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Application of Comedy and Satire in the Epic Theater: The Analysis of the Caucasian Chalk Circle by Bertolt BrechtGholamreza Abbasi^a, Seyed Mostafa Mokhtabad^{b1}, Mohammadreza Sharifzadeh^c^a*Ph.D, Department of Philosophy of Art, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*^b*Professor, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran*^c*Associate Professor, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*

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Abstract

Comedy, satire, ridicule, and humor, in general, stem from a tragedy. Wherever weeping does not suffice for the tragic fate of mankind, humor or comedy takes on this task by making people laugh. It is not in vain that typical theatrical emotions are displayed as two smiling and weeping faces. Tragedy and comedy are two opposing but interconnected aspects that have defined theater since the beginning of history. In this article, we will see how the epic theater, like the modern theater that crashed down the Aristotelian criterion in ancient theater, has used comical elements of comics (satire and comedy) in its structure to transcend features such as catharsis and the strong Aristotelian plot and turn the play into a means for making the audience aware of their position in the modern world. The main tool of epic theater for the realization of anti-Aristotelian theater is an interruption to keep the audience from being trapped and submissive to the plot and to make him/her contemplate. Comedy is an element can distance the audience from identifying himself/herself with tragedy.

Keywords: Comedy; Satire; Epic Theater

1. Introduction and Definitions

Comedy is the temporary victory of man over fate. Comedy, without tragedy, is not able to make people laugh. In presenting his theory of the alienation effect, Bertolt Brecht was influenced by two comedians of his time: Carl Falentin and Charlie Chaplin (Bye, 2008: 234). If we consider Charlie Chaplin the best comedian, then we come to this central definition of comedy: Clowns cannot make

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audiences laugh if they do not look miserable. Charlie Chaplin is a connecting link between comedy and tragedy and serves as an action guide for epic theater. Walter Benjamin refers to Charlie Chaplin as the leading representative of art for the people in his discussion with Horkheimer about art for art or art for people, and for this reason, he is the main authority in this discussion.

“For Plato, imitations, and mimesis are equivalent to the creation of a mental image that has no external manifestation, but only the virtual form of the truth of the thing” (Steel, 2004: 2-3).

The epic theater is an allegory, and if we refer to Plato's definitions of the parable, each epic theater has an Aristotelian equivalent that, when breaking down, leads to the creation of the parable. In the process of breaking Aristotelian rules, the epic theater uses a mirror that disrupts the proportion of elements and unity of time and place of the Aristotelian play, instead of imitations and mimesis, thus creating a tragedy. In other words, comedy is mixed with tragedy. The origin of comedy is this disruption. Therefore, if the epic theater wants to reverse or at least disrupt Aristotelian laws of mimesis in tragedy and be an allegory of Aristotelian play rather than a parable, it has no choice but to use comedy.

2. Literature Review

In his doctoral dissertation entitled "Standup comedy: One of the most popular forms of entertainment in America today a tool for social change", François Manwell (2018) investigated how a performance can be both entertaining and instructive at the same time. Manwell argues that Brecht believes that theater should illuminate the social dynamics of society by acting on a daily interaction on stage (Manwell, 2018: 29).

Daniel Bai (2008) in his doctoral dissertation entitled "Tomfoolery in St. Bertolt Brecht" seeks to explore the effectiveness of Tomfoolery and comedy in reinforcing the aims and effects of Bertolt Brecht's epic theater. According to him, Bertolt Brecht was influenced by two comedians of his time in presenting the theory of alienation and gesture: Carl Falentin and Charlie Chaplin.

3. Epic Theater

The term epic (episches in German²) is an old word. In the Aristotelian term, the word epic refers to a kind of tale that is not confined to Aristotelian unions of space and time, such as Homer's *Odyssey*³ or Enigel Virgil. This kind of story has a random quality⁴ and a series of loosely-connected events typical of Picardy tales⁵ such as *Joseph Andrews* by the English author Henry Fielding. The word epic in English is reminiscent of the wide-ranging dimensions of Hollywood films. In France, Roman Roland refers to his revolutionary plays like a completely epic theater to emphasize the uniqueness of the plays. Epic in Persian refers to the stories of extraordinary men and women who deal with the gods or other superhuman forces such as heroic stories in Ferdowsi's *Shahname*. However, in German - Brecht's native language - the original and primitive meaning of

² Episches

³ Homer: *Odyssey* alongside *Iliad* is the second epic work of Homer, a Greek storyteller. Written in the late 8th century BC, it is one of the most influential works of western literature. The story of this book is about the adventures of King Odysseus of Ithaca and his companions after the Trojan War and return to home. In many languages, "odyssey" means wandering and displacement.

