

Literary Schools

Compiled and prepared

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PREFACE

This book has been designed to serve as a textbook for literary school course. It is an invitation to think about literary school, to find out what is known and to distinguish the known from unknown. Our main purpose is to help students to sharpen their professional judgments on literary works. This book which offers a framework for analyzing literary schools and related issues, is specific to English works. It is intended to be applicable to all literary works in English.

Much of what is addressed in the following pages to one genre has also application to other genres and it is hoped that students major in English language and literature can use the text as a basis for a common viewpoint. It contains the main literary schools ranging from classicism and neoclassicism in the 18th century to postmodernism of the 20th century. The full list has appeared in the contents page.

We begin our enquiry by clearing the ground through a discussion of 'background information'. It is believed that without some basic grasp of the context that surrounds and shapes any single literary texts, those texts can often mean very little. Therefore, the role the prevailing conditions – social, political, economic, religious – plays in the rise or decline of a literary school are fully discussed. Then the principles and elements of a literary school or movement are emphasized. The next stage begins by reading the samples given for each literary school in the light of the main principles of the school. In each part, the students are urged to think about the key concepts and constituent principles by asking the following questions: which of these principles have influenced the work under discussion? And to what extent? What qualities in the form or content of the work differentiate it from another literary work. We need bearing in mind that in some instances, the line of demarcation between some literary schools is so thin that it is practically indistinguishable, such as realism and naturalism. Each work may have some and lack others. There are works to which

different principles of various literary schools can be applied. *Paradise Lost* can be viewed as a classical heroic religious work as well as a Marxist work with clear social conflict model.

A limitation in another direction should also be pointed out. While this book aims to be 'practical' in a broad sense and provide information on class management and techniques used as a kind of guidance, the exact study of long works such as novels and plays is beyond the scope of this book. Clearly, the readers are the losers which they fail to see in a work all that may be legitimately seen there. We have presented a number of literary schools, aware that many have been only briefly treated and that much has been generalized. But we suggested some of the tools and principles that enable students to follow features, to judge and to discern so that they see better the truth of a literary work, to relate it to the range of human experience in particular condition. Doing this systematically, it is hoped that we will end up by understanding literary schools better and by making sense of how to trace the characteristics of a specific school in the work under question.

Finally our debt to Ardebil Branch, Islamic Azad University is obvious and we are grateful to those who have supported and furthered the work. We once again acknowledge the many helpful suggestions that were made during revising and proof-reading stages. For any shortcomings in our book we, of course, take full responsibility.

Roshan Baba Alipor

Vida Sadrolmamalki

Overview

Literary school refers to a group of writers and critics who have a particular set of ideas about writing and try to carry out these ideas in their works. It helps us to analyze and classify the literary works and understand them better. If we want to refer to its history, we find the roots in classical time so it is better to start our studies from classicism.

Classicism is the achievement and attitudes of ancient Greece and Rome. Its major characteristics are: Restraint, restraint of emotion, restricted scope, harmony, decorum, dominance of reason, sense of form, unity of design, clarity, balance, attention to structure and logical organization, chasteness in style, moderation, self-control, intellectualism, respect for tradition, imitation, conservation, good sense.

The rediscovery of classical works was a source of encouragement and inspiration for renaissance artists and writers. They desire to imitate these works (classical works) in their work and to consider their rules and conventions in their own time and their arts. The word renaissance itself means "rebirth", the rebirth and revival of classical art, literature and learning that began in Italy in the 14th century, spread to the north, including England, by the 16th century, and ended in the north in the mid 17th century. Many attempts have been made to define "the Renaissance" in a brief

steamed on though a single essence underlay the complete features of the intellectual and cultural life of a number of European countries over several hundred years. It has, for example been described on the birth of the modern world out of the ashes of the Dark Ages, on the discovery of the world and the discovery of man, and on the era of the emergence of untrammelled individualism in life, thought, religion and art.

During this period it is possible to identify a number of events and discoveries which beginning approximately in the fifteenth century, clearly

effected distinctive changes in the beliefs, productions, and manner of life of many people especially in the upper and the intellectual classes.

The innovations during this period may be regarded on putting a strain on the relatively closed and stable world of the great civilization of the later.

Middle ages, when most of the essential and permanent truths about god man and the universe were considered to be adequately known.

The full impact of many developments in the Renaissance did not make itself felt until the Enlightenment in the later seven tenth and the eighteenth century restless curiosity and the imaginative audacity of many people of the era, whether scholars, thinkers, or adventurers.

Study of the Renaissance might well center on five interrelated issues. First, although Renaissance thinkers tried to associate themselves with classical antiquity and to separate themselves from the Middle Ages, but there were some traces of their recent past evident such as belief in Great Chain of Being. Second, during this period, some significant political changes were taking place. Third, the great movement of Humanism and expression of the noblest ideals were in the period. Fourth, the literary doctrine of imitation which was connected to Humanism and the idea that how literary works should be created was declared. Finally, the religion movement known as the Reformation was one of the outcomes of enlightenment of that period.

The Great Chain of Being

Among the most important of the continuities with the Classical period was the concept of the Great Chain of Being. Its major premise was that every existing thing in the universe had its "place" in a divinely planned hierarchical order, which was pictured as a chain vertically extended. ("Hierarchical" refers to an order based on a series of higher and lower, strictly ranked gradations.) An objects "place" depended on the relative proportion of "spirit" and "matter" it contained-the less "spirit" and the more "matter", the lower down it stood. At the bottom, for example, stood

various types of inanimate objects, such as metals, stones, and the four elements (earth, water, air, fire). Higher up were various members of the vegetative class, like trees and flowers, and then came animals; then humans; and then angels. At the very top was God. Then within each of these large groups, there were other hierarchies. For example, among metals, gold was the noblest and stood highest; lead had less "spirit" and more matter and so stood lower. The various species of plants, animals, humans, and angels were similarly ranked from low to high within their respective segments. Finally, it was believed that between the segments themselves, there was continuity (selfish were lowest among animals and shaded into the vegetative class, for example, because without locomotion, they most resembled plants.)

Beside universal orderliness, there was universal interdependence. This was implicit in the doctrine of "Correspondences," which held that different segments of the chain reflected other segments. For example, renaissance thinkers viewed a human being as a microcosm (literary, a "little world") that reflected the structure of the world as a whole, the macrocosm; just as the world was composed of four "elements" (earth, water, air, fire), so too was the human body composed of four substances called "humors," with characteristics corresponding to the elements. (Illness occurred when there was an imbalance or "disorder" among the humors, that is, when they did not exist in proper proportion to each other.) "Correspondences" existed everywhere, on many levels. Thus the hierarchical order within the family, the state, and the forces of nature. When things were properly ordered, reason ruled the emotions, just as a king ruled his subjects, the parent ruled the child, and the sun governed the planets. But when disorder was present in one realm, it was correspondingly reflected in other realms. For example, in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the simultaneous disorder in family relationships and in the state (child ruling parent, subject ruling king) is reflected in the disorder of Lear's mind (the loss of reason) as well as in the disorder of nature (the raging storm). Lear even equates his loss of reason to "a tempest in my mind."

Through Renaissance writers seemed to be quite on the side of "order," the theme of "disorder" is much in evidence, suggesting that the age may have