

The Brave Ideas of the Woman playwright in the English Restoration Period Literature

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English women prose occupies significant role in the studying process of English Literature. Georgian Society is familiar with famous English writers' works like Jane Austin, Virginia Woolf, Charlote Bronte and othrs, But there are still many feminine writers who are shadowed in Georgian Literary scientific studies and researches, who expressed their brave ideas in the masculine society and showed their interests and great desire to occupy equal place and rights in their world.

Aphra Behn, an English playwright, fiction writer, translator, who entered the history of the restoration literature as the first woman playwright who earned her living with a pen. Her life was not easy, it was not full of joy or happiness, but on the contrary it was a continual work and struggles against overwhelming adversity. The work discusses the courage of the lonely, poor and friendless woman who was the first in England to turn to the pen for surviving, but she did not only win herself bread but also she won her position in the English and World literature. Aphra Behn is famous with her poetry, essays, novels but the most important about her is that she was the first playwright woman, whose tragi-comedies were staged in her life, which were very successful but often turned into the subject of discussions and mostly arose dissatisfaction among critics. Especially men writers were against admitting and acknowledging the woman writer's talent and ability.

Three plays we discuss in the work "The force marriage or the jealous Bridegroom", "The Amorous Prince" and "The Dutch Lover" were subjects of discussions, irritation and hatred as the most painful issues of real contemporary society of that period are shown in them. It is considerable to admit that these three plays brought the playwright woman writer money, friends and reputation.

Key words: Playwright, reputation, Masculine, Feminine, restoration period, acknowledge, women's education, overwhelming adversity.

The questions of gender equality, feminism are getting more and more important, the main topic of discussions, conferences, analysis. Modern society has different approach to feminism but it was not like this in the past. The women's struggle for their rights started in the old past. English literature has always

been masculine. According to 18th and 19th century English standards of femininity, middle and upper class women- as opposed to men- were supposed to devote themselves almost exclusively to the domestic sphere of “hearth and home” as daughters, sisters, wives and mothers caring for fathers, brothers, husbands and children. They were expected to adopt suitably modest behavior and moral code of sexual purity and self-sacrifice, and avoid having strong desires and strong opinions, especially in opposition to the men who were seen as their “guardians”. Such differences of gender roles, by affecting access to factors like education, experience, time and financial support, have had their influence on the ways in which men and women could participate as writers, readers, critics, and even as characters.¹ The first female English authors are thought to have begun writing in the later Middle Ages. Though some literary critics claim that women writers existed much earlier. Diane Watt in her research- “About Women, writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650-1100” writes: “Women were at the heart of the emerging English literary tradition much earlier” In the book she lays out how some anonymous texts from the period were probably created by women, and contends that men rewrote works originally produced by women.² Diana Watt argues that “early women’s writing was often lost, suppressed, or deliberately destroyed”³ The question of women writings’ starting point is important and necessary today to understand the nature of women better, the conditions they lived in, the secret ways they used to write, the reason of writings, their struggle for equality, self-confidence, their rights in the period when they were ignored, overlooked or excluded. Georgian society is very well familiar with British women’s prose, with world known writers Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, Charlotte Bronte, Emily Bronte, George Elliot, Emily Dickinson, etc. In my latest scientific researches I started to concentrate on the women writers whose names are lesser known for Georgian society depending on the growing interest of the writers who represent women writing in the medieval English literature. These women truly occupy important place in English Literary history as they were the first generation who started furious struggle for women’s wellbeing, they were the first women writers who started their active participation into social life with the rise of organized feminism, developing into the feminization of literary culture, leading into the various movements of modern twentieth century feminism⁴

¹ Literature and Gender available at:

https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/135505/file/introduction/satellite/literature_and_gender.html

² The Guardian, Women's writing began much earlier than supposed, finds academic, Alisson Flood, 2020 available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/nov/07/womens-writing-began-much-earlier-than-supposed-finds-academic>

³ Bloomsbury, Women, Writing and Religion in England and Beyond ,650-1100, Diana Walt, London, Oxford,2019 available at:

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/women-writing-and-religion-in-england-and-beyond-6501100-9781474270625>

⁴ British Women Association. A History of the BWW, by Co-Founders Pamela Corpron Parker and Cindy LaCom available at: <https://britishwomenwriters.org/>

