

SUBJECT : ENGLISH

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TOPIC- EDWARD II

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PLOT-CONSTRUCTION OF “EDWARD II”

“Edward II” is not only the greatest structural triumph of Marlowe, it is also the first well-planned and well-constructed history play in English literature. Before it the history plays were episodic in continuity, presenting more or less disconnected and unimportant scenes , always failing to attract the reader. The plot of “Edward II” is just in proportion to the important subject which the poet intends to present. It is the dramatic art of Marlowe that he condenses the confused and

disconnected tragic incidents into five acts and successfully brings about dramatic whole.

The unity of plot is well defined in the play. The play has a beginning, a middle and an end in Aristotelian sense. Marlowe's earlier plays, Tamburlaine and Dr. Faustus are episodic in nature. There is the problem of middle in Dr. Faustus but in Edward II Marlowe tries to unify his material and constructs neatly structured plot. The story of Edward and Gaveston comes to an end before the story of Edward and Spenser begins. Marlowe remarks history. Spensers are the people to whom the king must turn after Gaveston has gone. Marlowe introduces the Mortimers in Act I and makes them quite prominent with their swearing nature. He has completely distorted history because he has assigned the oath-taking to the Mortimers, although it truly belonged to Pembroke and Warwick.

Marlowe also successfully incorporates a sub-plot in the play related to the love-affair between the Queen and

Mortimer. Its development owe to the conduct of the queen which has organic concern with the main plot. It shows Marlowe's creative imagination and dramatic craftsmanship which is not found in anyone of his contemporaries save Shakespeare.

As this play is the product of the immature period of drama and crude theatrical conditions it has several faults in structure. However Marlowe was making a bold attempt to develop tragic movement out of the confused narratives of chronicles. The dramatis personae are no longer mere puppets or abstractions but distinct personalities. Charles Lamb comments that the reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward II and the death scene of Marlowe stand unsurpassed in moving to pity and horror, by any dramatist, ancient or modern.
