The Beaux**

Stratagem'. The last play spiritually is unflagging is its human and there an open air atmosphere about his work that give it a distinctive place in the Restoration drama.

Conclusion: It has however to be admitted that the society that the Restoration comedies mirrored was itself dilettantes. If we condemn the society of the Restoration court, we cannot condemn the dramatists of the period. There are is an air of abandon and immorality in these comedies which overstep the bounds of decency and good taste. But these plays possess the gift of lengthen and that gift was particularly refreshing in the face of rising sentimental and moral movement. The brilliant wit, the bright dialogue and hilarious languets it produced are of enduring interest of all lovers of literature. More over Restoration comedies have to be studied not in the light of present day theories blights but in the spirit of the age in which they were written. The Restoration comedies give a true picture of their society their portraits of gallants and belles are true to life.

Scandinavian Influence

“An Englishman cannot thrive, be ill or die without Scandinavian words; they are to the language what bread and eggs are to the daily fare.”
-Otto Jespersen

In connection with his observation on the democratic nature of the Scandinavian influence on the English language, Jespersen refers to the kingship existing between the two tongues- English and Scandinavian. The Old English language was a purely Teutonic language and had few foreign elements. Towards the end of the eighth century near about 790, bands of Norse invaders attacked and plundered the east coast and finally established a few settlements there. The Scandinavians (Danes and Norwegians) eventually became a great influence on the language of the land.

The Scandinavian (*Scandinavia, today's Norway, Sweden and Denmark: Scandinavian invaders are known as Vikings; This Viking Age, which took place roughly from the 8th to the 11th centuries when Norse seafarers and settlers from what is now Scandinavia came to England.*) colonization of the British Isles had a considerable effect on the English language and vocabulary, as well as culture. The Scandinavians, originating from Denmark, Norway and Sweden, were once neighbours of the Anglo-Saxons and shared the same ancestors, thus being closely related to them in language and culture.

The Scandinavian and the English words existed side by side for a long time. It is quite interesting to study the effects of linguistic co-existence. In course of time, such an existence is found to have a five-fold consequence.

In the first place, in some cases, both of the forms, the English and the Scandinavian survive, with a slight difference in meaning such as-

English	Scandinavian
No	Nay
From	Fro

In the second place, the Scandinavian form survives in dialects only and the English in the literary languages, such as,

English	Scandinavian
Leap	Loup
Mouth	Mun

In the third place, the native form has superseded the Scandinavian and survived as seen in the following cases-

English	Scandinavian
Fish	Fisk
Naked	Naken

In the fourth place, the Scandinavian words have survived supplanting the native forms, such as-

English	Scandinavian
Yete	Get
Yive	Give

In the fifth place, in some cases, the old native forms have survived, but they have adopted the significance of the corresponding Scandinavian word. In fact, a sort of sense shifting from the Scandinavian words to the native place. Thus, the present meaning of 'earl' has come from and Old Norse 'jarl'.

There exist a large number of places that bear Scandinavian names. More than 600 places in English have names ending in -"by" which is a clear evidence of Scandinavian influence. Numerous examples can be cited: Grimsby, Whitby, and Derby, Rugby etc. (the Danish word -'by' means town or farm Names like Althorp, Bishopsthorpe, Linthrope contain the Scandinavian word 'thorp' which means village. Similarly we have Applethwaite, Braithwaite, Langthwaite, thwaite meaning an isolated piece of land' while Brimtoft, Eastoft, and Nortoft ending in 'toft' meaning a piece of ground. Such examples can easily be multiplied. A similar influence is observed in the case of personal names ending in "-son" such as Gibson, Thomson, Johnson, etc.

The Scandinavian influence upon the English language is profound. Enormous similarity is found between these two languages in nouns like 'man', 'wife', 'father', 'folk', 'mother', 'house', 'life', 'winter', 'summer'; verbs like 'will', 'can', 'meet', 'come', 'bring', 'hear', 'see', 'think', 'smile', 'ride', 'spin'; and adjectives and adverbs like 'full', 'wise', 'better', 'best', 'mine', 'over' and 'under'. In addition, very interesting to note that when we work with Scandinavian loan words, the word 'loan' itself seems to declare its descent from the Scandinavian.

