

# John Dryden

classmate

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Page 1

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Unit - B.

Topic - John Dryden

Lecture - 01

"Dryden", according to Dr. Johnson was the father of English criticism as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principle the merits of composition". Between the two extremes of Ben Jonson and Dr. Johnson, Dryden holds the balance. While Ben Jonson is ruthless Dryden is tolerant. Whereas Ben Jonson's critical range is limited and his criticism sketchy and relatively small, Dryden's is broad, elaborate and comprehensive. While Ben Jonson wants even geniuses to perfect his art through training, Dryden favours a lenient view. Whereas Ben Jonson criticised the mingling of tragedy and comedy, Dryden approved of it. Ben Jonson's humour is replaced by the emphasis on wit by Dryden.

From the very beginning, Dryden was gifted with rare critical faculty, apart from being a successful poet. He had read the ancient well and had the elasticity of temperament to profit by the doctrines of the modern". He had developed a unique style of judging individual authors much on the lines of Longinus. He never disputed the ancient principles of criticism but he considered the

The individual works of literature almost without regard to their principles. Saintsbury rightly remarks "Dryden established the English fashion of criticising as Shakespeare did the English fashion of dramatizing - the fashion of aiming at delight, at truth at justice, at nature, at poetry and letting the rules take care of themselves"

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