

“The Artistic” and “The Literary” in Short Types of Dramatic Creations



Literature

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Abstract

Even in his most important piece of work “Poetics”, Aristotle the ancient Greek philosopher, does not simply lines up the classification of the types of literary creations; but he identifies their individual features. So, he considered comedy as different, compared to the three other types: (tragedy, the epic poetry and lyric poetry), because “comedy” searches the ideal form of expression (representation); never in search of forms which imitate life itself. Fiction and invented realities, characters from the low levels of society, the commoner, the banal and the vulgar, the small things that are taken to be as “great”, are some other features of comedy, which would not be enough anyway, to consider comedy as “beautiful”. In this context, it is indispensable the presence of “the artistic” and “the literary”, that an art work can own the status of a sublime expression; can own the status of a form of artistic communication that radiates indispensably messages that can travel through different generations and time periods. In short forms of dramaturgy creations (sketches, parody, comedy in one act, couplet, etc.) through “the artistic” and “the literary”, somewhere “the ugly” is presented as “beautiful”, somewhere “the old” faces “the modern”, the coward sells himself like the greatest hero, bad habits are sold like virtues, and out of this we get “the laughter” that brings optimism and deliberation from life frustrations to the viewer or the reader. For as long as “the art” is not a mere copy of the real things in life, but a transformed artistic recognition, the doze of “the artistic” determines the value of the literary creation. In different humorous creations, the drawing of dramatic characters and situations in which they discover themselves, would never attract the spectator (the reader or the viewer) if they would not have within them “alive” elements of “the artistic” and “the literary”, which could be recognizable as: 1-in a conflictual form; 2- in a conflict resolution form, 3-from the point of view of the comic writer.

Introduction

It is widely known Aristotle’s opinion on the positivity of comedy, that optimistic feeling that instills in the reader, followed by joy, exhilaration, situations out of the ordinary, which occur or don’t as presented; that all of them, in essence, feature the truths of life, and human relationships directly or indirectly. “Comedy characters are intriguing. They provoke, laugh, although involved in nonsensical actions characterized by stupidity and ugliness”¹. In his work “Poetics”, Aristotle determines comedy as one of the four literary genres. The other three genres are tragedy; epic poetry and lyric poetry. All three, unlike comedy, possess the ubiquitous main discerning element, “mimesis”, or life imitation. Comedy, according to the ancient philosopher, avoids the power of imitation of something real that has happened or is happening. On the contrary, it strives towards ideal forms of presentation where contrived, invented realities mostly come into play. Comedy has no extraordinary heroes, no great sacrifices; no powerful people bringing down states, staring wars, leading peoples as usually can be seen in the ancient tragedy. On the contrary its characters come from the low masses of society, from rural and urban “elders”, who believe in and boast about something important which actually is not at all like this. This presence of vulgarity and banality and other such valueless items, the trivial intentions presented as “bright” and “extraordinary” etc., bring about the premise to the birth of humor for there is a distinct incongruity among them. In addition to these means the presentation of “mask” at the start of the action is important according to Aristotle, when the character impersonates or an event or occurrence is put forward as something different. And when the presentation of “mask” has

been achieved through incidents and multiple situations the removal of this mask is realized, the denunciation of pretense and “the other identity”, thus revealing the contradiction accompanying the character’s behavior and personality.

The comic is never a form of expression but it exists in a multitude of such forms. However, it has its specifications or “a handle” which connects and unites them. This is the contradiction between the fist and the revelation, between the ugly, lowly phenomenon and the way it is disguised camouflaged, presented, as something else, as well as the opposite to the truth, in which case the old and the hackneyed pretends to be modern, contemporary progressive. As a result of the clash and the confrontation between this two side, humor undoubtedly comes into being, by claiming the small to be big, the unimportant to be important, the lowly to be heroic, the ugly to be beautiful, vice to be a virtue.” *It can be seen, thanks to the means of expressions the writer uses, that there exist a fragrant disconnection between the two sides of the contradiction which provokes laughter. Laughter in itself creates healthy situations by banishing stress*”.²

Let’s take two examples, when humor is caused by existence and non-existence, that is, when something existing is presented as non-existent and vice-versa. The corruption ruling in hospitals is reflected in the Vlora Variety show premiere 2011 “We pay”. A patient comes to hospital for a visit and treatment but what the viewer knows is that he has to bribe the nurses and the doctor to be served. The opposite happens the nurse and the doctor “case” for the patient by not allowing him to pay for the guard, nurse, doctors, operation and medicaments, etc. They cover all his expenses. Humor therefore is caused by the opposite if what is really expected. The whiter further utilizes the element of paradox taking to extremes something that does not happen but which is claimed; the policeman comes and arrests the nurse and the doctor for corruption as they have given money to the patient and an therefore corrupt. Paradox reaches its peak when the policeman himself takes money out of his pocket to pay for the patient’s unpaid can fine.

