



JOHN DRYDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO CLASSICISM DRAMA

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Abstract:

This article discusses the stages of classicism in the literature of Europe. John Dryden and his contemporaries, who are considered prominent representatives of European literature, especially English drama, contributed to classicism literature and literary criticism, leaving a rare heritage to the next generation, such as John Dryden's drama "Aureng-Zebe". The idea embodied in the drama, is about the mysterious and wonderful East for that time, in which the main character Aurengzebe Alamgir, the fifth representative of the dynasty of the Great Mogol Empire (Baburids), fights bravely defending his father as well as his state. The struggle for the throne, state administration, the internal atmosphere of the palace, family problems in Dryden's style and art in the direction of classicism are revealed in the article.

Keywords: Renaissance, character, classicism, etymological analysis, drama, comedy, genre, play, Restoration period, linguacultural, linguistic, semiotics.

INTRODUCTION

Literature of Europe in Renaissance period turned to the classics of Roman and Greek mythology and folklore. This is evidenced by the fact that representatives of the literature of the European Renaissance took the works of ancient Greek and Roman literature as "models" and created a number of tragedies, dramas and comedies based on them. Several well-known tragedies by famous playwrights W. Shakespeare, B. Johnson and later J. Dryden can serve as an example of this fact. This literary trend called classicism.

Classicism is a universal, philosophical and literary phenomenon that has a typological essence, hence this phenomenon considered the object of literary studies. Moreover, the aesthetics of classicism is associated with the culture of the ancient world, which imitates the art and culture of the ancient Romans and Greeks, shows respect and adherence to its order, as well as intelligence, high taste and strive for established standards. Classicism, according to its internal principle, relies on three important foundations: imitation or traditional reflection, centralization of the concept of intelligence and absolute taste.

Classicism - first appeared in Italian culture in the XVI century, fully formed in the XVII century in France, by the XVIII century was closely associated with the Renaissance and Enlightenment and spreaded all over Europe.

By the time of the Restoration of the Stuarts, who replaced the bourgeois republic on the path of the historical development of England, classicism was wanted literary trend. The reason was that, the



citizens of England, fresh out of the civil war, needed peace and stability. The canons of classicism were aimed at education of people by sharing pleasure, to awaken in citizens a sense of duty to the Motherland, and to raise a noble person who meets the principles of ethics and aesthetics. Hence, the main concept of classicism was to put duty and reason above feelings.

If the heroes of a literary work created in the Renaissance are embodied in various forms, rich, powerful and passionate characters, then the aesthetics of classicism summarizes the subordination of passion to reason and emotion to duty. The main conflict in the works was the struggle between feelings and duty. The image of the hero is characterized by one-sidedness. In this process, there is a tendency to create generalized images.

English classicism is distinguished mainly by the influence of French, ancient Roman and Greek literature on poetry and drama. A huge contribution was made to the history of world literature of classicism by playwrights and poets, such as Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), Moliere (1622-1673), Racine (1639 -1699) in France, Lope de Vega (1562-1635), Tirso de Molina (real name was Gabriel Tellez, 1579-1648), Ricardo de Turia (1574 -1641), Bartolome Leonardo (1562-1631) in Spain etc. In the trend of classicism in British literature gained great fame by the well-known writers and playwrights such as John Milton, Benjamin Johnson, John Dryden, John Locke, William Temple, Samuel Pepys. Adhering to the strict traditions of classicism most of them managed to break the borders of classicism and discover a new direction in this literary trend [8]

Among the writers of English classicism, Alexander Pope, who is a follower of the classicist writers, describes in his poetic essays that the harmony of mind, style and content are the basic principles of classicism:

Expression is the dress of thought, and still

Appears more decent as more suitable... (Part 2, ll. 318–19) [7]

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,

The sound must seem an Echo to the sense... (ll. 364–65) [7]

However, Pope's words in 1711 were not new in the world literature, since all writers from Chaucer to Shakespeare were inspired by ancient Greek and Roman literature. Here one cannot fail to dwell on the pride of the English classicist poet, the great playwright Benjamin Johnson.

Benjamin Johnson distinguished himself from his contemporaries by his deep study of ancient literature and his love for classical literature, and it was for this reason that Johnson's work differed sharply from that of other playwrights. The writer served as a bridge between Renaissance literature and classicism, and later laid the foundation for his followers such as Dickens, Smollett and Thackeray[9].

Along with Benjamin Johnson, a great contribution to the development of classicism in the literature of the Restoration period in England was made by John Dryden (John Dryden, 1631-1700), while he is considered the founder of English literary criticism. In his poetry and drama, the principles of the aesthetics of classicism received their artistic embodiment. Dryden was not only a poet, critic and great



playwright, but also the founder of dramatic art. His contribution to English literature is so great that the period from 1660 to 1700 is marked in the history of English literature as "The Age of Dryden" [2].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

John Dryden's famous tragedy "Aureng-zebe" is a vivid example of the "heroic tragedy" of the classicist trend. There had been done many research on this tragedy particularly by M. Alssid, Arthur C. Kirsch, W.P. Ker, George R. Noyes, M. Frederick, M. Johnson, E. Moody etc.

