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Themes of Chronicle Drama

Abstract

Chronicle drama occupies a central position in modern literature which represents a field for interaction of ideas and actions, as it works as storage for historical and human experience. It records a sequence for the history. This study aims to examine the main themes of chronicle drama. Thus, it tracks the history of modern literature as a wide source for this literary genre. The study adopts a historical and analytical methodology in order to clarify the broader dimensions related to chronicle drama and its sources. Historically, chronicle drama was used to dramatize the facts and work as an expression of factory life of kings. That's why King John of Shakespeare in 1553 was the first one of this genre. The study concludes that chronicle drama mirrored surrounding circumstances of the facts since its early times. So, it was effected by the historical conditions. This is clearly appeared in the early works like Henry the Fifths, Tragedy of Richard III The life and Death of Jaike Strew and so, the previously mentioned "The King John". So it was affected politically and socially by the European historical context. The research also indicates that the Elizabethan Dramatists put the basics of the later stage of literature development especially on the level of techniques. This appears in Shakespeare's works who used to end the drama with restoration and disordering which still exists in postmodern literature.

Keywords: Chronicle Drama, Methodology, Circumstances, Historical Conditions, Postmodern Literature.

Introduction

Literature has an important role in the human history. Such role appears in many forms. Poetry, narration and drama represents a storage of meanings, values and actions. So, it important to be examined in order to understand the history of humanity. Exploring the relationship between literature and society, their interdependence and mutual influence necessarily leads us to a very complicated sociological study. It may take us away from the essence of literary creativity and its purpose.

Studying literature faces many dilemmas related to the idea of creative work starting from the question of its purpose, role and objectives, integrated relations with other fields of human existence to in the end attempting to turn it into a well-structured and integrated system.

(Systems in this context may be related to well-established scientific disciplines and orders that try to determine both literary movements,

elements of a literary work, place and significance of certain movements and authors in the development of literary art in general, and even those who deal with the previously mentioned relationship between literature and recipient).

In this type of drama, the ultimate endings represent by restoration-restoration to all destroyed things, insight to people who have been in miserable situations or madness. In his Theory, Jonathan Culler deals with matters such as Determination, Functions and Purpose of Literature. Here is a critical question about the chance of succeeding after Culler's assertion.

(I believe in this contest that Aristotle's Poetics is considered the base to all of the following consideration of literature. It represents also the base of any comparison of all accomplishments of the other works in the history of literature).

Much efforts were done in order to provide a scientific framing for one of the most

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sophisticated fields of human activity and develop it as a systematic functioning according to some certain rules. At this point, one should take Culler's words in his consideration to refer all possible ideas.

(Culler's words come among a wide range of works that try to signify and analyze the changes in the theory of literature as a change of human perception of many concepts related to literature.

Literature knows many genres as channels to express the idea in deferent forms. Narration is the widest one of such form. As a simple and a comprehensive way to draw a history of some moment, narration is the most spread form of narration. One of the main reasons of such importance of narration lies in its availability to be transformed into drama. Drama is a way to express themes of literature, however its forms (poetry, novels, short story...etc.). Till yard E. M. (1963), Gerald Graff and James Phelan (2000).

In the heart of the many genres of drama, chronicle or historical drama is one of the early stages of the history of literature. It is one of the most prominent genres in the history of English literature. History of chronicle literature dates back to the age of the European Renaissance times, since historical conditions have been reflected in literary works. This early period was rich of events and radical shifts in European societies in general. As a result of the direct connection and interaction between literature and human life, historical literature has evolved clearly both at the level of style and content. Andrew Sanders (1994), Gupta, S. C. Sen (1964).

Chronicle drama represents one of the three genres in Western literature in addition to the other genres (tragedy and comedy). Its roots lay in the historical context of modern history of European social transition. Such genre is based on the historical narrative, which is set in the early modern past. Leader and the most famous model of chronicle drama is William Shakespeare whose works are surly considered as the main source to define this genre.