Let’s bring to your attention “Portokall” production by Top Channel or the character “Xha Teme” in “Al Pazar” by Vizion Plus. The latter is characterized by the conspicuous and humorous individuality of the well-known comedian Agron Llaka. This character stands out for his habit of vanity which is taken to the an unbelievable extreme. He attaches special importance to himself as a key man an intrepid fighter during national liberation war and socialist constructor of the country, with numerous sacrifices, always by the side of comrade Enver rescuing him from trouble and providing solutions to important strategic problems. All these so called “heroes”, “Brave partisans”, or “Secret Agents” capturing and killing diversants are ironized through the actor laughed at and nocked. A process of their de-glorification is an element of humor, achieved along the lines of denunciation, as the reader is aware of fruitful perception of aimless vanity and actual truths.

Artistry, or started otherwise artistic workmanship, is among the basic criteria for the evaluation of a literary work. This renders art and literature as such introduces them to their specifics. *’Artistic works, as esthetical concentration,- writes esthetician Alfred Uci,- are singled out from all other non-artistic esthetical phenomena of the reality, because artistic works are the*

concentrated and focused ways of esthetical assimilation, as they are presented as new esthetical values, thus forming " a second esthetical reality" created by an artist . This accounts for the fact that art is the highest form of esthetical assimilation. This is where its essential specifics lies''³. Or below: " Art in its entirety is not a passive photographic copy of items but transformed esthetical awareness''⁴.

It has commonly happened that other extra literary criteria have been introduced and accepted in the assessment of the literary work or some relevant parameters are regarded as chief and decisive, but which are not necessarily such as we can mention the narrative direct, assestions, surroundings, political and historical space of the development, characters and preferences towards characters, treated themes and messages. All of these are undoubtedly part of the content structure of a literary work in dramaturgy, but what shapes all of them is art, artistry and the literariness. Harsh political and ideological interventions were undoubtedly present in the small genres of dramaturgy prior to 1990, distorting and contaminating artistry, which is what makes a literary work exceptional. Art is art in its gain rights. It has its own codes. However important and fundamental ideas are, they come to be expressed artistically in a literary work, merged in the way characters act and think in their speech in the abstraction syntheses of what happens or not, indirectly or directly, through semantic underlying, symbols, metaphors, associations and other indirect means. Based on such reasoning, it would be unfair to dismiss any beautiful creation before 1990, as a work of art is viewed as " such a thing" that transcends time, not closely associated with the political commitment and message of the period when written. This is the reason why some funny literary works for both theatre and variety shows are still viewed with admiration. It suffices to mention just a few short comedies, sketches and other funny materials such as "Lipe Shtogu", "Dasma e Malos ", "Doni me per Belulin?", "Kunati i shokut Xhemal", "Hapi syte e zeze", "O burra se na zune" etc. "With such works and other similar ones,- according to Susana Langer - "you do not laugh at the characters or people, but at their actions- the traps they fall into, their speech and sometimes, their pain and anguish."'⁵ .

I can recall the musical sketch "Dasma e Malos" by P.Kulla starring Arqile Lipe and Todi Llupi performing two wonderful roles and high quality sound. The sketch ironizes the bad custom of bestowing money at a wedding party to the in – lows. This custom in itself is not bad or ugly. On the contrary, its exaggeration leads to the comic, ironic and mocking attitude of the writer. This custom turns from a source of pleasure into a source of desperation and refusal, when the family's economic situation is not satisfactory, but the custom must be observed and the bride must be bestowed with money. The social pressure of a tribal, backward culture is the object both critically and mockingly targeted. Exaggeration is and element which beings out of the old, laughable custom, which in turn empties out, the sad in-lows pockets as mother, bride, kinship, aunts and in-lows come and the tray is filled up with money. The sketch ends with a clever comical find: as the characters leave the wedding they don't even have any money to pay for the bus fare to return home. Although time has gone by, this wedding custom has not been eradicated, but it has actually strengthened. The writer has therefore aimed at the right target, the centre of on

Albanian anthropological custom, which besides generosity, is an aspect of having to respect “a norm” without fail, but which is turned down and refused by the new mentality.

Artistry and literariness, self-sufficient as they are evidently determine the quality of humor, how witty, fruitful, clever and nice it is. The quality of humor implies, among others, a common interaction between the comical phenomenon and the comical bearer. From the view point of socialist realism many literary works were badly damaged due to the degradation of this organic ratio where the comical bearer was asked for ideological speech under the so called “positive character, affirmative positive humor” etc., which violated the principles of creating humor, by closing constraint contradictions, unnecessarily introducing political rhetoric and other dull moralizations. Humor stamps from the bearer who is at the center of irony, mocking, criticism the bearer hides and pretends, his “scales” are removed his linens are washed in public, his tricks are revealed and he finally is the laughing stock bringing about a feeling of triumph and joy, the exhilaration that we managed to laugh at him, meaning that we laugh at the ugliness he stands for, vice, habits, faults dangerous, lowly action, social evil and soon.

