

## **Social and philosophical research structures of drama and folk narratives: the manifestations of embodied world views**

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### **Abstract**

The article analyzes the methodological potential of drama in modern socio-philosophical research. It is shown that the theoretical reconstruction of the drama model allows us to talk about the dramatic approach in the study and explanation of society, and the morphological analysis of the structure reveals its methodological potential for studying crises in society. Our focus is on the socio-philosophical study of drama. The subject allowed us to appreciate philosophy's complex, contradictory nature and history with its gains and losses. It also overcomes simplistic and excessive ideologization in the interpretation of the intellectual process of European culture. Our analysis of the concept of drama reveals the differences between the concept of social dramatization and the dramatic approach of I. We examine Hoffman's approach describing the analysis's main stages, which is necessary to positively answer whether drama has all the aspects of social dramatization in its invariant structure.

**Key words:** drama, social dramatization, social dramaturgy, dramatic approach, the principle of dramatization of social reality, morphological analysis of the structure of drama

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### **Introduction**

The drama “deed, action” is a literary, dramatic, stage, and cinematic genre. It became prevalent in the literature from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century, gradually replacing another genre — tragedy, contrasting it mainly with a domestic plot and a style closer to everyday reality. With the advent of cinema, he also moved into this art form, becoming one of its most widespread genres.

Unlike the lyrics and epic, drama reproduces the external world — the relationships between people, their actions, and the conflicts that arise. Unlike an epic, it has a dialogic form, not a narrative one (Losev, 1958).

The aesthetic subject of drama is the emotional and volitional reactions of a person manifested in verbal and physical actions. Dramatic works are characterized by acute conflict situations that encourage the character towards verbal and physical activity. Dramas specifically depict, as a rule, the private life of a person and his social conflicts. At the same time, the emphasis is often placed on the universal contradictions embodied in the behavior and actions of specific characters.

Traditional themes of the philosophy of history, such as the meaning and direction of the historical development of society, the driving forces of the historical process, the ultimate goals of human development, became particularly relevant in the second half of the twentieth and the twenty-first century and permeate the entire field of modern philosophical research. In this regard, the interest in the topic of society on the part of thinkers suggests turning to such approaches in the study of the laws of the development of society, which are extremely important not only for the analysis of the current situation but also for identifying productive strategies for understanding and solving current problems of the future (Shakespeare, 2017).

The proposed approach of social dramatization meets the criteria of significance, including for the development prospects of Eastern Europe. Thus, taking drama as an algorithm for the development of the conflict, as an idea that carries a modeling principle and contains in its invariant structure all aspects of social dramatization, it

becomes possible to predict the direction of the development of macrostructural processes in society to minimize risks and prevent social conflicts.

Modern European society is forced to adapt to life in conditions of constant crisis. The very fact of rapid changes indicates that crisis phenomena in all spheres of social life, without exception, have become an essential and integral feature of social life. In this regard, the interest in the topic of society on the part of thinkers of the 21st century suggests turning to such approaches in the study of the laws of the development of society, which are extremely important both for the analysis of the current situation and for identifying productive strategies for understanding and resolving conflicts of local and global scale in the future.

Emerging at the turn of the 20th century in Western Europe, the new drama marked a new era in art. At the same time, it reflected changes in the philosophy of history and the cultural consciousness in general. Significantly, the first samples of the new drama appear in different countries almost simultaneously, independently of each other, which indicates typological proximity caused by the needs of the individual's changing consciousness, not by cultural influence and borrowing. (Hoffman, 2000)

Directly or indirectly, philosophy influenced art in general and drama development in particular. The idealistic view of the role of the individual in history has dominated for a long time. The influence of the idealist theory was so strong that the concept of the individual as the creator of history was held by the spontaneous materialists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, including Rousseau, Diderot, etc., and the utopian socialists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the young Hegelians in Germany.

In the theory of drama, a kind of the equivalent of idealistic philosophical views was the concept of F. Brunetiera. He considers the law of conflict the fundamental law of dramatic action. The evolution of French tragedy-Corneille, Racine, romantic drama - is a way of strengthening the effective beginning and - in parallel-modifying the genre of tragedy, the least realistic, in his opinion, the most symbolic, considering the situation "sub specie aeternae" (Matsionis, 2010: 130).

Common to drama is its compelling nature and the "conflict" hero with all the genre varieties. "Drama, in general, is an action, an imitation of ordinary and sad life; it is a reproduction of the will of man in conflict with the mysterious and natural forces that limit and detract from us; it is one of us thrown alive on the stage to fight against fate, against the social law, against one of our kind, if necessary, against the ill-will of others" (Matsionis, 2010: 132).