⁴ Episodic

⁵ Picardy tales: It is a kind of story that originated in Spain in the sixteenth century and tells the story of a cunning, thief, and eloquent individual who is involved with all kinds of adversities.

the epic is a particular narrative format that is not dissimilar to Charlie Chaplin's cinematic expression technique. The epic term in literature is used for purely Picardy novels such as Schweik⁶, and for any disruption in the contractual arrangement of the plot of the story, whether in the form of the modern reporting technique or the novels by Joyce⁷, Dos Passos⁸, Alfred Dublin⁹, and one or two stories from Sadegh Hedayat (Ta'avoni, 2005: 28). Table 1 summarizes the differences between the epic theater and Aristotelian theater:

Table 1 The differences between Aristotelian and Brechtian theaters

Play	Dramatic elements	Aristotelian and dramatic theater	Brechtian and epic theater
Playscript	Language	Noble and aristocratic	Language of ordinary people
	Catharsis	Yes	None
	Gesture	None	Yes
	Myths	Reproducing myths	Breaking myths
	Allegory	None	Yes
	Media	None	Yes
	Politics	Serving the ruling power	Exposing power
	Court of justice	None	The audience serving as a jury
	Ethics	Serving the power	Against the power
	Personality transformation	None	Yes
	Plot	Yes	None
	Education	Through emotions	Through judgment and rationality
	Incidents	Within the incidents and trapped in the emotions	Standing against the incidents and contemplating on their causes
	Genre	Tragedy	Tragedy and comedy
	Time	A direct and connected line	Disconnected and multi-temporal
	Storyline	Straight	Spiral
	Ending	Surrender to reality	Surprise
Worldview	Accepting the world as it is	Disclosing the accepted world	
Narration	None	Yes	
Performance	Acting	Immersed in the role	Detached from the role
	Stage	The actor/actress does not see the audience	The actor/actress sees the audience
	Music	Fitting the play	Staccato and underscoring
	Chorus	Predictor and advisor	Alienating and revealing
	Decoration	As true as possible	With the minimal props
	Film	None	None

“Brecht wanted to see the audience contemplating - and if possible smoking. However, the act of smoking must have meant his detached relaxation and not the display of a common space-time.

⁶ Schweik: A satirically dark comedy novel by Jaroslav Hašek from the Czech Republic.

⁷ James Joyce: James Augustine Aloysius Joyce (February 7; Dublin - January 1; Zurich) an Irish whose *Ulysses* is regarded by some as the greatest novel of the twentieth century.

⁸ John Roderigo Dos Passos (1896-1972) is an American writer.

⁹ Alfred Dublin: Bruno Alfred Döblin (10 August 1878 – 26 June 1957) a German novelist best known for his novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929).

Brechtian audience detached and relaxed is smoking at his own time” (Lehmann, 2006: 286). However, the need to leave the dramatic theater, in Brecht’s view, is simply due to the inability of emotions to produce consciousness. He likes to see people in situations that are not immediately clear, and he does not need the logical justification and psychological motives of the old theater. The theater must find a form that allows it to display this lack of clarity in the most classical way possible, namely through an epic relaxation (Lehmann, 2006: 291).

Interruption/detachment is one of the most important features of the epic theater. “Detachment makes the audience confront a situation that has been usual and has become unusual now leading him to criticism. Any interruption in the actor’s dramatic action and alienation with his role will induce this thinking.

Benjamin believes that the technique of “interruption” in the epic theater is derived from the emerging “assembly” technique, which itself is the product of new artistic production tools (movie). Benjamin pointed out: “In the opinion of Brecht, the epic theater should not expand the plot, but it should portray the situation”. This theater, as we see it now, creates an interruption in the dramatic plot. “Let me remind you of the songs whose main function is to create an interruption in action. Here (using the principle of interruption), the epic theater has come up with a technique you have come to know in recent years through movies, radio, photography, and the press. I speak of the assembly technique whereby an element that falls on another element creating an interruption in the context to which it is attached (Benjamin, 2015: 162).

“One of Brecht's predominant mechanisms for achieving this measurement that he uses for detachment is the technique of interruption. Walter Benjamin pointed out “this discovery of conditions” happens through detached processes. Benjamin compares the use of interruption in the epic theater to the function of quotation in written texts, waiting for sober, wise, and conscious wearing out of that difficult thing. The main function of the text in this dramatic genre is not to describe the progression of action but rather to stop the action of the text itself. The delayed nature of these interruptions and this is the episodic feature and the framing of action that allows the gesture theater to become an epic theater (Benjamin, 2015: 38).

The Socratic way of discovering the truth is the dialectic intended by Benjamin. Here, any interruption in action produces a discovery of a situation that freezes in the interruption and the resulting gesture is a produced synthesis called the situation.

3.1. Dialectical Transfer from Theater to the Audience in the Detachment Interruption

The dialectical transfer from the inaction due to detaching the audience's mind and producing “surprise” of what was previously self-evident and now a kind of real-life revelation to the audience, a kind of pleasure that can only be obtained in epic theater shows and some form of human comedy that has never been possible to be produced by meaningless comedies before.

