



UNDERSTANDING COMEDY: HOWARD JACOBSON'S ZOO TIME

DR. T. VASANTHAKUMARI

Assistant Professor and Research Advisor
PG and Research Department of English
Govt. Arts College for Women (A)
Pudukkottai (TN) INDIA

K. NIRMALA

Research Scholar
Gust Lecture and Department of English
Govt. Arts College for Woman (A)
Pudukkottai. (TN) INDIA

ABSTRACT

Howard Jacobson is one of the comic novelist and journalist in English Literature. He has written fourteen novels and five non -fictions and he is a winner of the Man Booker Prize for his novel The Finkler Question in 2010. His novel Zoo Time won the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse prize for his comic writing. It deals with the story of a childless, Jewish middle aged man, born in Manchester and after he lives in London. He is pursuing the profession of novelist. His name is Guy Ableman. This paper aims at deals with the comic elements in Zoo Time. Guy is a protagonist who tries to write a novel. But it makes him failure among the readers. In the society the people are not accepted him as a novelist Jacobson is a highly self-conscious writer. He deals with the plot which is minimal and largely circular.

Keywords: Howard Jacobson, Zoo Time, Comedy, Comic theatre, Jewish.

INTRODUCTION

The word comedy is derived from the Greek verb to revel and comedy comes out of the revels and associated with the rites of Dionysus, a god of vegetation. Aristotle also states the word comedy in his work *Poetics*. It originates from the phallic songs. The contemporary meaning of the term comedy is an any discourse or work generally intended to be humorous or to amuse by, inducing laughter. It is developed especially in theater, television, film and standup comedy. The sense of the term comedy must be carefully distinguished from its academic one. The comic theatre originates from the western, in ancient Greece. The political satire was performed by the comic poets at the theatres. Some conflicts should be aroused in theatrical genre. Northrop Frye depicted these two opposing sides as a society of the youth and society of the old.

DR. SOMAPALYAM OMPRAKASH

1Page



Howard Jacobson is a Man Booker Prize-winning British author and journalist in the 21st century English Literature. He is best known for his comic novels that often revolve around the dilemmas of British Jewish characters. He was born on August 25th, in Manchester, 1942. He was brought up in Prestwich and was educated at Stand Grammar School in Whitefield, before going on to study English at Downing College, Cambridge under F. R. Leavis. He lectured for three years at the University of Sydney before returning to England to teach at Selwyn College, Cambridge. His later teaching posts included a period at Wolverhampton Polytechnic from 1974 to 1980. Jacobson has described himself as a Jewish Jane Austen. He also states that he is not by any means conventionally Jewish. He does not go to Shul. He feels that he has a Jewish mind and has a Jewish intelligence. He feels linked to previous Jewish minds of the past. He does know what kind of trouble this gets somebody into, a disputatious mind. What a Jew is has been made by the experience of 5,000 years, that's what shapes the Jewish sense of humor, that's what shaped Jewish pugnacity or tenaciousness. He maintains that comedy is a very important part in his writings.

His time at Wolverhampton was to form the basis of his first novel, *Coming from Behind*, a campus comedy about a failing polytechnic that plans to merge facilities with a local football club. The episode of teaching in a football stadium in the novel is, according to Jacobson in a 1985 BBC interview, the only portion of the novel based on a true incident. He also wrote a travel book in 1987, titled *In the Land of Oz*, which was researched during his time as a visiting academic in Sydney. His fiction, particularly in the novels he has published since 1998, is characterized chiefly by a discursive and humorous style. Recurring subjects in his work include male–female relations and the Jewish experience in Britain in the mid- to late-20th century. He has been compared to prominent Jewish-American novelists such as Philip Roth, in particular for his habit of creating doppelgangers of himself in his fiction. Jacobson has been called as the English Philip Roth and also he calls himself the Jewish Jane Austen.

The Mighty Walzer was published in 1999 and it deals with the table tennis champion. It won the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for comic writing. It is set in the Manchester of the 1950s and Jacobson, himself a table tennis fan in his teenage years, admits that there is more than an element of autobiography in it. His 2002 novel *Who's Sorry Now?*—the central character of which is a Jewish luggage baron of South London. His novel *Kalooki Nights* was published in 2006. It was long listed for the Man Booker Prize. Jacobson described *Kalooki Nights* as the most Jewish novel that has ever been written by anybody, anywhere. As well as writing fiction, he also contributes a weekly column for *The Independent* newspaper as an op-ed writer. In recent times, he has, on several occasions, attacked anti-Israel boycotts, and for this reason has been labeled as liberal Zionist.

