

*Correction of the Exam Paper : Théâtre Américain à ses Origines /
2020 – 2021*

.....

Answers to Questions

- 1) - **Villain**: A character in a story who embodies evil qualities or opposes the protagonist.
 - **Pantomime**: A form of theatrical performance where actions and gestures convey a story without using words.
 - **Satire**: The use of humor, irony, or exaggeration to criticize or mock something, often societal issues or individuals.
 - **Comedy**: A genre intended to amuse and entertain, often through humor, wit, and lighthearted situations.
- 2) The five parts of a typical dramatic structure are:
 1. **Exposition**: Introduces the setting, characters, and initial conflict.
 2. **Rising Action**: Develops the conflict and builds tension as the story progresses.
 3. **Climax**: The turning point or the most intense moment of the story where the conflict reaches its peak.
 4. **Falling Action**: Events that occur after the climax, leading towards resolution.
 5. **Resolution (or Denouement)**: The conclusion where loose ends are tied up, and the story reaches its final outcome or solution.
- 3) **Edwin Forrest** was a prominent American actor in the 19th century, known for his powerful and passionate performances, especially in Shakespearean roles like Othello and Macbeth. **His contribution to early American drama** was significant as he popularized a style of acting that emphasized emotional intensity and raw power, diverging from the more formal and restrained British acting styles prevalent at the time. Forrest's approach resonated with American audiences and helped establish a unique American theatrical tradition characterized by its vigor and naturalism.
- 4) British drama had a profound impact on American theater during its formative years, influencing various aspects of performance, storytelling, and theatrical structure. Two concrete examples of this influence include:

1. **Adaptation and Repertoire:** Many early American theaters primarily showcased British plays, adapting them to suit American audiences or mimicking British theatrical styles. Popular British works by playwrights like Shakespeare, Sheridan, and Goldsmith were frequently staged in America, influencing the repertoire and taste of the American theatergoing public.
2. **Acting Styles and Training:** Early American actors often received their training in British theatrical traditions. The prevailing acting methods, stage techniques, and performance styles were heavily influenced by British models. American actors initially emulated the formal and declamatory acting styles of British performers until figures like Edwin Forrest popularized a more naturalistic and emotionally intense approach, contributing to the development of an American acting style.

Discuss

Topic 1: Discuss the theme of love in Thomas Godfrey's *The Prince of Parthia* (1767).

"The Prince of Parthia" by Thomas Godfrey is a Neo-Classical tragedy that explores various themes, including love. The theme of love is intricately woven into the political and personal dynamics of the characters.

One of the main love stories in the play is between Arsaces and Evanthe. Arsaces, a prince, is deeply in love with Evanthe, whose father, King Bethas, has been imprisoned. This love is not without its complications. Artabanus, the King of Parthia, also harbors feelings for Evanthe. This creates a complex love triangle that adds tension to the plot.

The theme of love in this play is not just romantic but also extends to familial and platonic relationships. For instance, the brotherly love between Gotarzes and Arsaces is contrasted with the jealousy and rivalry of Vardanes.

However, love in "The Prince of Parthia" is often intertwined with power struggles and political intrigue. The love Arsaces has for Evanthe becomes a point of contention and is used against him by Vardanes and Lysias, who accuse Arsaces of treason.

In conclusion, love in "The Prince of Parthia" is a multifaceted theme that drives the plot and influences the actions and motivations of the characters. It's a poignant exploration of how love can be both a source of joy and a catalyst for conflict.

Topic 2: Compare and contrast national and foreign identities in Royall Tyler's *The Contrast* (1787).

"The Contrast" by Royall Tyler, first performed in 1787, is a comedy that presents a series of contrasts or oppositions of paired characters. The play is a critique of American society's fascination with European culture and manners, and it uses its characters to highlight the differences between national (American) and foreign (European) identities.

The national identity is represented by characters like Henry Manly, a virtuous patriotic New England gentleman-farmer and militia officer, and his egalitarian waiter Jonathan. These characters embody the American virtues of forthrightness, sobriety, and industry. They represent the ideal American character, which is seen as innocent, virtuous, and sincere.

On the other hand, the foreign identity is represented by characters like Billy Dimple, an anglicized New York City seducer and fop, and his servant Jessamy. These characters are depicted as foppish and deceitful, embodying the negative aspects of European culture that Tyler criticizes.

The central contrast in the play is between these American and European identities. Manly and Dimple compete for the right to wed Maria Van Rough, a wealthy mercantile heiress. This competition symbolizes the struggle between American and European influences in post-revolutionary America.

In conclusion, "The Contrast" uses its characters to explore national and foreign identities, highlighting the virtues of the American character and critiquing the influence of European culture. It's a patriotic effort to define and glorify a distinctive American character.