(Shakespeare is a master of making people and things appear what they are not. Women pretend to be men, others pretend to be friends whilst planning treachery, characters pretend to be mad; identities are mistaken. In some plays, the idea of appearance and reality lies at the very heart of what the play is about. 'Measure for Measure' is depends on the notion of 'appearance' whilst in 'Macbeth' and 'Hamlet' there is also deceit and treachery).

History of Chronicle Drama

Chronicle drama has risen in the western literature during the last period of the sixteenth century as it was a very rich stage in the European history. In the beginning, it was in an epic form of poem rather than a dramatic one. It covered the entire life and stories of a king as a hero and his or her situation toward the famous incidents in that time. Most of the minor events were often invented from writer's imagination. Kolhapur.

Such genre represented a storage for the history, since the writers used to record the history of society where they lived in narrative ways. But undoubtedly, it was in their points of view. That is why there is several and variant narrations for the same events. One refers that to the historical context that represents in social, political and Inter-European transition process". Leggatt, Alexander (1988).

Chronicle drama portrays the factory life of the kings and heroes. E.W. Talbert (1963). The most obvious examples of chronicle drama are the subject of King John story which illustrates three stages of its development: The first one is the moral aspect of King John of Shakespeare. in 1553. The second is called "The Troublesome Reign of King John" it was achieved between 1587 and 1591. In this period, there is an attempt to record king johns' victory. Third one is a completely developed tragedy but in a romantic style. The Second of these three models is noted to be a chronicle drama.

It contains an obvious satirical episode that concerns within a monastic system within which it had been produced. In this early work, it is cleared how great was the interest of the public in presentation of drama that deals with the national chronicles. Watson Curtis Brown (1960).

There are also Edward I by Peele, Edward IV by Heywood, and perhaps a half dozen others which were popular in their time. Charles Edelman (1988).

Sources of Chronicle Drama

The main source of Chronicle drama is considered as what is generally accepted to be Raphael Holinshed's great work. In 1586-7, the Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland were published. Since taking control over the last two years of Richard's reign, a museum was opened in 1398 with Richard arriving at Windsor and closed with an exhibition for his corpse in 1400. It involves the majority of the principle historical events and lots of details. It is assumed that all the subjects common to Shakespeare was crucially derived from

Holinshed, Wickham, Glynne (2963), Culik, Jan (2013).

According to Nicoll, Allardyce. (1968), Jean Froissart, the historian of French history, and Edward Hall, London lawyer and a Member of Parliament may also be consulted.

Halls the union of the two noble and Illustrate Families of York and Lancastre (1548) is indicated as Hall's Chronicle. He took Shakespeare so deeply in his youthfulness dramatizing the entire history of England ranging from prosperity of Edward III passing through the followed disaster to the civil peace under the Tudors. Block, Haskell M. and Robert G. Shedd (1961).

Tillyard indicated that Shakespeare may have found a natural drama in Halls headings of the chapters like The victorious acts of King Henry the Fifth or The unquiet time of King Henry the fourth. John Wilder (1979).

As a pioneer playwright, Shakespeare was expected to be sufficiently prolific so that he would write lots of lively drama on common themes like the great victories of King Henry V of France and the wickedness of Richard the three III (*He is the opponent of Queen Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry VII*). Moreover, a matching was presented for military successes in King Henry IV as well as Elizabethan hero which viewed as the king of Navarre.

(It is cleared that this genre remarks the situation in the European great empires not only in England).

Shakespeare here managed to make combination of popular interest in the history of both the French and English two nations. (*This time remarked by the historical competition between the France and England. Is historically called as the time of empires*), but with melodramatic episodes like the Duchess Eleanor in Henry VI or the rape, witchcraft of Joan of Arc and mutilations of Titus.

(It can be noticed that the early comedies succeeded in incorporating a romantic touch in the comic formulas of Plautus and Terence. But in this context Shakespeare's tragedies included comic characters like Juliet's Nurse).