Though the Scandinavians were not very superior in architecture or cooking, some words were adopted by the English, for instances window, steak and knife. Interestingly, the Scandinavian influence was more pronounced in matters of everyday use. Here is a specimen of common words in English that owe their origin to the language of the Scandinavians: bank, birth, bull, dirt, egg, gap, kid, link, race, skirt, sister, window, low, meek, rotten, shy, tight, weak, bait, crawl, dig, gape, kindle, lift, screech, thrust, they, their, then, aloft, athwart and many more. Or like:

Nouns: "sky", "egg", "law", "leg", "knife", "window", "skin", "husband", "fellow", "sister", and "want".

Verbs: "get", "eat", "call", "thrive", "take", "give", "thrust", and "die"

Adjectives: "loose", "ugly", "glad", "meek", "low", "ill", "happy", "rotten", "scant", and "seemly".

Pronouns: "they", "their", "them"

Prepositions: "from", "to", "till"

Conjunctions: "though", "both"

Adverbs: "aye", "ill"

In the case of grammar, many of the pronominal forms like 'they', 'them', 'their' etc are of the Scandinavian origin. The use of the pronouns "they," "their," and "them" instead of the Old English pronouns "hi," "hira," and "him" is due to Scandinavian influence. The use of 'shall', 'will', prepositional use of 'to' 'fro', use of relative clause without any pronoun are due to Scandinavian influence. Old Norse had a significant impact on word order in English sentences. For example, the placement of adjectives before nouns (e.g., "sky-blue" or "dead-end") is thought to have been influenced by Norse.

Some idiomatic expressions and phrases in English have their roots in Norse culture and language. For instance, "take the bull by the horns" is thought to have originated from Norse bullfighting. The pronunciation was also influenced by Old Norse. For instance, the "sk" sound in words like "sky" and "skirt" reflects Old Norse influence. Again, in areas of England where Norse settlement was prominent, such as the Dane law region, the Scandinavian influence on dialects and accents is still noticeable today.

The attempt of the Scandinavians to impose their own Danish law on England is evident from the number of Scandinavian law terms that have entered the language. For instance, "law", "by-law", "thrall", and "crave" are all Scandinavian words. There were many more such words which went out of usage after the Norman Conquest when the French took over the nation and replaced the terms with French loans. As the Scandinavians were superior in military affairs, the English borrowed from them a few words like "orrest" (battle), "lith" (fleet), and "barda" (a type of warship). However, these words also disappeared after the Norman Conquest.

The impact of Scandinavian languages on English is a testament to the dynamic nature of language and how it evolves through contact with other cultures. Today, English is a rich and diverse language that has been shaped by a wide range of influences, including the Scandinavian legacy from the Viking Age. Even though the Scandinavian loans abound in English this is not fair to say that the magnitude of loans affected the native style of English. It is worthwhile to point out that the very Englishness of English remains unaltered even at the face of abundance of Scandinavian loans in English.

SHAKESPEARE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

William Shakespeare is widely regarded as the greatest writer of the English language. Prior to Shakespeare and even during his time, English grammar and the rules of the English language were not fixed. But, once Shakespeare's plays became popular in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, they helped contribute to the standardization of the English language. This was rendered possible particularly through such projects as Samuel Johnson's 'A Dictionary of the English Language' which quoted Shakespeare more than any other writer. Scores of Shakespearean words and phrases became embedded in the English language. Shakespeare expanded the scope of English literature by introducing new words and phrases, experimenting with blank verse, and also by introducing new poetic and grammatical structures.

The first thing that strikes one about Shakespeare's English is that he used many words to mean something else than what they mean to us today. For example, the word 'fantastical' in Shakespeare's plays meant something more along the lines of 'imagined'. This word has positive connotations today, and couldn't be used to describe a murder, unlike '...My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical...' (1.3.138, 'Macbeth').