DR. SOMAPALYAM OMPRAKASH

2P a g e



In October 2010 Jacobson won the Man Booker Prize for his novel *The Finkler Question*, which was the first comic novel to win the prize since Kingsley Amis's *The Old Devils* in 1986. The book was published by Bloomsbury and explores what it means to be Jewish today and is also says that love, loss and male friendship. Andrew Motion is a one of the chair of the judges, said that *The Finkler Question* is a marvelous book. It is a very funny and of course, but also very clever, very sad and very subtle. It is all that it seems to be and much more than it seems to be. He is a completely worthy winner of this great prize. His other novel was *J* and it was published in 2014. It was a dystopian novel and also shortlisted for Man Booker Prize.

Jacobson has also worked as a broadcaster. His two recent television programmes include Channel 4's *Howard Jacobson Takes on the Turner*, in 2000, and *The South Bank Show* in 2002 featured an edition entitled "Why the Novel Matters." An earlier profile went out in the series in 1999 and a television documentary entitled "My Son the Novelist" preceded it as part of the Arena series in 1985. His two non-fiction books are *Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews* was published in 1993 and *Seriously Funny: From the Ridiculous to the Sublime* was published in 1997 and it was turned into television series.

Howard Jacobson has written a novel *Zoo Time* and it was published in 2013. The novel won the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse prize for his comic writing. Guy Ableman is a protagonist and narrator of *Zoo Time*. He now lives in Cheshire and is a author of the book called *Who Gives a Monkey?* It is a debut novel of Guy Ableman and it deals with a primate meets human melodrama set in Chester Zoo. Guy is a one-time manager of a fashion boutique in Wilmslow, who swapped Donna Karan for tailoring fiction. His novel has given a surprise success for him. But now he is forty years old. In those years, he has seen many experiences about writing. He has think about several books and watching his career nose dive into the reminder bin. He married a sharp-edged redhead woman name Vanessa. Though they are contradicted in nature, they lead a calm life. Vanessa aspires to be a novelist. Meanwhile guy develops an infatuation for his mother-in-law Poppy Eisenhower. Guy has published his article in a local library and they are refused to give him an internet access in that place. His first agent of his book should be disappeared in the Hindu Kush. His next publisher is Merton flak. He is a delightful and melancholy long - time publisher, but he shoots himself in his month. Because he can't publish the titles like Guy's novel and he is a last person and he states:

I shrugged through my tears. Of course I thought it had some thing to do with me. I thought everything had something to do with me. I was a first person by professor. I was the first of who gives a Monkeys? It

DR. SOMAPALYAM OMPRAKASH

3P a g e



was also the last. And yes I said yes I will I - no Matter that, it was a monkey, or might have been a monkey, Who way saying it. And the truth is you can't image yourself Into the 'I' of another Person, or indeed another creature without imagining yourself. (Zoo Time 23)

Jacobson deals with themes like sex, Judaism and marital difficulties. He focuses on guy's wish to bed with his mother - in -law. This explores the discussion of Jewish identify. Guy has find his books rants and rages about "Oxfam, Amazon, e- books, I pads, opera, apps, Richard and Judy face book..... the graphic novel, kindle, vampirism (*Zoo Time 24*)". He is not able to find out his book in the rages. Guy says that he knows the trouble of writers. So he accepts everything and make it ok there.

Jacobson himself states about the *Zoo Time* that this is the only literary prize that actively seeks out and reward comedy and other prizes often in his view it is a sort of embarrassing writer. Malfunction is a treacherous, in his view, when others consider the comic origins of the novel and the strong comedic traditions of English writing in particular. So to win the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse prize for comic writing once was bliss for him. To win it twice is very heaven. The English Essayist William Hazlitt says that the incongruous is the essence of the laughable and also declares that "Man is the only animal that laughs and weep for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are, and what they ought to be".

CONCLUSION:

Steve Allen in his book *How to Be Funny: Discovering the Comic you* (1987), deals with the comedy The human being are learned and listening the jokes from the person on tapes and records, movies TV and radio, and deals with the subject, and reading humor in books, magazines, cartoons and comic strips, seeing live comedy in night clubs and theatre, watching funny people, animals at the Zoo, Children, and funny situations which are occurs any time in the life. Man never learns the humor, but develops his own sense of humor.

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