The dam of real-life floods when the water flow is accompanied by an interruption makes it feel like a surprising reaction. This is the dialectic in the stillness (moving in the interruption) with its real object being “surprise” (Benjamin, 2015: 52).

In epic theater, interruptions and detachments at each stage of the story lead the audience to think critically about the action, and so at each stage, there is an instruction and the sum of these instructions lead to thoughtfulness. The hero of the tragedy in epic theater learns through struggle, and with his own death, provides instructions to induce resistance and change among the audience.

The creation of interruption in the actions will disrupt the audience’s identification with the tragedy and give way to critical thinking.

The epic theater no longer provides the story easily, but instead forces the audience to spend some time finding reason in the interruption moment, thus giving birth to the rational audience.

The epic drama is itself a dramatic allegory. In this sense, there is the main play through which the play is narrated; a play in which the actions are deliberately interrupted and the singers interpret and interrupt them. So, behind each epic drama, one can define an Aristotelian play. With the implementation of the epic techniques, the play disappears in its Aristotelian sense. The epic drama is not an Aristotelian drama, but rather an allegory of evils and vices that replaces the purpose of catharsis with the purpose of consciousness.

Any kind of interruption along with the logic of the actions and the interconnection of the actions to produce a plot is an interruption that draws the audience's attention from a focus on actions to focus on speeches. Therefore, alienation and detachment do not have to occur by interrupting the whole play and the entrance of non-dramatic elements and can happen in this way.

4. Humor or Satire

The word “satire” means ridicule and in Persian cultures means coquetry, ridicule, talking implicitly, derogatory, lamenting, irony, slapstick, and laughing at someone (Aslani, 2008: 140). The word in literature refers to a particular type of poetic and literary prose that makes use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to criticize stupidity or vices (Javadi, 2005: 11). The word satire was derived from the Greek root *Satxyos* and the Latin root *Satura* and *Satira*. This word has been used in most European languages to mean criticism that is expressed in a ridiculous manner (Brockett, 1984: 71).

Satire was, in the Greeks' sense, a ridiculous imitation of myths, a grimace at the gods or heroes and their adventures as well as abnormal movements, seductive dances and bizarre accents and behaviors.

Satire, in this sense, did not exist in contemporary Persian and Arabic and was formerly used in Farsi in the form of lampoon which was mostly direct and personal criticism, lacking indirectness and satirical features, and often not informative or social.

The American Encyclopedia defines satire as a type of literary genre in the form of poetry or prose, in which evil or negative social aspects are criticized, and it is a word of Latin origin and was first used by ancient Roman poets.

Satire is an art that human beings arrive at it when striving to transform the world, and always appear in the form of actions and reactions, and this is manifested in their view of the environment and reality in particular. True satire, originating from real-life events and based on the realities of life, reflects a ridiculous depiction of the negative aspects of life and exaggeratedly shows individual and social evils, that is, uglier and worse than their reality, and thus, displays the deep contradictions of the status quo with the ideals of a perfect and fulfilling life.

However, currently, satire is often referred to as any jokes and slapstick, and in many cases, it is equated with humor, clownish behaviors, laughter, ridicule, humiliation, and ridiculous sarcasm, and satire is the fastest way to get the audience to laugh. This definition of satire differs from the concept of authentic satire intended in this study (Sadr, 2002: 7).

Eric Bentley divides humor into two main parts: Slapstick and comedy (Bentley, 1997: pp. 140 & 155) as shown in the following Table 2:

Table 2 Slapstick and comedy properties

Slapstick										Comedy							
Character		Textual features				Power imposition		Atrocity				Comedy	Tragic comedy	Comedy tragedy	Atrocity	Theft	
Fool	Real	Suppressed desires	A final quick shock	Destined accidents	Childish actions	Scoundrel	Fool	Scoundrel-Fool	Abstract	Imaginary	Scoundrel	Fool	Happy script and happy ending	Happy script and sad ending	Sad script and sad ending	Logical support	Ownership

5. Research Methodology

To determine the role of comedy in the epic theater and Brecht's dialectical theatre, a comparative analysis of the play "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" was performed. Besides, using Table 2, the relationship of power and influence of touches of humor and its subcategories (slapstick or comedy) with the power and frequency of the epic elements in the theater was examined. For Brecht, the dialectical criticism was involved in creating a view of the "crisis" using their outcomes (Haug, 2005: 28).

"The Caucasian Chalk Circle" is a promotional-educational play composed of two completely different Aristotelian and Epic sections and is unique in this respect. "Grusha" is an Aristotelian and tragic play and "Azdak" is epic and comedy.

6. Research Questions

The following questions are addressed in this study:

1. Is there a direct relationship between the frequency of comedy and satire – as two elements of humor - in "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" with the frequency of Aristotelian and epic elements?
2. Do the power and weakness of the senses of humor have a direct relationship with the Aristotelian and epic elements of the play?

