

Topic- 008: “Drama In sub-continent”

Drama did not continue to flourish in the Middle East, however; much of the ancient theatre tradition there had disappeared by the third century b.c., and the religion of Islam, which originated early in the seventh century a.d., viewed depictions of humans—in both the visual and performing arts—as irreligious. But dramatic art was not stifled: from its Middle Eastern origins, it spread rapidly both east and west. In both India and Attica (now Greece), cultic rituals took place well before the first millennium b.c. And by the middle of that millennium, in the West, there arose a spectacular theatre in the city-state of Athens, which over the course of 150 years produced four of the greatest playwrights and the most important dramatic theorist of the theatre’s long history. Greek drama ushered in the Western strain of theatre, establishing its major modes of tragedy and comedy and characters and plot lines that underlie much of Western drama as we know it today.

Asian drama

The earliest form of Indian drama was the Sanskrit drama that is said to have its framework directly given by Lord Shiva who used these techniques to pray to Lord Vishnu. Between the 1st century AD and the 10th was a period of relative peace in the history of India during which hundreds of modern plays were written. With the Islamic conquests that began in the 10th and 11th centuries, theatre was discouraged or forbidden entirely. Later, in an attempt to re-assert indigenous values and ideas, village theatre was encouraged across the subcontinent, developing in a large number of regional languages from the 15th to the 19th centuries. Modern Indian theatre developed during the period of colonial rule under the British Empire, from the mid-19th century until the mid-20th.

Sanskrit theatre

The earliest-surviving fragments of Sanskrit drama date from the 1st century AD.[38] The wealth of archeological evidence from earlier periods offers no indication of the existence of a tradition of theatre. The ancient Vedas (hymns from between 1500 to 1000 BC that are among the earliest examples of literature in the world) contain no hint of it (although a small number are composed in a form of dialogue) and the rituals of the Vedic period do not appear to have developed into theatre. The Mahābhāṣya by Patañjali contains the earliest reference to what may have been the seeds of Sanskrit drama. This treatise on grammar from 140 BC provides a feasible date for the beginnings of theatre in India.

The major source of evidence for Sanskrit theatre is A Treatise on Theatre (Nāṭyaśāstra), a compendium whose date of composition is uncertain (estimates range from 200 BC to 200 AD)

and whose authorship is attributed to Bharata Muni. The Treatise is the most complete work of dramaturgy in the ancient world. It addresses acting, dance, music, dramatic construction, architecture, costuming, make-up, props, the organisation of companies, the audience, competitions, and offers a mythological account of the origin of theatre.

Its drama is regarded as the highest achievement of Sanskrit literature. It utilised stock characters, such as the hero (nayaka), heroine (nayika), or clown (vidusaka). Actors may have specialised in a particular type. It was patronized by the kings as well as village assemblies. Famous early playwrights include Bhasa, Kalidasa (famous for Vikrama and Urvashi, Malavika and Agnimitra, and The Recognition of Shakuntala), Śudraka (famous for The Little Clay Cart), Asvaghosa, Daṇḍin, and Emperor Harsha (famous for Nagananda, Ratnavali and Priyadarsika). Śakuntalā (in English translation) influenced Goethe's Faust (1808–1832).

Drama and theater's history in Pakistan is not news rather it dates back to older times. The theater and drama have been flourishing in the country. The positive theater and the theater based on literature have turned much lesser or has been almost vanished in Pakistan but the commercial theater is on high heels of success. Drama on stage is too witnessed lesser but the commercial drama on television is on boost.

Theater in Pakistan dates back to 19th century during the time of Wajid Ali Shah, that was also called the beginning time of Urdu Literature. By the end of the 19th century, this form of semi operatic drama along with its profusion of singing and dancing, its hyperbolic style of dialogue and its rhetorical technique of acting, had emerged as the chief form of entertainment in the metropolitan cities in the subcontinent. The last of this form of theater came with the legendary Urdu playwrights like Agha Hashr Kashmiri. Then the theaters had started turning into commercial cinemas giving room to feature films, which goy hugely popular among the masses and still this business is much flourishing in this part of the world and even in the world also.

The commercial theater arrived in Lahore in 1980s era when the likes of Naheed Khanum, Amanullah, Mastana and Baboo Baral gave it the meaning. They all had their own audiences and people simply loved them and this form of commercial theater. These artists' lively dialogues and innovative style was like a breath of fresh air for the masses.

In the heydays of commercial theater, which is still much popular among the people but has now turned vulgar getting laced with cheap dialogues and cheap dances by the girls with skimpy outfits, the need of serious realistic drama was felt by the urban people but it was not given due consideration and still no consideration at all.

The marvelous plays written by the legendary and classy Urdu literature's figures such as Mirza Qalich Beg, Abdul Halim Sharar and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. Their plays were not performed and remain written in writing form.

In 1930 and 40s, radio came in to provide the platform for the dramatists and the likes of Imtiaz Ali Taj, Saadat Hasan Manto and Rafi Peerzada came and became the prominent playwrights of radio.

Post independence, young students and amateurs came to succeed in forming the small theater groups. The likes of Khawaja Mueenuddin and Mehr Nigar dashed off the plays of great importance. Among them, Khawaja Mueenuddin emerged as the biggest playwright. His plays were witty and dialogues poured light on social things. His most famous plays were Lal qile se lulu khet tak, Mirza Ghalib bander road per and Talim-e-Balighaan.

By the end of fifties, another lumniosu lot of the literature came in. Like Zia Moheyeddin and Ali Ahmed came. Zia is the son of Khawaja Mueenuddin.

Zia Moheyuddin is the one who rescued the theater and literature utterly. He got international recognition in drama, theater and film. His readings of literary pieces got immense popularity. He traveled to Hollywood as well and became an international star.

Others biggies like Kamal Ahmad Rizvi, Bano Qudsia, Intezar Hussain, Ishfaq Ahmad, Amjad Islam Amjad, Anwar Maqsood, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, Atta Ul Haq Qasmi and others too added the flavor.

Rafi Peer Theater has been doing immensely great job in forming theater and drama in Pakistan. Peerzada family like Usman Peerzada, Imran Peerzada, Samina Peerzada and others have been doing wonders in this art. The stage was also adorned with the talented artists like Moeen Akhtar and Omer Sharif.

“Script Writing” MCD502