The paradox lies in the fact that Brunetier created his theory in the last decade of the 19th century, that is, when it had already, in fact, lost its ideological dominance. Drama has always reflected history, in one way or another, and therefore also views on its development. The materialism of the 19th century debunks the cult of a strong personality who creates history and puts forward a new force - the people-as the true hero of history. The mysticism of the 19th century also does not accept the Renaissance type of the hero - the creator of his fate and the world and does not recognize the materialistic vision of history, which is created by the same person but magnified many times - quantitatively. In both cases, the concept of personality changes fundamentally (Welsh, 1990).

A radical change in the philosophy of history was also reflected in drama development. When it was believed that one strong personality could determine the course of history, then drama was monogamous. When the idealistic view is replaced by the materialistic one, with its relation to the masses as the creator of history, or the mystical one, with its belief in the connection and interpenetration of the worlds, then the structure of the drama naturally changes. The theoretical justification of the new theatrical and dramatic language was formulated in the "Quintessence of Ibsenism" by Bernard Shaw. As the playwright and drama theorist believed, Shakespeare's dramatic system had exhausted itself for all its greatness. "Shakespeare brought us on

the stage, but in situations that were alien to us: our uncles rarely kill our fathers and not often become the husbands of our mothers. We don't date witches. Our kings are not always slaughtered, and those who slay them do not always take their place. Finally, when we get money on a bill of exchange, we don't promise to pay for it with pounds of our flesh" (Vakhshtein, 2003: 105).

It is significant that the characterization of drama by Show (which has become a classic) are presented in terms that are textually close to the corresponding places of Maeterlinck's (1910) "Treasure of the Humble." For Maeterlinck (1910: 25), it is not the active, strong-willed Othello who lives the real, full life. Instead, it is the contemplative Hamlet, "who has time to live because he does not do things." It is not events that invade a person's life from the outside and violate his habitual separate existence that determine the essence and value of a person, but his attitude to the eternal and infinite.

In addition, "the psychology of victory or murder is too elementary and exceptional, and the useless noise of a cruel act drowns out the deeper, if hesitant, modest voices of beings and things" (Maeterlinck, 1910: 27). Therefore, the act, which for a long time determined the essence of drama, is brought to the periphery; on the stage, not an isolated, and therefore exceptional event, but the comprehension of the essence of the visible and invisible world should be shown.

With this understanding of tragedy and the tragic, the action proceeds without the will and participation of the main characters of the drama - consequently, they turn from the subjects of the action into the object of the application of invisible forces; a will that has materialized into an act. An act can change the current situation - this is the logic of developing the dramatic plot. But if someone else's will is obviously acting in the drama, then the actions also acquire an involuntary character, approaching in their nature to an event taking place without a person's will. (Ilyin, 2003: 7-9) B. Shaw is the founder of the intellectual theater, Maeterlinck - static, a particular branch of the new drama. It is impossible to suspect a direct influence here, especially since Chekhov comes to the same conclusion. Thus, the idea expressed from different ideological and creative positions about the need to create a new drama reflected the requirements of the time itself.

### **Research methods**

This article studies the concept of "drama" as a fundamental universal of culture, reflecting the contradictory cultural and civilizational development processes. It is characteristic that the Russian philosopher A. F. Losev, exploring the specifics of the ancient Greek drama as a cultural phenomenon, drew attention to the fact that "the drama itself reflects social reality in its contradictory development" (Losev, 1958: 122).

In addition, it should be noted that such concepts as "social drama" and "social dramatization" in the domestic socio-philosophical thought have not yet entered everyday use. The substantiation of these concepts at the meta-subject level and their introduction as categories of socio-philosophical analysis is an element of novelty of the proposed research.

So, traditionally, the concept of drama is considered in aesthetic, cultural, philological, art, and literary contexts to study its essence, specificity, form, and content in more detail at various stages of historical evolution. Researchers are usually interested in identifying generic literary differences between drama and epic and lyric poetry. The following aspects are especially worth noticing:

- difficulties in identifying the content and genre distinctiveness of tragedy, drama, and comedy;

- the state of these problems in the history of world aesthetic and literary thought, etc.