7. Plot Summary

Amongst the rubble of a bombed-out village in the Caucasus Mountains, in the Soviet Republic of Georgia, an expert from the State Reconstruction Committee has come to meet with the members of two kolaches, (sometimes translated kolkhoz) or collective farms. At stake is the fate of a valley in the aftermath of World War II. The Galinsky kolaches villagers, who raise goats and used the valley before the war, wish to reclaim the land for grazing, while the Rosa Luxemburg kolaches villagers are fruit growers and want to plant an orchard. The Rosa Luxemburg farmers have proposed a plan to irrigate the valley and exponentially increase the productivity of the land. To support their claim, the fruit farmers have hired a famous local singer and prepared a play with music, The Chalk Circle, based on a Chinese parable. After this frame is established, Brecht never fully returns us to the meeting of the kolaches, instead, he focuses on the play within the play for the remaining five scenes; a classic five-act epic structure. The story begins amid a revolution, the Governor is executed, and his wife must flee. In the chaos, their infant son Michael is left behind. When no one else will take responsibility for the child, a servant named Grusha takes him up and goes on the run. The next three years unfold in a series of episodes showing how Grusha and Michael survive. As always, Brecht explores contradictions in his work, prying open the two sides to every transaction and probing the reasons people act against their own self-interest, while others

blindly pursue it. Grusha nearly leaves the baby with a peasant couple, but cannot, against her better judgment. As Brecht wrote in his notes, “The more Grusha does to save the child’s life, the more she endangers her own,” (Brecht, *Collected Plays: Seven* 304). She takes refuge with her brother for a time but is not welcomed by her sister-in-law, and though she had promised to wait for her true love Simon Chachava, she must marry someone else so she and Michael can survive. The story shifts gears and we learn how Azdak, a clever but corrupt judge, has used his wits to keep his position during the years of revolution and war, and finally after the restoration of the old regime. Ultimately it is he who will hear the suit of the Governor’s wife, who has returned from exile and wants her son back. If she can prove Michael is hers, he is the key to power and will be heir to the dead Governor’s estate. With a habit of drinking on the job, a propensity for taking bribes, and a reputation for ruling in favor of the underdog, Azdak must decide which mother has a better claim to the child’s custody, or rather he must determine, “the child’s claim to the better mother.” He devises the chalk circle test, a circle is drawn on the floor around Michael, and the two contestant mothers must each take a hand and try to pull the boy out. When Grusha lets go, it is clear that she is the better mother. Azdak confiscates Michael's estates and makes them into public gardens. His last act is to divorce Grusha, thereby allowing her to marry Simon. During the dancing that follows, Azdak disappears forever.

8. Analysis of the Play the Caucasian Chalk Circle

One of Brecht's dominant mechanisms to achieve this measure that is used for detachment is the technique of interruption: Benjamin believes that “the discovery of the condition happens through interrupted processes. Benjamin compares the use of interruption in the epic theater with the function of quotations in written texts; a method he himself had mastery over it” (Wolin, 1994: 151).

8.1. Comic Interruptions in “Grusha” part

Comic interruption #1 (two hypocrites trying to pull the rug from under the other’s feet by using ridiculous arguments)

Two doctors who are children of the ruler act the role of a fool and hypocrite and change their roles alternately. They are both stupid (because they dispense stupid prescriptions) and hypocritical (because each tries to pull the rug from under the other’s feet). However, the main fool is the ruler’s wife and the two doctors are both hypocritical and vicious.

Comic interruption #2 (stupid and childish comic indolence at times of danger)

Not receiving a courier with breaking news for indolence. Here the adjutant acts in the role of the hypocrite and the ruler in the role of a fool.

Comic interruption # 3 (slapstick and stupid arguments)

The behavior of two doctors in escape from the coup against the ruler: A silly argument over whose turn is to remain as the king’s child when the king was killed and everyone is fleeing. Instead of fleeing, each doctor tries to kill the other with reasoning and conscientiousness and this leads to a silly quarrel in which the second doctor hits the first one on the head and makes him unconscious and runs away. The two doctors are both stupid and hypocritical with childish brutality due to foolishness while no one needs to stay.

Comic interruption # 4 (Changing slapstick into humanity)

Simon may refuse the ousted adjutant's order charging him with assisting the executed ruler's wife to run away and not bother himself, but he listens stupidly to the orders of a resigned powerless superior to execute his duty while it is redefined in the form of a new hierarchy, not the disrupted order. On the other hand, Grusha accepts the responsibility of the child of a queen who has evaded her own responsibility as a mother. So he is also doing a job that no one has ever done and that he has neither the power to do it nor to be blamed for not doing it. They may think of their love as the first task in this critical situation as the basis for survival, but they foolishly follow their raw emotions. This silly situation is a slapstick slowly turning into an epic. A magnificent epic of human duty against humanity (Grusha vs. the queen's child) and human duty against the orders issued by a superior (even ousted), representing a mix of stupidity and human duty. Simon's behavior looks stupid and Grusha's behavior seems humane. So we are faced with a solo slapstick in which the vicious person is the ousted adjutant or the fleeing queen.

