

Major Literary Movements

Robin Ghosh

Abstract: *The major literary movements began with the Greek tragedy. The word tragedy has been derived from the Greek word "Tragoidia". Its literal meaning was "goat He song" because in Greek the word "tragos" means 'he goat', and "Oide" means song. Tragedy means literary composition of serious or sorrowful character with a fatal or disastrous conclusion. The dictionary meaning says "Tragedy" refers to the species of drama in which the action and language are elevated, and the ending usually sad, especially involving the fall of a great man!*

Keywords: Greek tragedy, Athena, Phidias, Romantic Setting, The sentimental and the Anti Sentimental comedy

1. Research Methods

The Research Methods which have been undertaken in the article are fully considered on the basics of the facts mentioned therein.

Greek Tragedy 1

Phidias was an Athenian sculptor, the artist director flourished (490 - 430 Bc) of the construction of Parthenon, who created the most important religious images and supervised and properly designed its overall sculptural decoration. It is said of Phidias that he alone had seen the exact image of gods and that he revealed it to man. He established forever general conceptions of Zeus and Athena. Little is known of Phidias life when Pericles rose to power in 449 he initiated a great building programme in Athena and placed Phidias in charge of all artistic undertakings. Among works for which Phidias is famous are three monuments to Athena, on the Athenian Acropolis, the Oxford English Dictionary. Athena Promachos, they are menial Athena and the colossal seated Zeus for the temple of Zeus at Olympia, none of them survives in the original.

The Colossal statue of the Athena Parthenon, which Phidias made for the Parthenon was complete and dedicated in 430. It was made of gold and ivory and stood some 38 feet (12 meters) high. The Goddess stood erect wearing a tunic, aegis, and helmet and holding a Nike (goddess of victory) in her extended right hand and spear in her left.

The ancient writers considered Phidias Zeus completed about 430, for the temple at Zeus at Olympia to be his masterpiece. The statue is now considered to be one of the seven wonders of the World. Phidias last years remain a mystery. Pericles enemies accused Phidias of stealing gold from the statue of Athena Parthenon in 432 but he was not able to prove the charge. They then accused him of impiety for including portraits of Pericles and himself in the shield of Athena on the Athena Parthenon and he was thrown into prison. Until recently it was thought that he died in prison but actually he died at Zeus. But it is said that Zene is a Greek God, he cannot die (24.06.2019).

The Athena tragic Poet 2

The First great Athenian tragic poet was (i. e. writer of verse Tragedies) was Aeschylus (525 - 406 Bc). He is supposed to have written a large number of tragedies. But only seven have come down to English during the Renaissance and later. They are "The Persian (on the victory of Greece over

the Persian Invaders)". The seven against Thebes, The Prometheus Bound, the suppliants" (i. e. the fifty daughters of Danaus), and the three great tragedies on the story of Orestes. They are "The Agamemnon, Choephoe" and the Eumenides. In his early tragedies, there was one actor and the chorus. But in his later tragedies he introduced the second action besides the chorus.

The second great Greek tragedies was Sophocles (496 to 406 BC). In a drama contest, he defeated Aeschylus in 468 Bc, and won a prize. After this he was the favourite poet of the Athenians. In his tragedies, he increased the number of actors from two to three besides the chorus. His tragedies are more human and less heroic than those of Aeschylus. In his representation of man, he was an idealist. So, he represented "man as he ought to be". His extant tragedies are the "Oedipus the King", Oedipus at Colonies", Antigone, Electra, Trachinial, Ajax and Philoctetes.

The third Great Greek tragedian was Euripides (480 - 406 BC) in his plays, men and women have been represented as they really are. So, he is supposed to be a realist and most modern minded. He wrote about 90 plays. Eighteen of them are extant in England. The most famous of them are "Alcestis", Media, Hyppolus, Heccuba, Andromache, Helen, Electra, Orestes, and the Cyclops a satire play.

Heroic Tragedy or The Restoration Tragedy 3

In my earlier article I have dealt at great length about the Shakespearean comedy and tragedy so, I have skipped about the same and concentrate my findings on Greek tragedy. The Restoration Age is called the age of reason 1. The educated and the country people of the age did not appreciate the tragic idea of Aristotle or Shakespeare. So the tragedies of the age modified the idea of tragedy according to the taste of their audience. They developed what is called Heroic Tragedy, and also Restoration Tragedy. It divided itself into two kinds (1) the heroic tragedy in complete (2) The heroic tragedy in blank verse. The writers of the heroic tragedy were Davenant, Howard, Dryden and Lee.

Journey of the Heroic Tragedy

The founder of the Heroic Tragedy proper is John Dryden. His earlier heroic tragedies were 'Tyrannic Love or the Royal Martyr (1600) and the conquest of Granada (1670). Then he brought forward Amboise (1673) and Aurangzeb (1676). But his best heroic tragedy is all for Love (1678). It is his drama in blank verse. The plot of the story consists of a version of the love story of Antony and Cleopatra.

The other contributor to the heroic tragedy was Nathaniel Lee (1653 - 92) The best know heroic tragedy is the Rival Queen (1677). His other remarkable tragedies were Mithridates (1678), Theodosius (1680) and Lucius Junnius Bruins (1681).

According to George Sainsbury, the heroic tragedy flourished in England between 1660 and 1680. Its growth was hampered by Buckingham's mock play Rehearsal (1671) which satirized the rhymed heroic play of Dryden, Davenant and others.

Nature of the Heroic Tragedy Heroes and heroines of High States

The first outstanding feature of the heroic tragedy is that the heroine and that the hero are persons of high estate. The hero is a prince, a king, a conqueror. And the heroine is a princess, a great beauty of high estate, a or other important person. For example, in Tyrannic Love or the Royal Martyr, Maximin, the hero is the Roman Emperor. He loves the Christian princess of Alexandria. In 'All for Love', Antony is the Roman General while Cleopatra is the Queen of Egypt.

Romantic Setting

The second remarkable feature of the heroic tragedy is the romantic setting of the plot, Davenant, Dryden, Lee, all of them laid their seems in distant places of distant times India, Egypt, Mexico, Peru and other distant lands. For example the setting in the rival queen is that of Macedonia in ancient Greece. The Rival Queens statira and Roxana, the two queens of Alexander the Great. In Dryden all for love, the seems are laid in Alexandria, the capital of ancient Egypt.

Another peculiar feature of the heroic tragedy is a series of scenes of heroic deeds, murders, suicides, sacrifices, etc for the sake of the this and that. For example, in Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr, the scene in which Catherine repulses, Maximum, the Roman emperor who has captured her is highly striking. In the end St. Catherine is beheaded in one scene, and maxmin is stabbed by Illacidus, in another. They are great scenes of heroic deeds In all for Love, such lofty scenes are those in which Antony and Cleopatra kill themselves.

The theme of the Heroic tragedy is a heroic human feeling, particularly love with all ats reactions. In the Rival Queen, jealous Roxana enters statira's chamber and stabs her to death, and Alexander is poisoned by Cassandra a conspirator, In all for Love, Antony loves, Cleopatra to the last degree. He falls on his sword only when he suspects that Cleopatra loves his friend Do - labella. For he feels that he cannot live of her company. Here, the feeling is that of heroic love.

The heroic tragedy is especially a poetic drama. So it is full of passages of poetic feeling. At places, the heroic tragedies of Dryden and Lee are stunted with passages of poetic emotion. Davenant stage of Rhodes (1662) is a story sung in recitative music. Antony's soliloquy before he kills himself and that of Cleopatra before she applies the asp to her arm are passages of great poetry.

Comedy

Comedy is such a dramatic category that deals with a theme in a light amusing manner and gives it a happy ending. According to George Meredith, comedy appeals to the emotions, comedy often concerns to the social group while tragedy concerns to the fate of the individual. The elements of comedy are: A story with a happy ending, light amusing style, humour exciting smiles and laughs, principal aim to amuse the audience with humour, music etc.

History of Comedy

Comedy came into being in ancient Greece The earliest known comedy appeared in Athens in the 5th Century BC. It developed from simple local festivals in honour of Dionysus, the Greek God of fertility, wine and drama. It was produced by Aristophanes. In literature such comedy is called old Greek comedy. Examples of this comedy are the plays knights (424 BC) and wasps (422 BC). The Romans adopted the conception of the new comedy without any radical change the great Roman comedians were Plautus and Terrene. These comedies were popular in the 3rd and the 2nd centuries BC. Plautus's famous comedy is Mennechnu The idea of comedy probably came into England from Italy in the 16th Century. The first English comedy was Ralph Roister Doistor (1533) It was a classical comedy by Nicholas udall gradually there also came into being romantic comedy. And then emerged Shakespearean comedy. The first one was A Midsummer's night drama and As you Like it.

Restoration Comedy 4

After 1660, England saw the emergence of a new comedy called Restoration comedy. It was produced under the influence of the French comedy produced by Molliere, French actor and playwright. It held to ridicule social manners and so it is also called the comedy of Manners. Its supreme example is the way of world (1700) by William Congreve. During the 18th and 19th Century, comedy concentrated itself on sentimental Materialism, often with deep sentiment and moral lesson. Examples are the Tender Husband by stele, Sheridan Rival (1775) and Goldsmiths "She stoops to Congreve (1773).

Modern Comedy 5

Shaws comedy is the real modern comedy. It is the modern comedy of reason and modern ideas. Wilde's and Maugham's comedy is the comedy of social problems and manners. After 1930's the modern comedy treated of social problems, personal relationships in the changing society, love with a married woman or man, political morality etc. Humour, satire, sentiments emotional reactions etc are the dominating elements. The end is logical and impressionistic. Most comedies are one act plays produced for television and the stage. But some are still four act plays of shorter size then those of Shaw and others.

Classical Comedy (500 Bc – 1790) 6

Comedy is a dramatic composition of light, amusing, theme marked by wit, humour, satire etc and a happy ending. It came into being in its earliest form in ancient Greece. The earliest known comedy appeared in Athens in the 5th century BC. It was written by Aristophanes (448 BC – 380 BC) It was staged in the open in honour of Dionysius, Greek God

of fertility. It was packed with irrelevant matter, coarse humour, and satire. Its name is not known. Later, Aristophanes wrote more comedies of this nature.

Acharnians, Knights and Frogs 7

Among his extant comedies, the first will known is entitled Acharnians. It is a satire of the war party of Athens that advocated great war on sports. The second is knights. It is a bitter satire on the demagogue "Cleon" who was a war lord. The third is Frogs who are Aeschylus and Euripides contending for the tragic prize among the dead. The comedy by Aristophanes was developed by another great Greek comic poet Menander (342 - 292 BC) He made the contemporary life of Athens the theme of his comedy and added refined with humour and mild satire on vice and folly. This was the new classical comedy of Athens.

Roman Comedy 8

This new classical comedy was adopted by the first great comic writer of Rome. He was Plautus (254 - 184 Bc) the great comedy which he wrote by imitating Menander is a celebrated manner. It is entitled Menachmi meaning comic errors. The comedy turns on the mistakes that result from the resemblance of twin brothers. Some English critics suggest the English translation of Menachmi might have inspired Shakespeare to echo its comic theme in his comedy of Errors. Plautus left behind about 20 comedies. Many of them were imitated by English comic poets during the Renaissance and by Moliere in France. Another Roman comic poet was Terence (190 - 159 BC). He was a freed slave but very intelligent. He died young. He wrote only six comedies but all based on Menander's comedies.

Classical Comedy in England 9

The classical comedy arrived in England through Italy in 1553. The first English classical comedy was Ralph Roister Doister written by Nicholas Udall in 1553. He was the Head Master of Westminister. It was written in imitation of a Latin comedy by Plautus. It is divided into five Acts and marked by good humour and three entities. It is written in rhymed doggerel (i. e. poor trivial verse) It is classical through and through. It was stated by Westminister boys in 1553. It was published in 1567.

Closing of the Theatres

In 1642, all theatres were closed by Parliament and writing plays was banned. So, the journey of the classical comedy was halted. It was resumed after the restoration. The Restoration comedy was then based on the framework of classical comedy and soon came to be called comedy of manners. Dryden, Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve based their comedy. But their social realism is so much heightened that it seems artificial. There is great satire, fun, three units. But morals are lacking. In the last flickers of the classical comedy the first two decades of the 18th century, sentimental comedy of Cibber and Steele came to the fore. Then in 1760's and 1770's the classical comedy was revived by Sheridan and Goldsmith. The Rivals (1775) by Sheridan and She stoops to conquer (1773) by Goldsmith were the best flickers of the classical comedy thereafter it died away.

The comedy of Manners or The Restoration Comedy

In 1660 Charles II was brought back to England from France and was made Emperor of Britain. The king brought with him a good number courtly manner of speech, behaviour and literary style. The restoration of monarchy also resulted in the decline of moral values. Within a decade, the upper class English society was filled with vices of the flesh. Some great dramatists came forward and tried to focus the people's attention on the vices and artificial manners. They wrote comedies and held in them those things to ridicule. The comedy came to be called the comedy of Manners. The well known writers of the Restoration of the Restoration comedy were George Etherege (1636 - 1691), William Congreve (1670 - 1729).

Journey of the Comedy of Manners

The Restoration comedy remained in vogue about forty years. It was executed in 1649. He was the son of Charles I king of Britain (1625 - 1649) who was begun under the influence of the "humours" comedy of Ben Jonson. Dryden's comedy the wild gallant was a sort of comedy of humours. The author here tries to connect the vices of the age with Jonson's humours theory but soon Etherege drew his inspiration from the French dramatist Moliere and produced his comedy of affected social manners, moral lapses, intrigue, and witty dialogue. His first comedy was the comical Revenge or Love in a Tub (1664). It has realistic scenes, serious portion in rhymed heroics, and a comic under plot in produce. In 1668 he produced another comedy 'she would if she could' and in 1676 his master piece the man of mode or sir fobbing Flotter then other comedies such as Love in a wood (1671), The Gentlemen Dancing Master (1672), The Country Wife (1673) The Plain Dealer (1674), focused the people's attention on the licentiousness and indecency of his age. Then came Thomas Shadwell who produced Epsom Wells (1673) and Bushy Fair (1689) Then came the flowers of comedy - The old bachelor (1693), The double dealer (1694), Love for Love (1695) and the way of the world (1700) etc Then it can be stated that the themes of the comedy of manners such as the man of the mode or Sir fopling Flutter (referred to above) is the representation of society especially living for pleasure. There is a slight web of love affair which shows that the society has no serious business of life. The themes are satirical through and through.

The Sentimental Comedy (1703 - 1790) and the Anti Sentimental Comedy (1730 - 1790)

The age of classicism (1702 - 1740) was torn by a spirit of controversy. The rational enquiry allowed by the middle class scholars attacked the foundations of religion. So religious minded middle class educated people rose in favour of Christian philosophy. Their philosophies on the nature of life death, excited the sentimentalism of the Christian mind which was starving for it. The common people favoured the dawn of sentimentalism in the literature soon the novel, the poetry and the comedy of sentimentalism emerged in English literature. The literary sentimentalism was actually sentimental moralism.

The beginnings of the Sentimental comedy

English sentimentalism was actually religious sentimentality. It had been repressed by an impious social

and moral reaction during the forty years of the restoration era. It excited a fondness for pretty, simplicity, love of God and Nature, and a life of religious morals. The sensibility found the largest scope in the theatre. Its strong expression was the sentimental comedy. Three well known writers came forward to write that comedy. The first man was Colley Cibber (1671 - 1757). The other was Richard Steele (1672 - 1729). The third man was Richard Estcourt.

The first sentimental comedy *The Lying Lovers* by Steele was staged in 1703. It was highly appreciated Cibber's sentimental comedy "*The Careless Husband*" was staged in 1705. It was highly admired soon Steele's comedy *The Tender Husband* (1705) was staged, soon more writers joined the movement. By 1722 Steele had become well known through his comedy *The Conscious Lovers* (1722) Aaron Hills comedy *The Fatal Extravagance* (1721) also brought him good name. By 1730 the sentimental comedy was popular with the audience but an aversion to lovers of traditional comedy.

Sentimental Comedy - Its nature 10

The Sentimental comedy was comedy because it had happy ending. But it had been deprived of wit, humour and satire. It's great example was taken to be the *Conscious Lovers* (1722) by Steele.

Anti Sentimental Comedy 11

From 1730 to 1770 there was a great struggle between the sentimental comedy and anti sentimental comedy, that is the traditional realistic comedy of fun, laughter satire etc During this period, the theatre of the sentiment was overrun by Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies etc Fielding, Foore and Colman began to write traditional comedies of laughter and satire as contrasted with the sentimental comedy. Fielding's *Tom Thumb* (1730) was a force. His other two comedies as *Pas Qrun* (1736) and the *Historical Register* (1737) were social and political satires.

