

COMEDY TASTE AND COGNITION IN THE WESTERN LITERARY AND ARTISTIC FASHION OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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- **ABSTRACT:** In the 18th century, enlightenment thinkers who advocated rationality emphasized that literature and art should not only pursue beauty, but also embody truth and goodness, focus on linking with morality and indoctrination, and support the role of improving society. Comedy taste and cognition in this cultural process, it has become a prominent literary and artistic trend, but it is rarely discussed. The awakening and rise of the comedic spirit quietly took place in the 18th century, moving from the tradition of laughter to the aesthetic reflection of a mixture of tragedy and comedy. The rise of the subject's comic consciousness leads the trend of western literature and art and becomes a real sword to stab the feudal autocratic culture. The reversal of comedy and the revival of Shakespeare have become a strong proof of the pursuit of humanity and moral expression by the literary and artistic fashion of the 18th century.
- **KEYWORDS:** The 18th century; aesthetic reflection; human morality; comedy; mixture of tragedy and comedy.

In the 18th century, the western literary and artistic fashion underwent an important transformation. The return to the concept of “nature” in the classical era was initially proposed as a “sharp sword” pointing to the aristocratic dominant culture. At this time, the ostentation and extravagance were no longer sought after in Europe, and the new interest was the expression of natural rationality and the worship of the classical era. Drama, music, painting, architecture and so on all present this aesthetic taste change. With the continuous improvement of the self-consciousness of the middle class, they have been dissatisfied with the imitation and reconstruction of the classical literary and artistic style, and demand the expression of “personality”, and it is at this time that the comedic interest and cognition bear this appeal from the depths of the heart, which not only conforms to the development orientation of the public literature and art, but also shows the pursuit of humanity, morality, freedom and equality under the autocratic monarchy in a subtle and gentle way.

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The Awakening and Rising of the Spirit of Comedy

Comedy, derived from the Greek word *Komos*, originally referred to the carnival parade in the ancient Greek ritual sacrifice of Dionysus. In the meantime, there is always an impromptu singing and dancing with funny verses, and this carnival song is called *Komoidia*, also it is regarded as a carnival song and dance drama, which shows people's admiration and worship of the heroic and fearless spirit of Dionysus and the existence of freedom and wildness (NIANSHENG, 1985). In fact, the origins of comedy predate tragedy by nearly a century. Aristotle believes that as early as the age of democracies in the early sixth century BC, there appeared a kind of burlesque drama depicting mythological stories and everyday life (ARISTOTLE, 1996). After that, it combines the expression and technique of poetry with the performance of the carnival song and dance of drama, and it begins to move towards primitive comedy.

It can be seen that comedy was a natural choice in the era of ancient Greek democracy. It is the best form of literary and artistic bearing and expression of a democratic political system. It fully enjoys the freedom of criticism in a relaxed, lively, and playful manner and with an attitude of lifting heavy weights. In addition to the rough carnival of folk burlesque, it is also good at participating in social and political activities and life with satire and responding to serious social and political issues.

From a certain point of view, the inherently contradictory performance of comedy is precisely its remarkable characteristics and potential connotations, and after winning the victory of the rebuttal, it will present a wedding and banquet scene celebrating the victory. In the fifth century BC, comic poets represented by Aristophanes appeared in democratic Athens.

Nevertheless, comedy creation was nowhere near as important as the tragedies that emerged at the end of the sixth century BC. Generally speaking, ancient comedies, because they originated from burlesque dramas that expressed folk daily life, their language rhetoric was more vulgar and sophistry, full of simple life atmosphere. The establishment of Plato's principle of imitation of art has further enabled ancient tragedies and comedies to set up a natural barrier in the choice of subject matter and the use of words. In his view, comedy is a parody of a ridiculous ugly figure, who has no self-knowledge, poor spirit, and arrogant and unable to know the real self, so that they will expose the defects of not beautiful but think beautiful, not wise but think wise, not rich but think rich (PLATO, 1963). In addition, he pays great attention to people's disdain for ugliness when watching comedy, and thinks that the psychological dynamic of comedy reception is to generate a kind of personal attack pleasure of *schadenfreude* through ridicule. Therefore, the laughter here is more about the effect recognition of negative psychological effect, which is a kind of negation of evil rather than affirmation of good. In the early days, this distinction between tragedy and comedy contributed to the biased understanding of western aesthetic tradition: tragedy is serious and noble, while comedy is ridiculous and inferior, the two should not be confused.