Comic interruption # 5 (love for one's luxury vs. love for one's child)

The queen's life is at risk but she kills the time by picking up the clothes instead of protecting her baby. A completely childish move that is associated with threats from chambermaids who are no longer under her control. Here, too, the chambermaids are playing the role of the fool and the queen the role of a villain, who is herself a fool. Her orders are stupid because they are issued against her life and the chambermaids' obedience is stupid because the queen no longer has power and being afraid of her is pointless. Leaving the baby and taking away the suitcase is the peak of the stupidity that imposes shocks. The confrontation of a fool is with a villain, a fool, and a child.

Comic interruption # 6 (Selecting the right place to hang the ruler's head)

The evil governor attaches great importance to the choice of where to hang the ruler's head, while it does not matter, but he is obsessed with it and it seems a foolish act in this disastrous situation. He is a stupid person because there is no relevance between the obsession of finding the gate center to hang the cut head and the shock resulting from the appearance of the head, so this type of treatment is childish and silly in the context in question.

Comic interruption # 7 (doing a stupid duty where one has to perform a commanding role)

Recognize that a chambermaid is not a noble person from the roughness of his hands while his tongue is aristocratic, baby clothes are expensive, and the chambermaid has money: This is a comedy of social position. The elders rule over others because they know nothing and the subordinates do everything. This is a stupid contradiction because it should be the other way round, but class society is a stupid way of governing society. So the villain here is a class society and the stupid is a chambermaid who remembers the requirement for being a noble person is the lack of knowledge of doing a job, not the skill to do it.

Comic interruption # 8 (Mixing the tragic hero and the comedy villain)

Arguments raised by Grusha's sister-in-law and bother for getting him out of the house and finding an almost-dead husband while having a baby: Here there are two wicked persons (his brother and brother's wife) and a fool (the husband's mother) and the main villain is the husband who pretends to be dead lest to be recruited as a soldier. On the one hand, it is playing a prank with a hermit who has replaced the priest because he takes less money and does the ritual with a baby and a dead groom. Besides, the mother of the husband tries to hide the child from the public eye

while the child is exposed to the public. But the main mockery is the groom who presents to be dead so that he will not go to war, and after a year sleeping in the bed, he gets up when the war is over. The husband's mother plays the role of a fool and the husband plays the role of the villain, but Grusha retains her tragic role in the comedy. She is fired from her brother's house and forced to marry and lose Simon to keep the baby. So comedy-tragedy is formed in the form of three-sided shape; a fool, a villain, and a tragic hero. The tragic hero does not allow the villain to approach himself. Among the other stupid persons in this comedy are villager women who believed in the illness and a husband who is dying. The entanglement of this funny situation is later released by a stupid-evil person out of this comedy - Judge Azdak - as a result of an accident (which is intentional), and the tragic hero reaches his love and defeats the comedy fate.

Comic Interruption “Azdak” part

1. All the stories in this part are ridiculous and comical. This scene itself is also slapstick because Azdak has been appointed as a judge in a popular uprising and by accident.

1(a) The main element of slapsticks: Reverse balance of power

Concerning the relationship between the villain's power and the pretended power of the fool, we are facing the construction of the villain and the temporary removal of power by the fool and the temporary acquisition of power. The temporality and the heterogeneity of the amount of the power of the fool and the villain is one of the reasons for the emergence of this funny situation that is, of course, also the source of class consciousness of power. Azdak, like a fool, comes to a power that must belong to the villain, and all villains, from the nephew of the governor to the defendants of the upper classes, have to obey the power of Azdak, regardless of their class position. This heterogeneity of power and class position forms the basis of slapsticks.

1(b) Slapstick

Even though the wicked are to be punished, this process is done not by conventional logic but by irrational and ridiculous methods. In this way, senses of humor are not embedded in the ending but in the course and context of stories. Chaos is one of the main elements of slapsticks that flow through all interrogations and judgments. Chaos seems to have no particular reason, and so it is closer to slapsticks. In slapsticks, chaos is childish and lacks logic.

1(c) Comedy

If we look at jokes made by the kolaches' singers from their own point of view, this irrationality is nothing but the inversion of the high social class logic for the perpetual condemnation of the lower classes. The inversion of the ownership logic leads to the replacement of slapsticks by comedy because chaos is no longer childish but it has theoretical and intellectual support. Therefore jokes are internally considered as slapsticks but they are comedic in terms of the general structure.

1(d) Theft as the main theme of comedy

The collapse of the logic of ownership and its transformation into the theft is the main theme of comedy. What makes the core of the joke that makes them funny is this fundamental change. Azdak transforms the notion of bribery into a judge's wages and natural rights and delegitimizes the plaintiffs of their property by recognizing the theft committed by low-class people. The laughs followed by these jokes are all conscious and considered epic.