It is not easily to limit Shakespeare's drama in the comedic or tragicomic topics. This is followed by the success of Italian history of precedents in a tragicomic benefited from plots and characters.

Shakespeare's drama is not easily limited to the genres of comedy or tragedy following the successful Italian history of precedents in a tragicomic popularized by writers such as Cinthio. Such writer, from whom Shakespeare benefited from plots and characters. Perhaps, the theory of romance or tragicomic in Shakespeare's work was provided by Cinthio.

Geoffrey illustrates that Shakespeare either reviews the existed drama or turns the common

fiction which is generally translated from Italian or French into a drama. He rarely comes up characters and stories by himself thus his themes were already popular and had an interest. Hence, his tragedies are not separated from the chronicle drama and in general have a historical base deriving from national chroniclers like Holinshed which is going back to Plutarch for classical ones or King Lear and Cymbeline.

<http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/3876/MAJOR-WORKS-AND-THEMES.html#ixzz57aYDwzvD>

In addition to the previously mentioned, there is another source chronicle drama. Saintsbury, George (1890). It is Samuel Daniels Poem who produced the First Four Great Books talking about the historical civil battles between the two Houses of Lancaster and York in 1595.

It is noticed that Shakespeare affected by him on the level of tone and attitude rather than facts.

(In addition, Edward II of Christopher Marlowe was a source for Richard II as it was printed shortly after Marlowe's death in 1593).

That is why, the theme was hugely similar ant was written in the same way. So, his play was ended by the murdering the king. Henry V. Dir. Laurence Olivier (1998), Nicoll Allardyce, and Josephine Nicoll (1927).

Themes of Chronicle Drama

The richest example comes from Shakespeare's use of Holinshed's Chronicles of historical English monarchies and using of Froissart's Chronicles in addition to French chronicler. In order to write his chronicle of Richard I through Henry I through VIII.

Chronicle drama like in the work of Shakespeare didn't actually distribute between the elements of drama. For example, his comedies always incorporate tragic aspects like in The merchant of Venice when there was a life-threatening ethnic tension or in Much Ado when melodrama. The early kind of drama such as Richard III is indicated as mere tragedies, while Henry IV is more of comic dominating by the elements of Falstaff. Comedy such as Love Labor's Lost utilizes living contemporaries to represent the characters. Also, to make a match by the Orison of Twelfth Night or historical Don John of Much Ado as enacting recorded events. Often, in these situations, Shakespeare heightens and compresses instead of the entire recasts. His sources in fiction, history or previous stage are successful like The Chronicle History of King Leir, Ledge's Richards Tertius, Kyd's Hamlet, and others.

One can indicate that Shakespeare enshrined the traditional values of patriotism and so patriarchal authority. Nevertheless, he established some firm roles for females and

males. Their outcomes were by no means tragic. Shakespeare utilized interpretations of the main characters and conflicts deliberately like in Henry V, Octavius Caesar, without mentioning the determined ambiguities of Coriolanus, Brutus, Henry VIII and Hamlet. Such tension gives a systematic intent allowing lots of interpretations for audiences as well as actors.

Actually, element of provocation presents which matches same challenging influences lots of writers such as Euripides, Ibsen, Molière, Shaw, Strindberg, Chekhov, and even Brecht (consciously, modern writers followed Shakespearean precedent writers). The accessibility of Shakespeare's scripts in his physiological flexibility and intellectual ability was attributed to morally, aesthetically and so politically vagaries of each later age. This includes the twentieth century that has indicated Shakespeare as adoptable to all different kinds of modern sensibility therefore he remains the most well-known staged dramatist among all the others.

<http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/3876/MAJOR-WORKS-AND-THEMES.html#ixzz57aYZDMHU>"

The idea of stability that leads to confusion is one of the elements in Shakespeare's drama. This might be happened to an individual, society, or nature. But, it is important to point out the chronicle drama are not short on 16th and 17th century only, contrarily, it is still sometimes written, one can refer to John Arden "Left-Handed Liberty, Armstrong's Last Goodnight" as a strong example for chronicle drama in 20th century English playwrights.

