

B.A. Semester-I, MJC-1

Dr Sharique Haider

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Maharaja College, Ara

Q: Throw light on the general criticism of Shakuntala.

Ans: Kalidas's Abhijan Shakuntala like his Raghuvamsa, is the most popular and very widely read in all parts of India. It is a love drama, and belongs to that class of Rupakas which is known as the Nataka. Its subject is taken from history in its main out-lines. This single play has so much of the poet's genius displayed in it that we need not go to his other works to establish the superiority of Kalidas' muse. Its language exhibits all the traces of his style. It is highly elegant, being dignified where necessary. It abounds in striking and tasteful comparisons, is sublime in the poetical portions without becoming obscure or involved, and presents a most charming ease and simplicity in the dialogues without ever descending to vulgarism. No forced constructions, no offensive conceits mar its beauty. The metres are mostly the shorter kind, very musical and varied, with the sonorous Arya prominent among them. It is also highly finished from the artistic point of view. The action is progressive and the interest well sustained. Wilson's remark --- the story, the situations and the characters, are all highly imaginative, and nothing can surpass the beauty and justice of many of the thoughts. To select one as an example were to disparage a number of other passages, and they may be left to the critical acumen and taste of the reader-----applies more appropriately to the present play. The very fact that there have been translations, and versions of these translations, made of this play from time to time in the various languages of Europe, ever since it was made known to the European world by Sir William Jones by his publishing a translation of it, is a sufficient proof of its supreme elegance and growing popularity among the learned in every country of the civilised world.