I(e) Atrocity

Pranked cruelties are mostly slapsticks and chaplainic in nature because they have no logical relationship. For instance, the fear associated with cruelty such as incest is removed by giving a bribe to a witness who spends it his uncle's music class and it results in laughter instead of producing fear. It creates laughter because there is no ordinary logic between the uncle's music class and the heinous act of incest and it is produced through the collision of these two mockeries.

I(f) The association of mockeries with Grusha part

In a few mockeries, the evil characters of the tragic part of Grusha are tried for being accused of another crime. They are evil here too but lack the power they had in the tragic part. In this way, the connection between the comedy (Azdak) and the tragedy (Grusha) is made through the repetition of the stories.

I(g) Anti-Aristotelian mockeries

The mockeries lack Aristotelian logic. Laughter is caused by the inversion of class logic, and superiors often have to surrender to anti-logic in the coercion of subordinate judgment. The shocking structure of mockeries like the epic theater is based on defamiliarization.

8.2. Comic Interruptions of “Azdak” part***Comic interruption # 1***

An evil person lacks actual power but possesses potential power (the fleeing governor). The fool possesses the current power to rescue the villain and lacks power in the class position. The insignificant but actual power of the fool against the immense but potentially evil power that, through his mediating role releases the villain and causes him to scape, forms the basis of comedy.

Comic interruption # 2 (Teaching the customs of peasants to the feudal class for the scape of the governor)

The low-powered villain - Azdac the vagrant and the illegal hunter of the lord's rabbits- trains the fool (the fleeing governor) with no actual power but with potential power on how to eat food like the peasants to save him from death. Denial of the power rituals by the holders of potential power to save their life is the main mockery (Compare with mockery # 7 where potential power-holders, i.e., the governors' runaway women) and a powerless subject under false authoritarian cover discover their class mores but instead of teaching their class customer to rescue her, reject her with her child charging her with fraud at the class position.

Comic interruption # 3 (mixing the tragic hero, the wicked fool, and the revolutionary good-hearted fool of comedy)

Az dak is both a wicked person - by forcing Shaura the guard to hand him over to the center for the charge of sheltering and fleeing the governor-general - and a fool for demanding to punish himself while no one is aware of his crime. Her singing on the unsuccessful uprising of carpet weavers in the presence of the killers of the carpet weavers is a sign of her stupidity, and of course his role as a narrator of the revolution that could be a hero of tragedy because she faces the risk of execution, but not because of her fearlessness but because of his mistake and failure to recognize the killers of the carpet weavers.

Comic interruption # 4 (power vs. power pretention)

The appointment of Azdak as a judge stems from the power of the people's freedom of choice due to the revolution. In this situation, Azdak is a good-hearted fool seating on the judge's throne and his nephew and ruler who are competing with him for the seat of judgment are defeated villain. The important point is the source of the power of each party. Azdak lacks personal class power and relies on the support of the people, and the governor despite his apparent hierarchical power surrenders to the public choice for fear of revolution. In this situation, the good-hearted fool wins by his class consciousness and the support of the people over a wicked person that is unable to exercise his power that is seized by its people. What makes a funny situation is the clash of the villain's authoritative conduct weakened by the people and a fool's ostensible power strengthened by the people. The fool's victory is temporary because the carpet weavers' revolution has not come to fruition and the source of power that has put it on the judgment throne is threatened by the former regime. The fool's judgment leads to a class orientation in favor of the subordinates who have always been convicted in this court due to being subordinates. In other words, he is a wicked person in the face of the members of the overthrown higher class and has no mercy on them, and they have acted foolishly by following the orders of a judge who lacks class legitimacy. This is the core of mockery; the power against the pretense of power.

Comic interruption # 5

The overlap of two unrelated trials and issuing a verdict based on the overlap itself is slapstick because it lacks the court's logic and represents a childish act. Even each trial has both irrational elements and both plaintiffs and appellants and the parties' arguments against each other. In this way, the illogical connection of the two irrational trials shows childish chaos, resembling doctor and engineer games played by kids.

The first trial: A doctor did a surgical operation on the wrong foot of the patient and cripples him. The doctor's father, who has paid his educational fees, had a heat stroke when he heard the news of the doctor's treating the patient for free. Both are complaining. The doctor at the defense says his servant has forgotten to take the treatment fee. So the act is not benevolence but forgetfulness.

The second trial: A landowner filed a lawsuit against a bully. The landowner raped his brother's daughter and was caught red-handed by the bully. So he was forced to pay money to the bully to keep him silent. The bully gave the money to his uncle to pay for his music training course.

Punishment

- The act of bullying has been proven.
- The crippled man must pay a fine for the sum of 1000 piesters.
- The doctor in the first trial should amputate the crippled man in the case of a second stroke.
- The crippled man is given a glass of French wine as compensation.
- The bully shall pay half the money paid by the crippled man to him for court fees and medical education.
- The doctor is acquitted because of his unforgivable mistake.