On the other hand, artistry and literariness depend a great deal on the degree and way in which the comical phenomenon and its bearer are viewed and interpreted by the humorist writer. “Hashish” 2003 is a sketch- parody performed by four parodists in Vlora. Four unemployed young people leave the countryside to get to the town to make a living and find a job. After going through hardships, they find a solution. They go back to the village of one of them and plant hashish, 600 euros a kg. They comes the funny ending. The boys and get caught and are eventually sent to prison. However, the prison was better off than their village. It provided anything: meals, drinks, Tv ,...no lovers! /..Oh you men of power,/you’ve gold, emeralds/you sent us back where we come from. Ending comes in on absurd way: punishment converts into fun, like Schopenhauer put it, the clash of the absurd with the reasonable provokes funny reactions. Artistry and literariness are conditioned by some “finding”, some special unravelling as can be noticed namely in the sketch “Death”, Tirana variety show 1994. Two old friends of the deceased go to his family for consolation. Their roles are played by Vasillaq Vangjeli and Arjan Culiqi. They are both drunkards and this turns the rite of the consolation from something grief-stricken, serious and painful into something funny, hilarious and absurd. Having had their coffees and raki they bring out their raki flask and start drinking, obvious to their location, the dead and the condolences that have to be offered and finally they start singing. “Look here, I’ve got something to say to you. *The jackass’ men that is Hasan’s* - V.Vangjeli tells the householder Vegim Xhani – *you don’t know how to organize a death ceremony. Incredible, all this death no orchestra, yuk*”. The paradox and hilarity occur when they even propose a toast and under the influence of the alcohol, they start singing a merrymaking song “lake pupulake.. So the focus of consolation changes and exaggeration converts into an element of humour.

Artistry and literariness call imagination and rich fantasy. In fact imagination is the pure premise to creation to literary artistic fiction, the one that involves mixes, stirs inter- twins and orders all the elements of the plot, that shapes events, provides writing with details, creates sudden

situations and contrives games, tricks and comical traps. Imagination creates an amazing range of characters and timing which intentionally confuses them for one another as it happens (by the way) in cinema nostalgia series of the Top Channel production "Portokalli", where characters are presented as heroic partisans and men of spiritual power who perform majestic social gestures and sublime acts in the history of the country. Now they lose their value by doing the opposite and revealing the comical aspect of their actions and events, even their make-up is comical. There is, therefore, a total change in roles, locations and character: between the heroic and the magnificent and the ordinary and often the criminal. Imagination often leads to the appearance of the most paradoxical solution, but always linked to the contemporary theme' and modern man. The drastic change in character and the mood of the literary work borrowed from a film script with that written comically and in a humoristic way in a sketch or theatre dialogue lays emphasis on a certain idea by mocking the exaggerated heroism in our films before 1990, as well as creating some theme approaches between various times and characters, certainly aiming at jokes, comical and entertaining moods that humour obviously brings about with a total change of destination characters, speech which provoke comical situations for both the reader and the audience. Excessive fantasy and imagination, exaggerated artistic speculation beyond aesthetically acceptable norms as regards life the truth, literary creation should without fail be avoided.

Artistry and literariness are inextricably linked to the reader and viewer at the time of writing and performance as well as to a later time (when a literary work can be re-read, or put on stage). The above example clarifies the reader's expectation to like, approve or abandon a former literary work. In addition to the hedonistic effect and entertainment that a literary work brings about for the perceiver, the catharsis function of literature is well-known, outside of which, literature cannot be understood especially as regards the genre of comedy. We must admit writers at that time were restrained from writing freely and this has to do with a considerable proportion of dramatic comical literature. Censure and auto censure restricted the freedom to fantasy through a strict auto control from the very start of the conception of a literary work. The paranoia arose for fear of erring, exaggerating and "darkening the reality" through characters and situations which were obviously comical and hilarious. Being restricted and limited, imagination lacked "flights" to comical literary beauties and changed into by considerably reducing the effect of "contrivance" of comical artistic realities dissimilar to those of life." The comparison" with real life patterns suffocated the writer's imagination, hence the quality of humour. The effect of exaggeration, deformation on the character, to highlight hilarity, ugliness etc., lessened the quality of humour and alienated the audience.

Artistry and literariness are linked to an interesting aspect having to do with the readers or the viewers taste or the recipient's. It has to do with their bad education. In a dictatorship it was the ideology which was converted into a system of prohibition, censure and auto censure with many forums of examinations and assessments which judged literary creation in conformity with set standards and principals provided by above. The rapport with the reader was complicated, unnatural, for it suffered the imposed ideological violence as a social norm of reason in the form of a massive, collective and people 's' consent or taste. Meanwhile, the requirement for the

pressure of ideologically predetermined treatments prevailed over the real profound reasons of the existence of humour literature.

Conversely it can be claimed that a considerable part of the common public supports and applauds wrack humour literature where intolerable banality and vulgar speech prevail in the low levels of the society.

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