It is characteristic that drama has always been the object of research of applied, narrow-profile disciplines in the field of art and has never become the subject of a

meta-theoretical level of research. In other words, drama has never acted as a philosophical category or a methodological tool for analyzing societal macrostructural processes. In the history of thought, there are attempts to use theatrical terminology in the application to the description of human relationships. Thus, the Roman writer Gaius Petronius reflected the specifics of social interactions in a dramatic aphorism. His line “Mundus universus exercet histrioniam” literally means “The whole world is engaged in acting” (Mikhailov, 2006).

William Shakespeare suggested using the concept of “theater” as a metaphor that characterizes the essence of the world in which a person lives: “The whole world is a theater. In it, women, men—all actors. They have their own exits, and each plays more than one role.” (Shakespeare, 2017: 80) It should be emphasized that both G. Petronius and W. Shakespeare were directly related to the professional activity of the playwright, which gave them the right to use theatrical terminology to express their worldview. The transdisciplinary use of dramatic terminology became possible only by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the study of the laws and rituals of social behavior of people was updated in practical sociology.

What, then, is “drama in Nietzsche’s philosophy”? It is challenging to attribute correctness to it, let alone anything else. Nevertheless, Nietzsche is gradually recognized as a philosopher. The question is whether this is good for Nietzsche himself. Jaspers, who acknowledges the merits of Nietzsche in highlighting “serious problems,” speaks of Nietzsche in his own language or in the language of his time. However, he calls elsewhere for the need to delve first into the language of Nietzsche to understand the essence of those serious problems of “modern reality.” Therefore, to begin with, it is necessary to abandon the concept of “problems” and other formulations of this kind, as from a semantic construction alien to Nietzsche.

On the other hand, we lose sight of a different, more cunning danger behind this idea. You never know under what slogan philosophy is claimed by its own or subsequent time. The essence of the “times” is always the same and the essence of the demand that extends in their requests. It is clear that the superficial is required and that the deep understanding is not reached. But, as it seems to us, it is not so terrible not to understand the philosopher where he has understood himself well. In the illusion of understanding acceptance, it is much more terrible to pass by a place that the philosopher himself has bypassed with the knowledge or where understanding has avoided him. In fact, from the circumvention of such sites in the thinking of a thinker, his “philosophy” then arises. When it comes to “Nietzsche’s philosophy,” or one might as well say, “Nietzsche’s system, ‘or’ Nietzsche’s metaphysics,” - it is believed that the application of the word “philosophy” to Nietzsche will not turn him over so much in his grave—a phenomenon of just such an order.

Another interpreter of Nietzsche played a significant role in realizing this possibility - a philosopher of the first rank, Martin Heidegger. Heidegger devotes a special place to Nietzsche in his reflections on the history of the West, whose fate is determined since ancient times by the course taken by the initial thinkers of ancient Greece to represent everything that exists metaphysically. Nietzsche, according to Heidegger, appears at one of the key moments of the formation of Western European metaphysics, namely, at last, when it, under the weight of the unexplained, misunderstood and unthinkable in its own beginning and source, literally turns over, i.e. begins to turn into its complete opposite - the philosophy of anti-metaphysical revolt, revolt against metaphysics and postulated rejection of all metaphysics. It should be noted that the transdisciplinary use of dramatic terminology became possible only by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the study of the laws and rituals of social behavior of people was updated in practical sociology (Gottschalk - Whitmer, 2013).

Thus, Kenneth Burke (1897-1993) – American writer, journalist, philosopher, communication theorist, influenced the formation and development of the dramatic

perspective in sociology. In his trilogy “The Grammar of Motives” (1945), “The Rhetoric of Motives” (1950), “Language as Symbolic Action” (1966), he treats social interaction and communication within the framework of five elements: action, scene, actor, means and end. According to K. Burke, most social interaction and communication cases should be approached as a form of drama, the results of which are determined by the ratio of these five elements. This formula became known as the “dramatic pentad” and became entrenched in the dramatic method, according to which the relationship between life and the theater is understood literally, not metaphorically – the whole world is a stage (Aristotle, 1980).

Burke’s ideas concerning drama, which, in turn, are a reference to W. Shakespeare, influenced the development of the thought of Irving Hoffman (1922-1982), an American sociologist of Canadian origin, a follower of the school of the social philosophy of American pragmatism. Irving Hoffman, adapting the ideas of symbolic interactionism to the empirical analysis of social activity, developed a unique dramatic approach commonly used in micro-sociological studies to describe social interactions in everyday life (Losev, 1958). The dramatic method describes how social movements transmit power in modern sociological research. In his work “Representation of oneself to others in everyday life” (Hoffman, 2000), I. Hoffman develops a “dramatic” or “theatrical” approach in sociology, analyzing the “stage setting” of human micro-interactions, techniques for theatricalizing one’s activities, etc. According to the American thinker, “if we imagine ourselves as directors who observe what happens on the stage of everyday life, then we conduct a dramatic analysis-the study of social interactions, using the terminology of theatrical performance” (Matsionis, 2010: 130).