Among the First British women writers' name is the first woman playwright, poet, translator and fiction writer from the restoration Era.- Arpha Behn, who is known in the history of Literature as "First woman to make a living with writing" Much conjecture and little substantial information exists for a memoir of Aphra Behn. Her original name was Aphra Johnson, she was conceivably born in Canterbury in December, 1640, at Wye, a small market Town in Kent. Her father was a barber. When she was 18, her family moved to Surinam, as his father, a relative of Francis, who was Lord Willoughby of Parham, administrator of several British colonies in the West Indies, promised him to give some post. John Amis died on the voyage, but mother with her children arrived safely and were accommodated in one of the best houses in Surinam. Arpha Behn described the adventure that family experienced while travelling to a new location and the life in Surinam in her famous work "Oronoko". While in Surinam she witnessed the fortunes and fate of the royal Slave, Oroonoko, She writes about Oroonoko's personality and describes his life naturally and feelingly. Surinam supplied the material for her vivid comedies, the broad humour and early colonial life are photographic reality in her "Widow Ranter"; "The history of Bacon in Virginia", in which she touches hundreds of the detailed facts, which could be the outcome of long residence and keen observation of the author.⁵

Expectations about subsequent changes in their family affairs in Surinam failed, so the family had to return to England. They settled in London, where Aphra met a Dutch merchant, named Behn, who got so fascinated by her wit and calm nature, that he offered her his hand and fortune in 1664. During her married life, she is said to have been an influencer and appeared even at the Court, attracting and amusing the king himself by her anecdotes and clever ideas. Her husband died from pledge in a year after the marriage. Many literary scholars doubt if she had been married at all. They think that the marriage was supposed to have the title "Mrs" for evoking respectability and protection purpose. After his death she found herself helpless, without funds and friends. She applied to the court for assistance. To the fact that her name was Dutch and that she had been brought into close contact with the Dutch society by her husband, furthermore, because of her cleverness and wit, she was selected as a political agent in Holland. Due to her position neither she, nor her writings could be acceptable or acknowledged by English government. It is well known fact that she served the king Charle II as a spy in Nidererlands during the war against the Dutch. She was not paid for her services and had to borrow money for returning home back to her country heavily in Debts. She was taken to prison as she could not pay her debts. Nothing is known in which prison and how long she was arrested there. It does not seem that her imprisonment was long. We don't know either who was the person

⁵ Anthology of English Literature, The life of Aphha Behn, Anninia Jokinene 2011 available at: <http://www.luminarium.org/eightlit/behn/behnbio>

who paid money for her release. The rest of Aphra Behn's life was dedicated to pleasure and poetry.⁶ She broke down cultural barriers and gave track to future women writers for more action. At that time the writer could stay anonymous and she wrote with pastoral pseudonym -Astrea. She became a professional playwright. From Superficial look, the life she had, could be considered as extraordinary for any era, but for a woman living in the 17th century, who was neither rich or wealthy, it was unheard and unbelievable thing. She was on a long and dangerous journey into the wild in the west, lived with Indians, was involved in a slave revolt. She was a "feminist, who defended women's rights, fought for their education and rights, for their free choice of marriage according to their own free will. She was the first to talk about sexual freedom and equality between women and men. She was the writer, whose works were recognized by the dominant masculine literature during restoration period.⁷

Aphra Behn was colossally productive writer and playwright of her period. She wrote plays, fiction, poetry, she was translating works from French and Latin. She was one of the earliest and first of her gender who earned a living by writing as a writer in the English language. She was a successful author at a time when few writers, especially if they were women, could support themselves solely through their writing. Aphra Behn's work and lifestyle is so wide and various that it can be discussed and analyzed from different contexts and from different sides. She wrote 19 plays, 4 novels, Short stories, poetry. Each of them needs to be studied and analyzed very attentively in details to understand the moral, idea and soul of the enthusiastic and brave woman writer. The writing style and poetic devices are also the research themes that matters in her writings. In this research I tried to focus on Aphra Behn's Dramatic activities and writings, as she is considered as the first women playwright of English Literature. The plays "The force marriage or The jealous Bridegroom", "The Amorous Prince" and "The Dutch Lover" were the plays which brought her money, friends and reputation. "The force marriage or The Jealous bridegroom"⁸ was produced at the Duke's Theatre. It is a tragi-comedy about a woman's right to choose her own husband. It is tragic because Erminia and Galatea, the King's daughters are not able to choose the men they want to marry. It is a comedy because the brother and sister who are royalty are in love with the "commoners" who are married to each other. Romance is the plot of this play. The heroines' love is so strong that it outweighs their sense of obedience to society. "Ermenia, the king's daughter, who is in love with Philander, refuses and protests to

⁶ The Project Gutenberg e Book of The Works of Arpha Behn, Vol.1, Updated 2020 available at:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/21339/21339-h/21339-h.htm>

⁷ Ana Kvinikadze, "Sarah Kein and Modern British Women Dramaturgy", MA thesis, Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia University, Tbilisi, 2018 available at:

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⁸ The Forced marriage, by Jacinta Justice, community and Technical College, 2011 available at:

