



# SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF BRITAIN:II

MODULE I-AGE OF TRASITIONS

TOPIC:JOHN LYLE

IV SEMESTER

BA ENGLISH COMPLEMENTARY PAPER

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# John Lyly (1554-1606)



- John Lyly - English writer and playwright
- Best known for his prose romance *Euphues* and his comedic play *Endimion*.
- Earliest playwrights of the Elizabethan period.
- Died poor as neglected by Queen Elizabeth.
- His innovative contribution to English prose and theatre had been inspiration for generations.
- He became an inspiration for Christopher Marlow, Thomas Kyd and William Shakespeare

- Wrote witty court allegories
- Drew themes from classical mythology.
- His contribution to English literary history is two folded.
- First one is- Euphues –most popular works published in English at that time.
- Had enormous influence on the style of English prose.
- It had two parts
  1. **The Anatomy of Wits**
  2. **Euphues and his Engln.**
- Euphues : Romantic intrigue told in letters
- Interspersed with discussion on love and religion etc
- Plot borrowed from Boccaccio
- Euphues comes from Greek word meaning “ well- bred man”

- His prose was modelled after the prose of classical and Renaissance European masters
- Lyly focused his attention on the theatre
- His play Edimion – revolutionised the English theatre
- He was the first playwright to write dialogue in prose
- Its complex and powerful language combined with its elegantly simple plot, would become a model for dozen of Elizabethan plays
- His writing style is known as **Euphuism**.

- **Euphuism** :

- An effusion of short parallel phrases and sentences.
- In corporation of fantastic similes taken from natural history and mythology
- The frequent use of alliteration
- Rhetorical questions
- ❑ He devoted himself to writing comedies after 1580.
- Comedies : *Campaspe, Sapho and Phao, Gallathea, Midas,*
- *Mother Bombie* – only play that represents a modern theme rather than mythological stories
- *The Woman in the Moon* : only play he wrote in blank verse rather than Euphuistic prose