Shakespeare might have wanted to create language to fit his iambic pentameter style of writing. One way he did this was with 'what say you' and 'what do you say.' (Twelfth Night, 4.2.89; 4.3.31) One has an extra syllable, but both have the same meaning. Another device that he also used was making contractions. Ne'er instead of never, o'er instead of over, are examples of such contractions. It could have easily been a way for Shakespeare to fix up a line and give it the right rhythm and length.

However, the main reason why Shakespeare coined so many new words was to reach a broad audience. His viewers ranged from peasants to royalty. The variations of language that he put forth encompassed many different social classes. He created his characters through the language. He could turn a character into someone vulgar simply through their vocabulary. One such vulgar word was 'now-a-days' used by the grave-digger in 'Hamlet'. Although this is not one of his additions to the English language, it is still a prime example of how he used vocabulary, both in use at the time and new words that he coined, to shape his characters.

Shakespeare's words came largely from manipulation of the current language. He was able to switch words from one part of speech to another part. He turned adjectives into adverbs. He made adjectives into nouns. For example, '...a sudden pale...usurps her cheek...' ('Venus and Adonis'). Other examples are '...say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true...' ('Measure for Measure', 2.4.1283). He made adjectives and nouns into verbs. For example, '...which happies those that pay the willing loan...' (Sonnet IV, line 6.) And, lastly, he made verbs into nouns. An example is '...recounts what horrid sights seen by the watch...' ('Julius Caesar', 2.2.16.) The 'watch' here is used to mean watchmen.

The whole personality of Shakespeare and his varied experiences of life shaped his powerful language. In his writing, we can discern that he was not very enthusiastic about the school systems at the time. His general references to education tell us about that. Instead, he found 'tongues in trees, books in the running brooks.' ('As You Like It', 2.1.18) As a boy, he was more interested in nature. It is probable that he worked as a lawyer's clerk or a page, because he was very well acquainted with courtly speech. He may also have worked as a schoolmaster himself, which could explain his use of Latin to create new words, his knowledge of other languages, and his amazing rhetoric.

Shakespeare was a master not only of words, but of the language itself. His influence on the English language is monumental and he will always remain as an iconic literary figure of all time.

TALE OF WIFE OF BATH

The tale of the Wife of Bath is one of the most famous stories from Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales," a collection of narratives written in Middle English during the late 14th century. The Wife of Bath, Alisoun, is one of the pilgrims traveling to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket.

Alisoun is a bold, opinionated, and worldly woman who has been married five times. She's portrayed as a character who is well-versed in the art of love and relationships, and she uses her experiences to challenge societal norms regarding marriage, gender roles, and authority.

In her tale, the Wife of Bath recounts the story of a knight from King Arthur's court who rapes a young woman. The knight is condemned to death for his crime, but Queen Guinevere intercedes on his behalf and gives him a chance to redeem himself. She presents him with a challenge: he must find out what women most desire within a year and a day, or face execution.

Desperate to save his life, the knight embarks on a quest to find the answer to the queen's question. After much searching and receiving various conflicting answers, he meets an old hag who promises to give him the correct answer in exchange for a favour. The knight agrees, and the old hag reveals that women desire sovereignty over their husbands and lovers, as well as the power to make their own choices.

The knight returns to the court and gives the queen the correct answer. Impressed, the queen pardons him. However, the old hag appears and demands that the knight fulfil his promise to her. Reluctantly, he agrees to marry her.

On their wedding night, the hag gives the knight a choice: she can either be old and ugly but faithful, or young and beautiful but potentially unfaithful. The knight, torn between his options, lets the hag decide. Pleased with his willingness to let her choose, the hag transforms into a beautiful and faithful wife.

The tale of the Wife of Bath is often interpreted as a reflection on the complexities of love, marriage, and gender dynamics. It challenges traditional medieval views on women's roles in society and presents a nuanced exploration of power dynamics within relationships. Through her tale, the Wife of Bath asserts her own agency and challenges the authority of patriarchal norms, making her one of the most memorable characters in Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales."