

PERFORMING ART: A KALEIDOSCOPIIC FACE OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

Literature is the mirror of the society. Literature in a sense not only provides and describes the events of the society, rather, it enriches, provides the required idea of the conditions the individual faces during the course of time in the society. There was a varied pattern when it started something to be talked about literature. In the early stages literature had a different concept of placing the emotions in front of people through poetic form. These poetic forms were gradually taken over by story and later on novels. Novels had been a major source of continuous action among the people which proved to be much flexible with flexibility of language. Trends changed on from the classical language to the languages which describe the situation in general. A new trend which emerged in presenting the social life among the general class was with the drama. The huge difference could be found with the way of presentation of the play when taken into consideration the time period of its emergence to the recent contemporary era. This complete change over in the pattern of presentation made the varied people with their thought to come together. A varied form of writing with difference in pattern of stage performance and presentation can be found with many contemporary writers. From being epic in nature to being contemporary social in thought is what can be called as emerging drama which consistently pushes the individual to think in a much deeper sense.

Keyword: Trends, Epical, Classical, Contemporary.

1.INTRODUCTION

Before discussing about any form of trends which took place in literature the basic idea as to what is literature

and what are the features that any literature carries is an important concept. Also, the needs to give attention to the concept/ idea as to how the changes in the literature created change over in the process of thinking of the people who are belonging to a generalized class category. The study of literature explains us that literature is not just meant for the entertainment purpose rather, its growth through ages has brought the concept with wide area of uses/ challenges. Gradually, from only being just as a text the literature has changed its mode. Literature is the mirror of the society and it adds reality about the conditions which a person faces in his/ her day to day life. This enriches the daily life of the individual. Literally, in short what we have seen, felt, desired, observed, presented before us. This presentation of the literature before the people had a common form of pattern during the early ages. It meant to present the emotions of the individuals through the poetic language which had its drawbacks at some point or the other. This language was the classical form of language which a general uneducated person was unable to understand. This poetry gradually took a new form of writing which mentions about some classical situations but, in a different manner which included, novels, short stories, dramas, essays, and to some extent pamphlets. The novel being the most enjoyed part/ form of literature when it comes to the educated class of people.

J. Long beautifully has described and state about literature as- "Behind every book is a man; behind the man is the race; and behind the race are the natural and social environments whose influence is consciously reflected"

We can find a great variation with the changing time period in the pattern of writing and discussion of the issues. The era's in English Literature is gradually divided into forms- which show the influence of the time period

and also the reign of the emperor during the time period. This period had variations in their writing forms which included the classical concept to be major. The renaissance period gave liberty to the growing intelligence, while that the Neo-classical age ordered for the exact rules of poetry to be followed while presenting the emotion in general also. The romanticism on the contrary described the love with a difference. The main aim of the romantic writers was to show the love for the nature and beautify the nature as much as possible. With the advancement of the Victorian era a drastic change over in the form of writing could be seen. With the World war the faith among the humanity and the love for the nature was seen to be depleting while the invention were on its peak. With many invention out of which one included the question about the creation of living organism and the development of this organism. Because, of the study and inventions regarding to human evolution there was a period where the complete faith among the God its creation was lost. Even though with growing and developing inventions and raising questions about the human existence few of the poets turned on to holding on the roots of optimism, about the existence of creation and love for literature with the same niche.

During the change in the manner of presentation within the literature it was also the main focus regarding the way the literature is being presented. The exact idea about writing/ scripting is complexly unknown today also, as history describes the start with patterns with human growth, which started with scripting of the earliest form of the literature existence of the earliest form of the literature would have gradually developed to portray the emotions. Through the pictures and describing the social conditions at the time period. With development of the human language slowly the literature pattern and its way of presentation also changed. With language now being the major criteria many people started writing it through the words and portraying the emotions. This phase was a great achievement for the human race as the words were the major creation for portraying emotions. Also, the use of the words was just not made in a simple manner rather; artistic and musical forms were created to express the true sense of idea/ emotions. This expression was done through the use of the patterns like lyrical, epical with full use of rhymes and music to create much interest

among the audience reading the ongoing actions. This songs were early purely based on the story telling about the God and his creation to which later also there was a huge scope being prepared one of the best example in the later part of the literature can be seen with one of the best writing through "Paradise Lost" b Milton, which completely portrays the Good and Evil spirit and effect of spirit on the human (Adam/Eve). Also, the creation of human is discussed which makes the epic a great success from the literature point of view.