In addition, Chronicle drama emphasizes on the reality of societies such as public welfare that is achieved by looking to the past as a sources of lessons for present. That genre assumes a national consciousness within audience.

Chronicle drama has been flourished in times of spreading nationalism in western societies. Especially in England in the late 16th century for about 5 decades (580s - 1630s) since it was as a fashion. Sharma, Rajesh Kumar (2009) So Gibson outline it the following examples;

- In Night's Dream play of Midsummer, Nick Bottom is changed into an ass in a magic way.
- A false letter tricks Malvolio change from a puritan steward to a foolish would be a lover in Twelfth Night play.
- Changes sometimes occur in a especial context like a health, an island, woods or close to settings which is in some kind magical

In drama levels, the changes which occurred often highlights by time. Gibson divides the

themes work into three different levels in any play and as following:

https://resource.acu.edu.au/trsanders/units/shakes_theatre/shakesthem.html

1. Individually both on psychological and personal stages. Add to that spiritual or mental disorder, personal conflicts that might be faced from a particular figure.
2. On the social stage (Nation, Family, Society).
3. The natural stage (supernatural, natural and cosmic). This could be represented in some kinds like ghosts, nature, witches or storms. Conflicts and disruptions in the life of the figures are a simulation to that happened in the real life which are then usually resolved by the end of the play.

In addition, one can refer to Some Particular Themes as it obviously used in modern literature.

1. Macbeth: Evil, Ambition, Order and Disorder, Tyranny and Violence, Reality and Appearance, Conscience and Guilty, Magic and Witchcraft.
2. Romeo and Juliet. Death and Life, Hate and love, Youth Against Age, Fortune, Free Will and Fate.
3. The Tempest: Freedom and Imprisonment, Colonialism, Transformation, Dreams and Sleep, Nature V Nurture, Reconciliation and Forgiveness, Magic and Illusion.
4. Hamlet. Procrastination, Salvation and Sin, Poison, Acting and Theatre, Madness, Corruption, Revenge.
5. King Lear: Blindness and Sight, Nature, Justice, Broken Body and the Tortured.
6. Othello: Racism, Jealousy, Self-deception.

Within a deep seen in their themes, it is cleared that the main idea, and central theme effected by the early stage in which it was emerged. Human feelings and experience are the main sources of the themes in all of the aforementioned subjects.

Conclusion

Chronicle drama meant a dramatization of the facts that it is recorded in chronicles of the times. Chronicle drama mirrored social and political transition in European societies in 16th century. Writers heavily affected by such historical condition. It is extensively appeared in many examples like the prologue of John Ford's drama Perkin Warbeck which was out of fashion in its time because both of styles and techniques

it had been written. Since that moment, many examples of chronicles drama were produced. Such examples are Henry the Fifth's famous victory, Jake Straw's life and Death, The True Tragedy of Richard III and the troublesome of Raigne of John King of England.

By the first glance, one can easily notice the obvious reality of the European history within such period. Dynamism in political and social transition in the European societies were reflected in both contexts and techniques of these works. It is also obviously seen in the historical context that the overthrow of the tyrant Richard III motivated and affected in emergence of chronicle drama. Cavallaro, Dani (2001).

One found that in the so called Elizabethan Dramatists works which included the spirit and incidents of this age. Edward Halls, the Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate families of Lancaster & York and the chronicle of England, Scotland and Ireland of Raphael Holinshed. All these works were benefited their material from the wealth of chronicle literature. Ribner, Irving (1963).

Finally, a diverse argument has been established in Shakespearean scholars to indicate whether Shakespeare utilized to end his drama with all of what disorder or that restored already remain present. Nevertheless, we knew that figures changed in this way in all of his drama. For example, the change from life to death or even the development of the new insights and the empathy. Storr, Anthony (2007), <http://www.amazines.com>.

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