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**POETICS OF THE COMIC IN NIKOLAI GOGOL WORKS**

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**Abstract**

This article is devoted to the analysis of comedy short stories by N.V. Gogol. Gogol's comedy short stories is a cycle of plays linked by a common thought, similarities in form and composition. They depict phenomena typical of Russian life, show situations that are repeated in different historical periods. The features of life shown in these plays are not only external features, but it can be stated that this is the essence of their nature. The material of our study is the comedy short stories by Nikolai Gogol Morning of a Business Man, the Lawsuit, the Lackey Room and the Fragment. Comedy short stories created by N.V. Gogol are unusual stories that had not been illustrated in drama before. The relevance of this study is due to the fact that the poetics of the comic in the comedy short stories by N.V. Gogol has not been sufficiently studied. The analysis of the peculiarities of comic in Nikolai Gogol's comedy short stories allows us to conclude that the subject of exposure is not only "social vices" (corruption of officials, bureaucracy, etc.), but also the disorder of the world as a whole. The comic techniques used by Gogol create a sense of absurdity. The traditional images of comedy – a servant and a master – take on new functions. Nowadays the interest in the comedy short stories by Nikolai Gogol is not fading away. Gogol's works reveal vices such as hypocrisy, flattery, sycophancy, greed, envy, etc. These are the moral problems of mankind.

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## **1. Introduction**

Gogol's comedy short stories is a cycle of plays linked by a common thought and similarities in form as well as composition. They depict phenomena typical of Russian life, show situations that are repeated in different historical periods. The features of life shown in these plays are not only external features, but it can be said that this is the essence of their nature. This is probably why Nikolai Gogol's comedy short stories are unique and relevant at all times. In our opinion the life episodes shown in these plays are very convincing and creatively different.

Comedy short stories can be described as works that facilitated the development of realistic drama.

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## **2. Problem Statement**

The works of Gogol (1952) are of great interest to researchers of Russian literature (Dolinin, 2018; Hashemi, 2017; Putney, 2001). Such scholars as Mann (2007), Virolainen and Karpov (2011) wrote about Gogol's literary activity. The artistic features of the little tragedies of N.V. Gogol became the subject of study in the fundamental works of such famous scientists as Stepanov (1959), Paderina (2011), and Vishnevskaya (1976). Modern literary critics mainly examine in detail the iconic dramatic works only occasionally studying the problems of Gogol's little tragedies.

## **3. Research Questions**

The material of our study is the comedy short stories by Nikolai Gogol Morning of a Business Man, the Lawsuit, Lackey Room and the Fragment.

1. The object of the study is the texts of these works – comedy short stories by N.V. Gogol.
2. The subject of the study is the poetics of the comic in the comedy short stories by N.V. Gogol.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the study is to identify the features of the comic in the comedy short stories of N.V. Gogol.

## **5. Research Methods**

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was the works of leading literary scholars, specialists in the history of Russian literature. The article analyzes the literary criticism concerning the issues under study. There was used the descriptive method, complex analysis of the text, as well as the method of literary hermeneutics.

## 6. Findings

Comedy short stories created by N.V. Gogol are the unusual stories that have not been in drama before. Small one- and two-act scenes depicted purely Russian phenomena, i.e. what was typical of Russian life. They gave a complete picture of typical Russian character. In comedies, situations are clearly shown that are repeated in different periods of the life of Russia.

Russian life. They gave a complete picture of the typical Russian character. In comedies, situations are clearly shown that are repeated in different periods of the life of Russia.

In these comedies, the characters are shown very realistically: They live real lives. They are characterized by vices, and these are not external features, but the essence, the content of their nature. It is likely that this is what makes the heroes of the work so convincing and so vital. The four plays made up a certain cycle linked by a common thought, similarity of form and composition. They can be called comedy short stories.

Firstly, they are all small in volume (Morning of a Business Man consists of five miniature episodes, the Lawsuit – of four, occupying six pages of the book, the Lackey Room – of eight, and the Fragment of two).

Secondly, the playwright's faithful portrayal of a whole bunch of typical characters of Russian life in each small play. Thus, both characters in the comedy the Lawsuit – Proletov and Khristofor Petrovich Burdyukov – have their own features, their own style, but at the same time they are swindlers and scoundrels, ready to commit any meanness to achieve their goal. These are typical representatives of the bureaucratic world of that time. In our opinion, it is these characters that are relevant at all times, and not only at the time that Gogol showed.

Thirdly, Gogol uses a special artistic technique thanks to which a play where two or three characters act (for example, in the Morning of a Business Man they are Ivan Petrovich Burdyukov, Alexander Ivanovich Proletov and Schrader; in the Fragment – Marya Alexandrovna, Misha, Sobachkin) became 'densely populated' remaining small in size. This is an inclusion technique in a dialogue or a monologue which tell about something significant; stories about unknown people or ridiculous incidents. We find the same technique in other works by Gogol. For example, in the Marriage, the Inspector-General and the Dead Souls. This technique was also used by other authors such as Ostrovsky, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Chekhov.

Fourthly, in Gogol's plays there is no division into main and secondary characters as they all participate in the setting and in the subsequent development of the action, 'each of them lives on the stage and reveals his or her own character in relation to the conflict.