The fool is Azdak and the villains are the doctor and the landowner. Both the plaintiffs' claim and the court's decision for the defendants in two separate cases with the same plaintiffs are ridiculous. What is being criticized is the medical profession used as a business, the benevolent act of not receiving the treatment fee due to making a mistake, the adulterer's legal action against the person demanding the blackmail without himself being punished for adultery.

Again the wealthy people pay the compensations and the poor are benefited. Here too, the criterion is not a crime but class status. The subordinates are, however, the winners of the court of law and the judge considers the bribe as part of the payment, and it is the conversion of the bribe into official payment disclosure bribery that has been defamiliarized leading to a funny situation. This is the logic of mockery, but the reality is that under ordinary circumstances, members of the high social class always win. So the comic situation is just the inversion of a fact that it is irrational and seems to make sense by inverting it, but the logic of classes and law is so tarnished that its inversion results in a funny situation. This funny situation is also a comedy if viewed from the standpoint of class oppression because the chaotic acts have their own logic. This comic situation uses a profoundly anti-logic approach and attempts to show insensible class decisions. This comedy shows us how we habitually do not notice the oppression imposed senselessly on us by the people belonging to the high social class. If we turn the situation upside down, we will notice how senseless are the decisions taken by the capitalist court. This devastating confusion caused by this funny situation following comic rules in Groucho Marx's movies.

Comic interruption # 6 (The punishment of the guesthouse keeper in Grusha part)

The second part narrates the story of the escape of Grusha, who tries to disguise herself as a person of noble rank, hiding in a guesthouse with runaway women. Upon the women's awareness of her social rank, she is forced to run away with the help of the janitor who is of the same social class by giving him some food. As mentioned, the guesthouse is located in a valley that is the site of the kolaches' subsequent disputes, and Brecht shows that the timing of the play is in the future, and this asynchrony of the surreal veins is, at the same time, a sign of continuing ownership disputes. The old man is the owner of the valley and a greedy person plants trees.

The funny situation is formed based on the relationship between the guesthouse keepers' bride and the janitor who confesses having a sexual relationship with her. However, tempted by the bride's erotic body, Azdak orders the janitor's acquittal and condemns the bride for committing adultery. The bride is punished by giving her husband father's horse to Azdak. Again, a funny situation is developed with an upside-down logic. The true story is that the bride and the janitor had sex with their own free will, and the bride has been punished by the guesthouse keeper who wants to lay the blame on the janitor - which is condemned from being from a lower class. Azdak rules without any reasonable evidence and based on his instinct. His witness is the bride's dancing. This time, too, we see a trial that his based on the instincts and sentiment against forged documents and evidence of capitalism. Without being mentioned in the story and without any logic, Azdak had sex with Grusha, and this relationship is non-linear and free from any plot which disrupts the general logic of the Aristotelian plot.

Comic interruption # 7

In this comedy, the bandit becomes a holy person. This conversion is not the type of changing a bandit to a saint, but it is a kind of banditry and the distribution of plundered goods among the poor. The landlords' argument based on ownership is rational, and the old woman and the bandit's argument based on ownership is false and funny because the laws protect private ownership. Azdak's actions to bypass the laws to be protected by himself add more fun to the situation. He is trying to take advantage of his position as a judge to help people who are legally deprived, and thus is attempting to evade the laws as the executor. It is the paradox that produces laughter because the arguments are all against his position and duty. As such, it is a matter of infiltrating one class into another and abusing the situation, which is funny. All the signs of the bandit's attack lead to a

change of landlords’ conduct and their affection. The swollen heads of the servants are a sign of their change of heart and their refusal to take rent from the old woman under the pressure of banditry turns them into benevolent landlords. The miracle is that the landlords have strayed from their class characteristics, the old woman has eaten meat, and that the saint is a bandit who used force against the upper class and violated ownership laws and wins the court’s decision under the fake title of holiness and miracles. Azdak rejects the landlords’ complaint by accusing them of refusing miracles and apostasy. These charges are often raised by owners against the poor, accusing them of being anti-religion for violating class laws. Here, a funny situation occurs by inverting the class elements, and at the same time, maintaining the corresponding logic because the two have always been together. This upside-down situation is reflected in the chorus: "The life is reversed. The uppers are upset, and the poor down in joy”.