It is necessary to point out the main shortcomings of I. Hoffman’s dramatic approach: a) social interaction is interpreted mainly as a game of people’s imaginations about each other; b) interaction occurs not so much between individuals as subjects, integral indivisible personalities, as between different social faces of individuals, as if between the characters they depict; c) in the context of such an analysis of the forms and rituals of interpersonal interaction, there is no place for moral action, since everything is aimed at solving pragmatic problems, and free will coincides with necessity.

In his arguments, the author of this article suggests going beyond the micro-sociological methodology of I. Hoffman. Namely, to consider the drama not as a metaphor for describing the microcosm in which a person lives but as a formula or model of the actual processes taking place in society. Traditionally, drama is considered in the field of art without affecting its methodological potential, which can become a tool for modeling social reality and constructing the future. The author of the article proposes to consider the concept of drama as an idea that carries organizing, centering, and modeling principles, which in its invariant structure contains all aspects of social dramatization.

It should be noted that the adherents of this trend in theoretical sociology interpret social interaction mainly as a game of people’s imaginations about each other. A person directly exists for another person only as an imaginary entity that affects his mind. Interaction occurs not so much between individuals as subjects, integral indivisible personalities, but between different social faces of individuals, as if between the characters they represent. George Herbert Mead called this position “social solipsism” (Mead, 2015). Moreover, in the context of such an analysis of the forms and rituals of interpersonal interaction, there is no place for moral action since everything aims to solve pragmatic problems, and free will coincides with necessity. In this regard, the modern American sociologist John Welsh in his book “Dramatic analysis and social criticism,” called the theory of I. Hoffmann “a product of consumption” (Welsh, 1990: 48).

I. Hoffman did not seek to build a theory of society as a whole but consciously analyzed a special micro-reality that occurs only in social situations where

participants are in the physical presence of each other and have a direct opportunity to react to the actions of others. Therefore, the dramatic approach does not contribute to the understanding of the laws in the functioning of society and does not meet the goals of theoretical sociology. For many researchers, the experience of Hoffmann undermines the hope of fulfilling a cherished dream – to build a bridge between observations and generalizations at the level of everyday situations and historical stereotypes of macro-sociology. And not in the form of intuitive insights and superficial metaphors, but in the form of a ladder of strict concepts included in the general theoretical system. For this reason, the dramatic approach of I. Hoffman has rarely been the subject of study in Russian socio-philosophical thought. (Vakhshtein, 2003; Ilyin, 2003).

What is drama in the context of socio-philosophical research, and how legitimate is it from a theoretical and methodological point of view to use this concept to describe the essence and specifics of conflicts occurring in society? It is important to note that the concept of “drama” in translation from ancient Greek means “action” and is considered as one of the three types of fiction (along with the epic and lyrics) (Mikhailov, 2006). Aristotle (1980: 665) defined drama as “... the imitation of an action... using an action, not a story.” According to M. Gorky, “drama must be strictly and thoroughly effective” (Mikhailov, 2006). The action that takes place in the drama is primarily a conflict of motives, actions, interests, and views. In the drama, the action unfolds only when there is a contradiction – the core of the dramatic work.

Drama as a kind of literature and drama as a genre should not be confused. Any literary genre constructed in a dialogical form, including comedy, tragedy, drama, vaudeville, farce, etc., belongs to the drama as a literary genius. It is necessary to emphasize that it is the generic and not the genre characteristics of the drama that are universal, ontological in their nature, and allow us to talk about the possibility of using the dramatic approach to analyze conflict processes in society.

Further, the term “dramatization” is derived from the word “drama” and is characterized by an action that reflects contradictions and conflicts. To dramatize the process of social life means to give this process a dramatic form with an apparent conflict, contradictory beginning, which expresses itself in the clash of people’s diverse interests. In other words, social dramatization is a set of phenomena or interactions that occur in a society according to the invariant laws of drama and change the relations between people or between the constituent elements of a community. The essential features of social dramatization are their universality and connection with the subject who carries out this process (dramatization of activities with certain subject attitudes) (Sizova, 2012).

