

Literary genres of the Restoration Period

Heroic Tragedy

The heroic tragedy emerged at the beginning of the Restoration Period. It was drama in the epic mode, grand rhetorical and declamatory at its best and often bombastic at its worst. The heroic virtues of love and honour were the themes of the heroic play. It was, in particular, was influenced by the French classical drama of Corneille and Racine. John Dryden defines it in the preface to the *Conquest of Granada*, (1672), “a heroic play ought to be the imitation of, in little, of a heroic poem; and consequently, ... love and valour ought to be the subject of it.” The protagonist is often a large scale warrior, a noble heroine are typically placed in a situation in which their passionate love is in conflict with the demands of honour and with the hero’s patriotic duty to his country. When the conflict ends in a disaster, the effect is a tragedy. John Dryden was one of the most popular exponents of heroic tragedy in this period. Some other notable dramatists who wrote heroic plays were Sir William Davenant, Nathaniel lee, Thomas Otway, Joseph Addison etc.

Satirical Poetry:

Satire is a literary genre in which the poet/ writer criticises the follies and mannerism of his times in a mocking and often humorous way. “Satiric poetry” challenges the suggestion that poetry and satire are mutually exclusive and insists on the status of work as poems, on the same model as “elegiac poetry” or “lyric poetry”. One of the best examples of satirical poetry is Dryden’s *Mac Flecknoe* and

Absalom and Achitophel, Pope's Rape of the Lock, Dr Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes etc.