Table 3 The funny situations in the two parts of the Caucasian chalk circle

Play parts	Grusha part: Aristotelian and tragic								Azdak part: Epic and instructional							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Mockeries																
Power	Members of high class: Owners of forceful power	*	*	*				*			*	*	*	*	*	
	Members of low class: Powerless and reliant on incidents	*		*	*			*			*	*	*	*	*	
	Members of high class: Owners of ineffective power Members of low class: Owners of effective empty power	*				*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	
Senselessness	Childish pleasure	*				*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	
	Proving the senselessness of all characters at the end	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
	Theft											*	*		*	
Atrocity	Low-class people revenging high-class people	*		*			*			*	*	*	*	*	*	
	Abstract and imaginary violence						*			*	*	*	*	*	*	
	The victory of class people over high-class people									*	*	*	*	*	*	
Mockery power (%)	67	22	44	22	44	44	33	11	56	67	89	100	100	78	100	
Total mockery power (%)	36								84							
Types of mockery																
Mockery power (%)	Slapstick	38								100						
	Comedy	62								100						

According to the results presented in Table 3:

1. The more comic parts in the play; their play will be more epic in terms of detachment and alienation.
2. The basic dialectic of understanding Brecht's works occurs between the two plays (one potential and one actual). It is the dialectic that occurs between the potential Aristotelian sentimental drama and the symbolic and deformed consciousness-raising Brechtian drama and turns into an informative tragedy-comedy in which laughter is part of the shocking results of consciousness rather than carelessness and ignoring the truth. For this reason, from Walter Benjamin's point of view, the shock is one of the main features of the epic theater.
3. Epic comedies reflect the absurdity of the present situation (Frankfurt comedy) or expose the legal and executive laws that give legitimacy to ownership and classes and show its inverse logic (Orthodox Marxism). It is a de-familiarization that reveals the truth of the existing situation (which is hidden under the burden of ideologies) to make us laugh at their weaknesses and absurdity.
4. Comic elements disrupt the tragic process and thus can be one of the disruptive elements of the plot, so the more comic elements the tragic plot and the catharsis will be hurt more severely, and thus there will be more room the narrative and epic comedy.
5. The characters and especially the hero of the epic comedy become alienated with their roles, so the more comedy elements are embedded in the hero, the more epic will be the play.
6. When the short stories inside the plot show more conflict with the tragedy (i.e., when they are more comic), they will interrupt the play more frequently detaching the audience from catharsis and emotional empathy, and open the room for further awareness and education.
7. Comedy in its structure would be dialectical with tragedy if the resulting synthesis is the audience's consciousness, not the propaganda and injection of the author's specific idea. So the stronger this dialectic is, the more instructive will be the play. In contrast, the weaker this dialectic is, the more promotional will be the play
8. The epic theater is extremely historical; constantly reminding the audience that they only receive a report of past events (Henderson, 1977: 12). The death or defeat of the tragic hero represents a mismatch of the character with an unhistorical and eternal fate, but the death or defeat of the epic hero reflects the hero's failure to conform to the current conditions of society and the weaknesses of society's current capabilities to win over fate, and so it is historic event that is oriented to the future. The comedy hero's triumph over fate is historical and temporal, but the author perpetuates it through non-historical endings. Therefore, comedy is an interruption in the victory of fate and represents the ultimate victory of the hero over fate, which is currently in the imagination and struggle. This interruption enhances the hero's energy and casts doubt on the legitimacy of fate, both contributing to the weakness of fate.
9. In tragedy, comedy is sedative, and in the epic, comedy plays a predictable role, yet representing the absurdity of the hegemony of fate in the present situation. Comedy type (standalone story, irony, lectures and short positions) increases the visibility of the epic nature of the drama. Comedy, on one hand, connects to the epic through the absurdity (of the current situation) and to the tragedy on the other. Brecht's comedies have a sweet covering and a bitter kernel.

10. Shock is the interface of comedy and epic. Therefore, the Aristotelian dram cannot contain comedy. Measuring the number of comic and epic shocks can be a sign of its anti-Aristotelian power.
11. One gesture, especially the actor's gesture, is readable only concerning the gesture of the other actor. Hence the importance of gesture theories (Benjamin, Brecht) is because they examine the ways in which social determinations and hierarchical relationships in apparent exchanges, relationships between body masses, differences in attitudes are engraved (Varney, 2007: 117). If comedy is the theater of the human body, a gesture is another factor that can be a comedy, not a tragedy. So the more frequent the gestures, the more epic elements are present in the drama.
12. The common point between slapstick and epic is the gesture and the common point between comedy and epic is the way they deal with tragedy. Besides, comedy and epic share the lack of the audience's identification with the tragedy.
13. Slapstick shows that the world is a world of fools, and man uses his little intelligence to make things worse. So this is a tragedy for humans and slapstick has tragic features. Because of the superiority of the logic of stupidity over the logic of benevolence, people in the epic theater are involved in a stupid situation because the system is stupid and people try to move from a stupid situation to a humane one, but they don't succeed. Therefore, it is both a slapstick and tragedy.

9. Conclusion

According to the results of this study, humor is one of the main components of the epic theater, and the greater the power of the chaplainic humor and satire, the drama is more successful in reversing the elements of the Aristotle and classical tragedy and is more expressive in creating informative interruptions. It was also shown that the type of satire including slapsticks or comedy is effective in the epic and dialectical power of the plays, and the more senses of humor resemble slapsticks, the theater is the more informative and allegorical.

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