According to Arthur Kirsch [4] neither of Renaissance playwright understood the main goal of classicism drama better than Dryden. Dryden strove to make the drama's dialogue different from ordinary speech, rhyming correctly, meaningful, inspiring and instructive for the audience. Obviously, tragedy "Aureng-Zebe" was vital for the Restoration period as it targeted to establish peace and welfare in the country. The writer was primarily interested in questions of history related to spirituality: issues such as the struggle for power, the problem of succession of throne, the usurpation of power by force; moral lessons like courage or virtue, without which, according to Dryden, a person neither can fulfill his role in history nor establish lasting peace in the state and ensure the prosperity of the country [1]. Hence, he tried to convey his ideas to the people through his work.

Michael Alssid [1] has done an extensive research on Dryden's contribution to world literature as a playwright, and the founder of new direction of classicist drama. Dryden's main design in the tragedy "Aureng- Zebe", his political, philosophical and social ideas and writing style were analyzed by this scholar as well.

The historical drama "Aureng-Zebe" by John Dryden describes the fifth generation of the Babur dynasty (1526-1658) in India - the last year of the reign of Shah Jahan (1627-1658) and also the years when his son Aurengzebe (1658-1707) ascended the throne. The scene reflects the images of Shah Jahan and the heirs to the throne, princes Daro Shukuh, Sultan Shujo, Aurengzebe, Muradbakhsh and courtiers. The author does not try to move away from the images in the book by F. Bernier [3]. Dryden, using a real source adapted it to the spirit of the European public, skillfully giving an artistic sound, with the help of lyrical digressions and artistic techniques conveyed his real design to the reader and the spectator [6].

Michael Alssid [1], in his article Design of Dryden's "Aureng-Zebe", was one of the first to draw attention to the historical parallel between the restoration of peace and order in England after the accession of Charles II and Aureng-Zebe in the Great Mogol Empire in India. The struggle for the throne in India lasted several years, but Dryden chooses a very significant date for the tragedy - "Agra, 1660", thereby metaphorically alluding to his contemporaries to the restoration of royal power in England as well as peace and stability in Britain.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Dryden who was deeply aware of ancient literature showed his respect to ancient literary canons following them in his tragedies. According to Aristotle, tragedy came from the efforts of poets to present



men as 'nobler,' or 'better' than they are in real life. Dryden managed to combine epic poetry with tragedy in his drama "Aureng-Zebe".

Unlike the French playwrights, Dryden made an incomparable contribution to the literary direction of classicism, adhering to its the principles. The playwright writes in his work "An Essay on Dramatic Poesy" (1668) that French playwrights strictly adhered to the principle of the requirement of three units, because of which the plays are devoided of emotion. He compares these plays to a beautiful but lifeless statue. According to Dryden the main goal in drama is idea not the rhyme. In the prologue to his drama "Aurang-Zebe", he noted that it was time to abandon rhyme:

Our author by experience finds it true,
'Tis much more hard to please himself than you;
And out of no feigned modesty, this day,
Damns his laborious trifle of a play.
Not that it's worse than what before he writ,
But he has now another taste of wit;
And, to confess a truth (though out of time),
Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, rhyme.
Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
And nature flies him like enchanted ground [5]

The writer emphasized that dramas should be full of passion, emotion. He followed the study of literary teaching and Horace's theory of classicism, based on common sense and considering that:

- dramas should reproduce nature;
- imitate samples of ancient art, ancient heroes;
- should be a sharp division of characters into positive and negative;
- the hero must always follow a sense of duty, and at the same time expressing his feelings and being a virtue;
- the playwright should create the image of a hero performing a task of national importance or a human duty, after which the hero overcomes all difficulties and receives a well-deserved reward;
- at the end of drama any tyranny should be defeated.

Dryden considered that the main task of classical literature is to educate a person, and this must be done through real enjoyment. We can see a vivid example of this in Aurangzeb's drama. In this work, Dryden proves that he is merciful and devoted to his country. Dryden argues that any war will inevitably lead the state to chaos, economic crisis and erosion of human dignity.

CONCLUSION

Thus, drama plays an important role in Dryden's work, he enriches the heritage of English literature with his contribution, follows the patterns of French classicism that has significantly advanced in this area (Cornell, the works of Racine) and at the same time had made significant contribution in it.



It is worth to mention that Dryden's works contain an interpretation of his philosophical views. At the same time, classical and Renaissance epic features are visible in them. At the heart of all his works politics of that time, the harmony of love and historical plots, social events of that time were revealed.

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