Triumph of Sentimental Comedy

During 1745 and 1770 a great wave of religious melancholy swept through English Poetry. The poems of young, Robert Blair, James Harvey, Thomson, Gray and Collins aroused the people as if from sleep. The wave of religious melancholy gave strength to dramatic sensibility. So sentimental comedy showed its largest output and its most brilliant successes during 1760 - 1770. The Great writers of sentimental comedy during this decade were white head (*The School for Lovers* 1762) Mrs Sheridan (*The Discovery* 1763) Isaac Bickerstaff (*The Maid of the Mill*, 1765) and Mrs. Griffith (*The School for Rakes* 1769). The Leader of the group was Richard Cumberland (1732 - 1811) His comedies *The Brothers* (1790), *The West Indian* (1771), *The Fashion Lover* (1772) were greatly admired. The message of their comedies was the stress on simple nature as the source of all virtues the exaltation of all charities, and submission to philosophical preaching. They attracted all honest hearts to their sentimental moralism.

The Revival of Comedy

But between 1775 and 175 comedy was victorious over sentimental comedy. The two great writers of comedies were R B Sheridan (1751 to 1816) and Oliver Goldsmith (1730 -

1774) Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775), *The School for Scandal* (1779) were great successes. Goldsmith's first comedy '*The God Natural Man*' was rejected by Garrick. But his second comedy *she stoops to conquer* (1773) was a great success.

Abstract

It would appear from the details furnished above that the details given about the Greek tragedy, about the Heroic tragedy or the Restoration Period and the history of Romantic comedies, the classical and Anti Classical comedies and the Restoration comedy and comedian manners area jugglery of figures given by the different poets, writers who existed or not and it gives about the details as it occurred all in England during the period from 14th Century to 18th Century and the period in all which they wrote were at least 30 in number and all happened during the periods of Kings and Queens beginning from Charles II. It was clear the poets were from England and no where else in the world. In this connection let me add that the Greeks were the only place in the world where apart from astrology, sculpture they were also adopt in writing prose and verse. They were so to say that only Shakespeare was above them though Shelley, Keat, Byron, George Bernard Smaw and Jane Austen were there they have also mastered great novels which of course I have left out here. Scholars are of the view that Greek tragedy does not lay down the principle that tragedy should have an un happy ending there must be scenes of human suffering to arouse emotions of pity and fear. Aeschylus has a last "Seene which transcends and reconciles the tragic conflict. In 'Sophocles' *Electra*, she is the sister Orestes and incites his brother to avenge his father's murder by killing his mother Clytemnestra both of them undergo great human mystery and human suffering. But neither of them meet death. They (the great Greek Tragedians) did not lay down and follow the principle that the tragic hero or heroic should fall and meet death. This is not the case of Shakespeare Heroes or Heroines.

2. Conclusion

G. R. Rowel remarks that Greek tragedy is rightly called religious drama. It will also be just to call it scientific. Aristotle regards tragedy as the noblest form of literature. The Heroic tragedy of the restoration period has heroes and heroines in high estate. His setting is a place of romance. His themes is the restoration of heroic feelings today comedy is a great medium of entertainment and instruction. It is enacted on the stage shown on the television or broadcast by the radio. It is also given in the form of feature film under the modern conditions if is a wonderful entertainer and a great eye opener. The classical comedy was the product of Aristophanes and Menander in ancient Athens in the 5th and 4th Bc. The restoration comedy also called the comedy of Manners, is essentially the comedy of intrigue, manners etc. It focuses our attention on the licentiousness, foppiness silliness etc of the restoration age. It is highly satanic and aims at correcting the moral and manners of the people. To achieve its end, it holds the objectionable to ridicule. It has been leveled Artificial Comedy by Charles Lamb. Cazamean observes that Sheridan's comedy had no more lasting results So, comedy could not destroy the vitality of the sentimental comedy.

3. Summary

Facts that have been given in the article go to prove that these intellectual gains of Greek tragedies and comedies are enough to prove that the Greeks were the first to highlight that they do not believe in killing the heroes and heroines and it is cleared that from Charles II onwards the kings and Queens are the only experts in Greek that they were adept in writing prose and poetry only the next to Shakespeare. They have also written great satires.

References

- [1] Greek Tragedy.
- [2] The Athenian tragic poet.
- [3] Heroic tragedy or Restoration tragedy.
- [4] Restoration Comedy.
- [5] Modern Comedy.
- [6] Classical Comedy.
- [7] Acharnians, Knights and Frogs.
- [8] Roman Comedy.
- [9] Classical Comedy in England.
- [10] The Sentimental.
- [11] The Anti Sentimental Comedy.