With the advancement in the human knowledge and development with the society their also occurred/ started many problems which made the writers to think about it and create a complete new pattern of writing. Where on one part with the earliest form of writing we find the discussion about the supernatural powers but, through the songs which were much lyrical and could be read and understood only to a limited class of people. This made the writers to create a literature which could be read and understood not only for the typical class but, for all the generalized society. There the elimination of discrimination was the main criteria and understanding the problems of the mediocre and poor class became important. With this development about the class slowly the issue of language was also resolved and much creative work reading the supernatural, kingly powers were being created in an understandable language. The language belonged to the common person.

With the advent of different kingship there arouse the form of writing which included the life of the king and their ruling strategies to a larger extent. The stages were crafted to present the stories which were actually only behind the curtains. Now, by making it easily available o the stage the life of the ruling class was made public. Yet, this presentation was meant to a limited class of people and category. To continue it this limitation it was early being performed only in the courts and churches to some extent. Later, which changed t present the stories in the church areas only and the theme of the plays were concerned with the Clergy. The general advancement of the people in the church which created a huge interest among the audience to look and know about the life of the higher authority. Also, the way of presentation fascinated the audience to a larger extent for being the suitable person to watch it. This stage performance had a great variation when considered

from the point of time of early scripting and presentation to the plays performed in the churches but, in front of the common audience.

2.PERFORMING ART (DRAMA)

Drama/ performing art made a significant change among its presentation and development. The stage took over the idea that it had changed according to the different form of acting. In the very Greek classical patterns the stages were prepared which were being called as "Amphi theatre". This stage had the typical setting which was round and had the capacity to hold the audience in large number. Around one third part of the stage was used to be filled with audience and hence a huge number could gather at a common place. This Amphi theatre rather had many drawbacks, which included the actually performance by the artist could not reach the audience. The huge number of audience could hardly listen the dialogue and understand the ongoing situations. To overcome the problem the techniques which were used were like- the actors were made to use loud symbolic costumes with mask for the purpose of visibility. Great use of gestures was done which made the audience to understand the exact act being performed. The loud voice and declamatory voice were used so that the audience could listen to the dialogues. The 'chorus' was one of the important part during this period as the Corus created the dialogues which were in a form of warning or an advice to the characters on the stage. Most of the plays were being performed during the day and use of natural and real life scenery was done. The biggest drawback in this performing art is that they were being performed during the festive, special occasions, religious ceremony and only the free men were allowed to watch the plays. The concept 'free men' meant that the women and the slaves were not allowed rather we can say that they were excluded.

During the later stages in the theatre art, the plays were being performed on the typical occasion only. They were being performed during the festive and the theme was basically morality and miracle plays. The major change which could be found with this performing art was that they were performed in wagons which were completely flexible with their placing in area of presentation. The wagons could easily be carried/ moved from one place to another and with the area could be stopped for the easy availability of the audience. This performance was

given with in the crowded and completely close by to the audience. The themes chosen were very much limited to the audience only. The viewer's perspective and their thoughts regarding the issues they were facing were given prior importance. There was open interaction among the actors and the audience and audience actively participated in the play giving the feedback and opinions. Yet, again the problem arises of the timing and to some extent the involvement of the audience. The performances were usually done during the day time due to lack of lighting and surrounding availability. Looking from the point of view we can also consider that there is a similarity between the stage preparation of the medieval time and that of Indian folk tradition. In India many folk performance were done with the moving stage only. These moving stages were the complete sets which were carried from one pale to another with all the actors and sceneries. This includes – Nautanki, Tamasha, Lavani, Ram-Lila, which represented that social life during the period. With loud sound, make-up, setting and music it was done for the audience for their interest in the form of songs. This sometimes during the festive also included the praises of the almighty and the miracle stories.

Advancement, in the ruling and the problems which the audience faced, the performance art took over the new way of presenting the plays. Here, now with the Elizabethan age, the set up and the themes completely changed. With changes the audience was now much interested in looking not only for the miracles and the moral roles of the characters but, rather the comedy and tragedy was also included. This was the time period when the complete role of plays and performers changed and now the audience was much interested with the mixture of time, place and action was completely kept aside and now it was tragedy, comedy and later a mixture. This pattern interested lot and came forward the writers like Shakespeare with his intelligent way of presentation. The theatre was completely not an open theatre neither a close theatre. Also, the plays were being performed during the day light. The major drawback of the period being that it was performed during the day light and hence, it was hard to imagine something related to the night scenes. Also, as there was less difference between the audience and the actors the stage set up could be disturbing. But, regards to these

conditions this stage to hold a heterogeneous category of the audience and could strictly entrain them.

