

A comparative analysis of the political atmosphere that caused Greek comedies to be divided into Old Greek Comedy and New Greek Comedy

POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE THAT AFFECTED OLD GREEK COMEDY AND NEW GREEK COMEDY IN ANCIENT GREECE

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The objective of this paper is to examine the political atmospheres that have affected Old Greek Comedy and New Greek Comedy. Greek Comedy was a theatre performance in the 6th century B.C.E. Athens. Of Greek comedies that have survived the works of Aristophanes represent Old Greek Comedy and works of Menander represent New Greek Comedy. Aristophanes' comedies were written during the 5th century B.C.E.. It was the period of direct democracy where they had power to speak and to participate directly in politics. Aristophanes lampooned the most important personalities and institutions where he criticizes politicians, fellow artists and philosophers. New Greek Comedy emerged in the late 4th century B.C.E. when Athens was conquered by Macedonia and Athens became a subject state. Hence Athens had no political freedom for artists and they could not express their ideas in political matters. The circumstances made Menander focus on the day to day domestic affairs as there was no freedom for him to express ideas on the larger context. This made Menander become the poet of the 'humane'. Due to the political influences, political satire of Aristophanes ceased to be. Instead the New Comedy which dealt with safer subjects such as the rural, domestic and more humane subjects emerged.

The objective of this study is to examine how the social political atmosphere of the respective types of comedy had affected their characteristics.

Key words: Old Greek Comedy, New Greek Comedy, Political atmosphere, Aristophanes, Menander