

XV

(Eng. Hom.)

(2nd Sem.) contribution of Christopher Marlowe ~~(1st Sem.)~~

Christopher Marlowe possessed a supreme quality which enabled him to lift drama into the sphere of high literature. He was a great poet — a lyrical, personal, violently egoistical poet, who carried with him his own ~~of~~ unique conception of man and life and was able to give his audience an impression of greatness, made them tremble with enthusiasm. His plays made the hearts of people swell with a new national pride and his characters are too large to be realistic or convincing; and yet they have the breath of life in them. He was less versatile than the other prominent playwrights of his day and was less able ~~to~~ than they to conceive of multitudinous feelings distinct from his own emotions. He did not have the same capacity as several others had for dramatic construction and for writing supple and nimble dialogue, ~~and~~ and had little aptitude for ~~the~~ delineating women.

The first to use blank verse in tragedy was Thomas Sackville whose "Gorboduc" was written in this metre. Later it was introduced into England by the Earl of Surrey. ~~It was Marlowe who seized upon it as the ideal medium for drama.~~ But the blank verse of these two men was wooden and monotonous. It was Marlowe who seized upon it as the ideal medium for drama. By his high poetic artistry and genius, he made it respond to



every note in the scale of human passion, and gave it such naturalness, such ethereal beauty and suppleness, that it quickly established itself as the most suitable metre for English poetic drama. As regards both plot and character, he was the founder of genuine romantic tragedy. Before him, the characters in plays had too often been mere lifeless puppets, but Marlowe informed his central characters and the whole of his dialogue with life and passion. In Marlowe's plays "one character dominates the stage; a necessary effect of this quality is that the other characters, vividly drawn as some of them are, tend to be dwarfed; and that, as the masculine element predominates, the feminine characters become mere foils to it. The very insignificance of the minor characters, however, serves as an effective contrast, throwing the major characters into high relief. The ardour and passion which inspire Marlowe's plays partly account for the absence of true humour. It may have been his consciousness of a lack of humour that led him to seek collaborators who could supply this ingredient, so essential to an Elizabethan audience".

Marlowe made momentous and revolutionary contributions to English drama. He raised the subject-matter of English drama to a higher level and dealt with heroic subjects that had a stirring effect on the imagination.



His heroes were—Tamburlaine, a world conqueror; Faustus, a scholar peering supreme knowledge; Barabas, dreaming of fabulous wealth; Edward-II with his mingling of nobility and ignobility, reaching the heights and touching the depths of human nature. As Marlowe's subjects were the boundless spirit of adventure, the towering passions of love and hate, the ideal of beauty, the nobility and fitness of human life. The characters in his plays were not puppets manipulated by strings, but living and breathing realities. Just as Chaucer is regarded as the father of English narrative poetry and Defoe as the father of English prose fiction, Marlowe has been called the father of English dramatic poetry. In conclusion we can say that he is the greatest discoverer, the most daring and inspired pioneer in all our poetic literature. Before him there was neither genuine blank verse nor a genuine tragedy and after his arrival the way was prepared, the paths were made straight, for Shakespeare."

— R. D. —