

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Scientific-Theoretical Foundations and Evolution of The Comedy Genre: In the Context of World Literature

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Abstract

This article analyzes the scientific-theoretical foundations of the comedy genre. In particular, the views of thinkers such as Aristotle, Horace, Bergson, Freud, and Bakhtin on comedy are generalized, and its aesthetic, social, and psychological essence is elucidated. The study theoretically substantiates the place of comedy within the structure of dramatic genres, the category of comicality as its principal feature, and the mechanism of laughter. Furthermore, a conceptual model of the process of creating comedy is developed, and its artistic and educational functions are scientifically interpreted.

KEY WORDS

Dramaturgy, drama, tragedy, type, genre, evolution, comedy, comic situation, style, device.

INTRODUCTION

Comedy has been formed as one of the important components of the cultural development of humanity, through which social problems, political processes, and shortcomings of everyday life are reflected in a critical spirit. At the same time, comedy positively influences human psychology and provides an opportunity to look at reality from a new perspective. The content conveyed through laughter often encourages the reader toward deep reflection and the development of critical thinking. Therefore, throughout historical development, this genre has not lost its significance and has continuously renewed itself.

As a genre based on the phenomenon of laughter in fiction, comedy is formed within the framework of the dramatic type. In world literary studies, many thinkers have researched the theoretical foundations and historical development of comedy. These include Aristotle, Horace, Lope de Vega, P. Corneille, Voltaire, D. Diderot, N. Boileau, G. W. F. Hegel, G. Lessing, F. Schiller, J. W. Goethe, I. Kant, H. Bergson, S. Freud, M.

Bakhtin, V. Belinsky, N. Chernyshevsky, N. Dobrolyubov, I. Timofeyev, A. Anikst, N. Tamarchenko, and V. Khalizev. The earliest scientific views on drama theory were expressed in Aristotle's Poetics. In it, "tragedy is emphasized as consisting of six structural elements: plot, character, logical basis, scenic expression, language, and musical composition". While discussing comedy, Aristotle interprets it as a "representation of the actions of lower-class people that evokes laughter." He "associates the first examples of comedy with Homer's творчество and notes the work Margites as one of the earliest attempts in this direction." Although only fragments of this work have survived, it is emphasized that the principles of laughter and generalization occupied an important place in it.

Although comedy is less extensively covered than tragedy in Poetics, it is also evaluated as an art of imitation (mimesis). Comedy reflects the vices of human nature and social disproportions through laughter and thereby performs a moral-educational function. Aristotle's "views on the origin of

tragedy and comedy (tragedy originating from dithyrambs and comedy from phallic songs) are still recognized by the scholarly community as an important theoretical foundation". The comedy genre, formed in Ancient Greece in the 5th century BCE, became especially widespread through the works of Aristophanes. In ancient comedies, musicality, song, and dance elements occupied an important place, while actors often appeared on stage wearing masks. During this period, the theoretical study of comedy also began, and the ideas developed by Greek philosophers served as a foundation for subsequent scholarly research. In Roman literature, interest in the nature of laughter continued, and thinkers such as Cicero further developed Aristotle's ideas.

All forms of drama – tragedy, comedy, and drama itself – possess specific characteristics that distinguish them from one another in essence. "Tragedy (Greek: tragos – goat song) is a dramatic genre based on the psychological collision of heroes, characterized by intense passion, emotional influence, and an ending in catastrophe". As a component of the dramatic type, comedy is studied in close connection with tragedy and drama. "The genre of drama is based on melodrama (an emotionally characterized literary form synthesized with music). However, it should not be forgotten that melodrama is only one of the manifestations of the dramatic genre." "Drama, meaning 'action,' is considered one of the most complex forms of fiction." Belinsky evaluates drama as "the summit of literary arts." This type includes three principal genres: tragedy, comedy, and drama. Their common features are intendedness for the stage, reliance on dialogue and monologue, and the expression of events through action. "In Greek dramaturgy, tragedy, comedy, and satyr drama were formed as separate types." Satyr drama represented a transitional form between tragedy and comedy, in which satirical elements predominated. Although works belonging to this type have not survived completely, their existence is of great importance in understanding the evolution of dramatic genres.

The subsequent development of comedy theory is associated with the Roman poet and theorist Horace. In his treatise *The Art of Poetry*, important principles concerning the drama genre were developed. In particular, "principles such as the integrity of the plot, the conformity of the hero's character to social status, compositional perfection, five-part structure, and the existence of a didactic purpose are advanced. This five-stage composition consists of exposition, development of events, climax, approach to resolution, and conclusion (catharsis)".

Important information concerning comedy theory is also presented in the manuscript *Tractatus Coislinianus*, preserved in France. In this anonymous source, comedy is shown as consisting of six structural elements: "plot, character, idea, speech (discourse), tone, and scenic expression. Furthermore, three types of comic characters are distinguished: the liar, the humiliated, and the false figure". It is emphasized that this classification is directly connected with Aristotle's ethical-philosophical views. Views on the essence of drama and comedy are also encountered in medieval Western philosophy. The English philosopher John of Salisbury, in his work *Policraticus*, "interprets life as drama and compares people to actors on a stage". In his opinion, whether life is perceived as tragedy or comedy depends on the individual's attitude toward it. This approach is of important significance in revealing the philosophical essence of comedy.

M. Bakhtin connects comedy with carnival culture. In his work *Rabelais and His World*, he considers comedy to originate from ancient carnival culture and pays particular attention to the grotesque method of the genre. The scholar states that "laughter, as one of the integral parts of folk culture, possesses the ambivalent quality of 'carnival laughter' it both denies and affirms, both buries and cradles". These ideas indicate that through laughter, a person not only expresses joy but also releases inner pain and suffering hidden in the psyche. The scholar's conclusion that laughter both "cradles and buries" is expressed precisely for this purpose. That is, laughter does not consist merely of laughing; beneath it are also hidden bitter truth, pain, and anguish. Sigmund Freud studied comicalness through the psychoanalytic method. According to him, "forbidden desires and aspirations of the human being are released through witty expression. This condition gives rise to laughter". According to Freudianism, laughter is the manifestation of forbidden desires hidden in the subconscious. "The meaning of the word eloquent is an orator, a master of speech, a person capable of expressing thoughts fluently and effectively". An eloquent person is a skilled speaker who conveys ideas in a manner that attracts and persuades listeners. Precisely because of these qualities, eloquence may have been studied in Freud's theory in harmony with comicalness.

The mechanism of creating comedy is a complex system consisting of identifying disproportions in real reality, artistically processing them, expressing them through comic devices, and ultimately producing laughter and an aesthetic-

cognitive process. This process is formed on the basis of the integration of social, psychological, and aesthetic factors.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the comedy genre has traversed a complex path of theoretical and aesthetic development from antiquity to the present day. It possesses important scientific-theoretical significance not only as an artistic form that evokes laughter, but also as a means of critically understanding society, analyzing human psychology, and shaping aesthetic values. The process of creating comedy is based on a multilayered aesthetic and psychological mechanism. It emerges not only through the reflection of reality (Aristotle), but also through the interaction of principles such as social criticism (Bakhtin), psychological release (Freud), and laughter directed against mechanization (Bergson). From this perspective, comedy is a complex creative system that transforms disproportions in real life into the effect of laughter through artistic generalization.

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