Considering all the above, it becomes possible to clarify the difference between the dramatic approach developed by the author of the article and the dramatic approach of I. Hoffman. Thus, the dramatic approach is etymologically related to the concept of “drama,” i.e. “drama theory, action theory,” and is based on the principle of mirroring the external behavioral reaction of a person to specific circumstances. This approach is a recipe for achieving what is desired from the outside world, which is generally characteristic of the school of American pragmatism. As for the dramatic approach, it is related to the concept of “drama,” and it is based, if we follow the definition of drama according to Aristotle, on the principle of reflecting action through conflict, the essence of which is in contradiction, in the clash of interests.

Thus, the dramatic approach in social philosophy is a set of techniques of theoretical reconstruction of the drama model and dramatic modeling of conflict in the study and explanation of society, united by the principle of dramatization of social reality. The principle of dramatization of social reality is the starting point of the dramatic approach, based on the consideration of social processes through the prism of the drama model as an algorithm for conflict resolution (Goffman, 1983). Dramatic

conflict modeling is a technique within the framework of the theatrical approach that allows you to model a social conflict on the principle of dramatizing social reality.

The theoretical reconstruction of the drama model is a technique that allows us to fully reveal the methodological potential of drama in the context of socio-philosophical research. Thus, the reconstruction of the classical drama model includes the identification of the fundamental principle of the construction and development of a dramatic work, its classical form, structure, and strategy of involvement (Poznyakova, 2017). For this study, the structure of drama as an algorithm for conflict resolution will be of the most significant methodological interest. The morphological analysis of the drama structure allows us to identify the following mandatory, invariant components, which will simultaneously be staged in the conflict resolution algorithm.

The first stage is a prerequisite for conflict. In classical drama, it is called a dramatic situation. The second stage is the beginning. Here, the essence of the contradiction between the potentially conflicting parties is determined, and the transition to an open confrontation of the parties' interests to the conflict. The third stage is a methodological crisis, characterized by an unsuccessful attempt to resolve the conflict by the usual methods, techniques, and means, which leads to an aggravation of the confrontation of the interests of the conflicting parties. In classical drama, this stage is called the "first loop." The fourth stage is the "point of no return." In drama, it is called "midpoint" because there is an identification and awareness of the actual, deep cause of the conflict, considering previously hidden factors, which leads to a crisis of the participants' worldview of the opposing sides. The fifth stage is the worldview crisis or "second loop." The parties to the conflict seek to find and apply the most destructive means of confrontation to resolve the conflict. The sixth stage is the culmination. Open fight of the parties to the conflict to assert the interests of one of the parties. The seventh stage is the denouncement, in which there is either a constructive resolution of the conflict, leading to a compromise of the interests of the parties, or a destructive one, associated with the suppression and subordination of the will and interests of one of the parties to the conflict, or the death of the parties to the conflict.

The contradiction's essence lies in the conflicting parties' attitude to private property, the antagonism of classes, the exploitation of man by man, labor as a commodity, etc. An attempt to resolve the conflict in the usual way, first with the help of an arms race and then with the help of actively developing international law, does not lead to the desired results. Obviously, at the climax, we are waiting for an open clash of the opponents of the conflict, namely, war. The seventh stage of the conflict has not yet arrived. But we know that it leads either to a constructive resolution of the conflict, a compromise of the parties' interests or to a destructive one – the suppression and subordination of the will and interests of one of the participants. In addition, in the era of nuclear weapons, the death of the parties to the conflict and the entire humanity becomes relevant (Durnenkov, 2007; Goffman, 1983).

## **Conclusion**

Thus, the analysis of the crisis with a dramatic approach gives an understanding of what awaits us in the near future and what else can be done to avoid a catastrophic outcome in the form of the death of civilization. The theoretical reconstruction of the drama model allows us to speak generally about the dramatic approach in the study and explanation of society. The morphological analysis of the drama structure reveals its methodological potential for conducting socio-philosophical research (Kravchenko, 2010). To positively answer the question of whether drama has all the aspects of social dramatization in its invariant structure, it is necessary, first of all, to perform morphological analysis of the drama for the presence of specific mandatory, consistent components that can reflect the research and show that each structural unit

of the drama performs its function as part of a single whole, and also that these functions can be relied on both in the field of drama and in the area of social reality. And finally, with the help of a built-up model of drama, to clarify the possibility of constructing and predicting actual macrostructural processes in society. Thus, by identifying or modeling the conflict of interests in society, isolating its invariant structural elements following the drama model, it becomes possible to adjust the direction of the social conflict towards the so-called “cathartic globalism” – the global community, eternal peace, avoiding the consequences that frustrate people’s consciousness, leading to social catastrophes.

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