<https://hum120.wordpress.com/2011/05/22/the-forced-marriage/>

marry Alcippus, whom the king wants to grant for his brave battle. Furious king dismisses her by saying she isn't of royal blood. The King's another daughter Galatea is in love with Alcippus but she dares not to say about it anything because he is not of royal blood.⁹ "The climax of the play is when Alcippus returns home unexpected and finds Philander hiding in his bedroom. A fight breaks out between the two and when Ermenia steps in the middle Philander leaves willingly. Alcippus then accuses her of adultery and strangles her. Thinking she is dead Alcippus is overcome with thoughts of suicide. Ermenia is seen walking through the courtyard with a veil and is believed to be a ghost. She then uses this to her advantage and appears to Alcippus telling him that Galatea is the one he should marry. During her funeral Ermenia reveals that she is alive and the king grants the marriage between Philander and Ermenia and Galatea and Alcippus".

Resolution of this story is that Ermenia and Galatea are finally allowed to marry who they love" Ermenia, who is the main character of the play, is caught in an awful situation. Confronting the society, leaves her heartbroken. She has to obey her father's order, but she moves on and continues struggle for her own happiness, by letting her husband know that she will never ever share his bed. Ermenia, who is the victim of loveless and unhappy marriage arranged by families, is drawn as heroine by Arpha Behn. With this tragic comedy Behn introduced us with the life and destiny of women in the 17th century. Sexual jealousy continues to be the main subject in "The Amorous Prince". A comedy was Arpha Behn's second staged play. Arpha Behn shows another angle of women's witty nature. Clarina the main woman character of the play, learns her husband's plan to test her virtue. But she devises a counterplot of her own with the help of her sister-in-law Ismena. The women push gender boundaries. Arpha draws negative sides of the men in the play and shows their dominant nature over women which arises disgust and hatred against the strong side. Frederic is the face of men, the prince of the title who is in love with Cloris, he makes vows to her, but does not look at this matter seriously as he knows she is socially beneath him. In reality Cloris is not low-born, she is modest, polite and intelligent because she was raised in the country. The main idea of the play, which the author wants to outline is to depict the function of core relationships, not only between spouses, but also between siblings, fathers and children. "The Play "The Dutch Lover" has only one Dutch character, Haunce van Ezel, which is translated "Haunce of Donkey" in English. The title already indicates that the author is not positive about the character and about his portray. Dutch were considered phlegmatic, passionless. Haunce is engaged to Euphemia, but Euphemia is in love with Alonzo, who tries to marry her by impersonating Haunce by being very impatient, uncivil and pushy, constantly asking Don Carlo for his daughter. He temporarily borrows Haunce,s identity. Haunce arrives in Madrid before they can actually get

⁹ The Forc'd Marriage, Or The Jealous Bridegroom, Alpha Behn, published by H. L. and R. B. for James Magnus, London, 1671 available at:
<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=eebo;idno=A27294.0001.001>

married “¹⁰ The play was staged in 1673, critics had only negative attitude towards the play, only on the ground that the author of the play was a woman. Aphra Behn was proud that she was a woman and that she and her plays became the subject of discussions and sabotage. With all her essays and letters she struggled against existing attitude towards women. She claimed that women had been held back because they had no right of education, and not because they lacked ability. In the above mentioned comedies she lines out about women’s wit, their cleverness, just, struggle and acceptance and eagerness for new style of life. They are bored to be examined and treated like things or belongings of their fathers, brothers and husbands. Behn’s women characters are brave, enthusiastic, motivated who break barriers in early English literature, struggle for independence, free choice in marriage, against slavery, obedience, Aphra Behn’s women’s brave characters are reflection of Behn’s inner struggling character. Experiencing the hard conditions of being on lower level and unfair attitude from the strong” side, they themselves try to unit together to confirm that they have the same rights, will and desires. The real tragedy of women are really well expressed in her plays in comic style, she bravely outlined advantages of women over men. Arpha Behn made a revolution in her period. The questions she arose in her works are painful and actual even today. There are forced marriages in nowadays world, parents play a huge role in a lot of people’s decisions, the society is still Masculine and men are still considered having more power, strength and decision making rights. 300 years have passed after her death but the works of Arpha Behn are still meaningful, which influences the people who are interested in issues of feminism, self-determination, gender equality, etc. Arpha Behn wrote the works which were vivid pictures of her modern society and reflection of the hard life she had to overcome. Her life was hard struggle against overwhelming adversity. She can be role play and encourage lonely, friendless, poor women like her, who used her pen to have piece of bread, the pen which brought her name, immortality and fame.