In 1842, Morning of a Business Man, the Lawsuit, the Lackey Room, and the Fragment became independent one-act plays prepared by Gogol for the press and stage without any connection with each other. Vishnevskaya (1976) believes that one should not see them as a continuation of one in the next one. It is three in the morning in the houses of business people: in the Morning of a Business Man, the Lawsuit and the Lackey Room. We can assume that the action takes place in the Fragment in the morning. The anatomy of morning of active idlers is presented to the reader by Gogol, he does not think here about the recurrence of events, it is more important for him to comprehensively discern the phenomenon. In the Morning of a Business Man a lot is told about the life of people, about St. Petersburg life. The morning

begins with a meeting of two eternal, chained enemies – a master and a lackey. In most of Gogol's plays this is where the action begins. The dialogue between Ivan Petrovich and the footman ends with mutual irritation. The lackey's deliberate desire is not to do what the master asks; the master's constant desire is to humiliate the lackey.

The discussion about uneven fields in the comedy *the Morning of a Business Man* takes place with such passion and tension as if this is the most important thing in business and means more than uneven fields. But 'the minister will not pay attention to this insignificant things' the official retorts timidly 'Insignificant things! ... I myself think the same: the minister will definitely not go into it. Well, what if he does so? .. I completely agree with you: he will not deal with these trifles. Well, what if he has to? Let me see if there is a lot of space left for the fields?''.

*The Lackey Room*. The situation is the same here: Morning, irritated master and a footman. They do meet each other. The master scolded; the servant found an excuse. There is the same amount of Stepan's tacit disregard in the *Lawsuit* in his short, seemingly chopped-off answers: he was, sewing, did not come, bought, etc. He nether got into conversation with the master, nor did he answer with pleasure.

In many works of Russian and foreign literature of the XIX century the relationship of servant and master was almost always shown as friendly and sometimes idyllic. The hostile relationship between the servant and the master was first shown by N.V. Gogol. Servants do not resent openly, do not rebel, but they do not love their masters, do not help them. Masters can no longer count on the devotion of their servants.

The Gogol lackeys do not openly criticize their masters, but they can afford to use a funny word or pretend to be a fool in order to infuriate a respectable master. Gogol's works show gentlemen as capricious children. In Gogol's comedy short stories most often the relationship between the servant and the master is shown in social environment.

In *the Morning of a Business Man* and in *the Lawsuit* the heroes in the morning read mainly bureaucratic publications and calendars. They are looking for the same thing, i.e. who is awarded, who has received higher rank.

Gogol put Petersburg, the village, and the surrounding area into the comedy short story *the Lawsuit*. This little comedy has a special place in Gogol's work. This work is dedicated to a terrible phenomenon for Russia – litigation. *The Lawsuit* is a small play that has undergone such censorship ordeals that neither the Inspector-General nor the Marriage knew.

In Gogol's comedy short stories there are signs of new creative manners. For example, in the comedy *the Fragment*, Marya Aleksandrovna tells her son how she was offended at the party of Rogozhinsky. This how it was 'Gubomazova, such a fool, the day before yesterday at the Rogozhinsky's, she was saying something so that I could hear. And I was sitting on the third, in front of me there was Sophie Votrushkova, Princess Alexandrina, and I was behind the Princess Alexandrina. What would you think this worthless woman dared to speak? I really wanted to get up; and if not for the Princess Alexandrina, I would not know what I could have done. She says "I am very glad that civilians are not allowed at court balls. I am glad, she says, that my Alexis does not wear this nasty tailcoat"... Such a disgusting bastard!.." And Marya Alexandrovna is going to transfer her son from the civilian service to military service, if only does not she boast with Alexis Gubomazova in front of her. Because of the

opinions of Gubomazova the dramas can play out, human destinies can break. The tragedy of human destinies is revealed in the comic of petty existence.

The scene of the Lackey Room depicts the idleness of the lackeys pretending that they are occupied with thoughts about the house when the master appears. Gogol in an amazing way conveys the unique color, language, manner of specific environment. This gives a special comic effect because the main topic of the conversation in the servants' room is the master's theme – the upcoming ball. The ball is being thrown together by the footmen from different houses. Annushka, a maid from another house, runs in to talk to the butler about the ball. The conversation between them is completely secular. The chatter about the ball mirrors the empty chatter about the balls and living rooms of high society.

In Gogol's small comedies the comic of petty existence is revealed, thereby the author reveals the tragedy of human destinies.

## 7. Conclusion

The analysis of the peculiarities of the comic in Nikolai Gogol's comedy short stories allows us to conclude that the subject of exposure is not only "social vices" (corruption of officials, bureaucracy, etc.), but also the disorder of the world as a whole. The comic techniques used by Gogol create a sense of absurdity. The traditional images of comedy – a servant and a master – take on new functions. Nowadays the interest in the little comedies of Nikolai Gogol is not fading away. Gogol's works reveal vices such as hypocrisy, flattery, sycophancy, greed, envy, etc. These are the moral problems of mankind. The questions and problems raised by the author remain relevant at all times.

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