During the years of 17th and 18th century rather the stages were used to represent a very high class, social and sophisticated part of the society. The area of stage was comparatively smaller and now the number of people attending the performance was also limited. The use of artificial lighting was there which could not easily make the difference between the two categories of audience and actors. Also, the use of language describes that the main class of audience belonged to higher society. Now, it was time where the people of all class from the audience also wanted to perform and be a part of the stage. The draw back during this setting was the lack of different light system or the absence of darkness. Also, the scenery change was taking place in front of the audience as there was no dark.

The very recent form of stage which is prepared can be said to be a form of 'Proscenium stage'. These stages were set during the late 19th and 20th century which had the design and functioning similar to somewhat the stage and set up in today's condition. The stage created where complete from the point of view of audience and actors. Where on the performance where also designed from the point of view of the audience. The stage was fully lighted and had a variation in the lighting art which would change according to the scenery and the situations. Also, because of this the set up changes/ scene change was made easy and could only be seen to the actors actually present on the stage. The remaining part of the theatre is kept in dark and was the part where the actual audience is present. This set up and lighting provided flexibility to the audience also, to enjoy the performances going on before them. Also, because of the darker area the actors could easily concentrate on their part of acting skill. One of the major parts which were added in the contemporary theatre is the 'curtains' which could help the easy change of set up.

A huge difference can be seen in the form of writing when we consider and look back into the history of Indian plays specially. The changes in the writing and the presentation patterns can be considered to take place with the change in technology, its use with stage and patterns of set up/ stage setting used. This setting completely changed over the thought process of the individual's writer and from being a silent and epical

form now; the writers have started looking at the social, political and economical causes of the society. The good was not only the thing to be presented, rather it was also the base which took over the center stage and greatly attracted the general public. Early, the limitation of the stage caused the audience and performance to look at the sad/ worst part but, only through monologues and soliloquies performed by the chorus in early stages and actors in later stage. These were continued for creating the difference on the stage but, rather in the contemporary period with the greater use of technology and advancement in the systems such as lighting, sound, shadow effects etc. The writers and the performers actually tried for the worst conditions of the scenes to be performed on the stage. These included the killing, bloodshed, loss of ethical and moral characters and many more to the list.

Shakespeare in this case, at a very early stage created such conditions and was being the only person to have created the scenes of murder but, always with a difference. Rather, we can say that Shakespeare had all different types of killings with him to a huge list. Each play presenting always a difference in the pattern of tragedy especially killing than compared to his early plays. He had the types of acts which ended up in tragedy as with- snake bite, poisoning, murder, war, suicide, killings through different knives, words, in different situations was a remarkable which made Shakespeare to give difference compared to any writer till date. This difference can also be found with today's contemporary writings.

With today's contemporary writing the actual theme of the play has also changed a lot. The plays which were run successfully early had their major theme as epic, myth, moral, full cultural and social norms and having their constant rule over the normal audience. It was also the good which was spoken. The idea that the higher class authorities should always be praised was the only interest of the writers and their performers respectively. This change over within the themes was seen with a change in theatre set up and the area where it was being presented. This theatre acts now were meant for the idea of local person who stood in theatre to watch himself and his conditions being performed. This inspired to write and perform for the general audience also, and which emerged as a popular structure of varied themes. The themes now selected were discussing about their

local level problems which of course also included the problems due to the ruling powers. There could also be a ban found with few of the plays which of course were due to the era in which they were performed. The social cause with political burden gave the audience an assurance to take about their rights and which resulted in a new rise of class. This educated class now wrote only for the general man and his problems.

In today's contemporary period this class of writers not only included the political influence the social causes and its effect but, also focused on the change of economic conditions and its effects on the generalized society. With new techniques it became easy to show the problems with a great effect strengthening the issues. With development of technology the theatre art (performing art) has changed its face drastically. The technology being a support now has become the center for creation and presentation. With this development and use of resources, theatre has also made clear variations among its features and presentation pattern. It is one of the art which changes according to the change of time, change of situations and change of culture.

3.CONCLUSION

Literature has a great history since ages. From the era of presenting the literature in the form of the songs, to the contemporary age which adapts the maximum forms of presentation the literature also deals with the changes in the issues of presentation. The presentation form and concept changed. This change over also made the people to think about the actual conditions of the people which is being presented in the literature through different art forms. Be it the writing form or the visual form literature also has a role in changing the thought process of the people and the society.

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