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¹⁰ The Amorous Prince, Or, the Curious Husband, by Mrs.A. Behn, Behn Arpha,printed by J.M for Thomas Dring, London,1671 available at: <http://public-library.uk/ebooks/36/41.pdf>

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დიანა მიქელაძე

სამცხე-ჯავახეთის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი

დრამატურგი ქალის გაბედული იდეები რესტავრაციის პერიოდის ინგლისურ ლიტერატურაში

ინგლისური ქალური პროზა მნიშვნელოვან როლს იკავებს ინგლისური ლიტერატურის შესწავლის პროცესში. ქართულ სამეცნიერო სივრცეში საკმაოდ კარგად არის შესწავლილი მწერლების ჯეინ ოსტინის, ვირჯინია ვულფის, შარლოტა ბრონტეს და სხვა ქალი მწერლების ცხოვრება და შემოქმედება, თუმცა კვლავ შესწავლის პროცესშია არცთუ ისე მცირერიცხოვანი იმ ინგლისელი ქალი მწერლების შემოქმედება და საზოგადოებრივი როლი, რომლებიც ჯერ კიდევ ბურჟუაზიაში მოცული. მათ გაბედული სიტყვა თქვეს, თავისი პოზიცია გამოხატეს, რითაც საფუძველი ჩაუყარეს ინგლისურ ფემინისტურ მწერლობას, რაც მათი ცხოვრების პერიოდის მასკულანურ საზოგადოებაში სირთულეს წარმოადგენდა.

ნაშრომის მიზანია, წარმოადგინოს XVII საუკუნის, რესტავრაციის პერიოდის დრამატურგის, მხატვრის, მთარგმნელის, მწერალი ქალის - აფრა ბენის ცხოვრება და შემოქმედება, რომელიც ინგლისური ლიტერატურის ისტორიაში შევიდა, როგორც პირველი

დრამატურგი ქალი მწერალი, რომელიც თავის სარჩოს კალმის მეშვეობით გამოიმუშავებდა. მისი ცხოვრება არ იყო გამორჩეული სიხარულითა და ბედნიერებით, პირიქით მან რთული და პრობლემებით სავსე გზა განვლო. ეს იყო უწყვეტი ჭაპან-წყვეტა, გაუთავებელი ბრძოლა დიდი უბედურების წინააღმდეგ. მარტოხელა, ღარიბი ქალის გმირული და თავგანწირული ბრძოლა საკუთარი მეს, საკუთარი ძალის და პოზიციის გასამყარებლად, რაც მიუღებელი იყო საზოგადოე-ბისათვის და რის გამოც იგი სრულიად მარტო მეგობრების გარეშე ეული აღმოჩნდა. ნაშრომში წარმოდგენილია არფა ბენის ცხოვრება და შემოქმედება. ის იყო პირველი ინგლისელი ქალი, რომელმაც კალამი საკუთარი თავის და სხვა ქალების მომავლის, მათი სავალალო ბედის გადასარჩენად მიმართა. აღწერდა რა ქალთა უფლებებო, არასახარბიელო მდგომარეობას, იგი სუსტი სქესის წარმომადგენლებს თავიანთი ადგილის დამკვიდრებისკენ, განათლებისკენ, პოზიციების გამყარებისკენ, თანასწორი უფლებების მოთხოვნებისკენ მოუწოდებდა. აფრა ბენი ცნობილია თავისი პოეზიით, ესეებით, რომანებით, უპირველეს ყოვლისა, ის იყო პირველი დრამატურგი ქალი, რომლის სიცოცხლეშივე დაიდგა ტრაგიკომედიები, რომელთა განხილვა კრიტიკოსების ცხოველ საკამათო და ამასთანავე არასასურველ თემად გადაიქცა. მწერალი ქალის ნიჭისა და უნარის აღიარების განსაკუთრებით წინააღმდეგი იყვნენ მწერალი მამაკაცები. ნაშრომში გაანალიზებული არფა ბენის სამი პიესა „ ძალით ქორწინება ან ეჭვიანი საქმრო“, „მოყვარული პრინცი“ და „პოლანდიელი შეყვარებული“ განსაკუთრებულ ზიზღს, აგრესიას და დისკუსიას იწვევდა, რადგან სწორედ მათში ყველაზე მეტად იყო ნაჩვენები არფა ბენის პერიოდის საზოგადოების მტკივნეული საკითხები, თუმცა საგულისხმოა ის გარემოება, რომ სწორედ ამ პიესებმა დრამატურგ ქალს, ფული, მეგობრები და რეპუტაცია დაუბრუნა.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: დრამატურგი ქალი, რეპუტაცია, მასკულანური საზოგადოება, ფემინიზმი, რესტავრაციის პერიოდი, ქალთა განათლება , აღიარება, უბედურება.

რეცენზენტი: პროფესორი იან აიდუკოვიჩი