Although tragedy was in the mainstream in the ancient Greek period, the edge of comedy still reserved a huge space for aesthetic imagination and interpretation for the

spirit of freedom. In the carnival songs and dances of the Dionysian festival, there are also jokes about the gods of Olympus, which nakedly release the passion of life. Of course, the democratic and free city-state system and the brave and sincere national character gave the ancient Greek people a positive and optimistic disposition that was good at laughing and joking.

This cultural tradition of laughing and teasing has had a profound influence on later generations. Because they mainly focus on how comic ugliness is imitated and mocked with contempt, they ignore the affirmation and praise value of comedy and the rich quality difference of the sense of ridiculousness, which inevitably lead to prejudice and problems. This kind of negative aesthetics with mockery once occupied the central discourse power for a long time.

The Aesthetic Reflection on the Mixture of Tragedy and Comedy

With the advancement of the historical and cultural process, the comic aesthetic cognition has also changed. It is no longer limited to the narrow and barren prejudice, and has awakened and risen. Among them, the most outstanding is the aesthetic reflection of the mixture of tragedy and comedy developed with the European Enlightenment. The wind of reflection has been quietly rising as early as the Renaissance.

It was in the 18th century that the more remarkable and bold process of combining practice with theory took place. Denis Diderot (1713-1784), chief editor and chief writer of the *Encyclopaedia*, strongly proposed the creation of a serious comedy between tragedy and comedy. He negated and criticized the dominant position of the feudal aristocracy in culture and art, questioned the *classical unities* of drama rhetoric, and focused on describing and praising the virtue and wisdom of the common people, rather than satirizing the ignorance and ugliness of humble characters, so as to replace negation with affirmation. From the perspective of dramatic technique, he believed that tragedy requires solemn and powerful technique, while comedy requires delicacy (DIDEROT, 1984). It hopes to eulogize the universal and common virtues in real life with exquisite comic layout and technique, so as to serve the enlightenment of the third class thought, which is quite different from the traditional western comedy concept. This is not only a literary and artistic declaration, but also a political one.

Coinciding with Diderot's view was that of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) of Germany, in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, he criticized not only the chaos of German drama, but also the propositions of French classicism, thus pointing out the direction of realism for the development of German literature. He hoped to see the aesthetic enlightenment of human beings as the purpose of comedy, a comedy is to be improved by laughter, but not by ridicule. Neither the vice of making people laugh through comedy, nor the vice of making only the ridiculous vice show itself. Its real, universal benefit lies in laughter itself. It would be enough if comedy could not cure incurable diseases and keep healthy people in good health (LESSING, 1981). In his view, comedy is by no means just a comical farce or absurd plot that makes people laugh, but to ridicule and

improve bad behavior, believing that comedy should have a social criticism function and a corrective role. In other words, although comedy is compatible with real life, it should not be reduced to inferior gags and amusing. On the contrary, we should pay attention to and realize their moral influence and behavioral education significance of close to the people.

Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) implicitly expressed his theory of comedic freedom in his important treatise *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*. According to him, the poet's genius can be expressed in two ways -- realistic imitation and ideal expression. The former makes him a simple poet, while the latter makes him a sentimental poet. Schiller further believes that comedy is dominated by sentimental character and is more suitable for imaginative free creation. Tragedy is determined by simple character, which is more often limited to imitation and reproduction.

There have been several times when people argue about tragedy or comedy, which is the higher of the two. If the question is only whether which of the two deals with a more important object, then there is no doubt that tragedy prevails; but if one wishes to know which of the two requires a more important subject, then one can hardly disapprove of comedy. In tragedy, many things are already realized by the subject matter; in comedy, the subject matter realizes nothing, and everything is done by the poet (SCHILLER, 2011).

It can be seen that Schiller's comedic aesthetic is also subversive, believing that the wonderful task of comedy is to generate and maintain the freedom of the mind in people's hearts, and attaches great importance to how the subject shows the sublime freedom in a beautiful way, rather than allowing the ugliness of the object to act arbitrarily. Then, in order to realize the ideal expression of human nature, the aesthetic standard should advocate a combination of simple character and sentimental character, and a mixture or even fusion of tragedy and comedy, which is already the trend of the times, is the literary and artistic embodiment of people in the course of striving for democracy and freedom, so as to accommodate the dual aesthetic expectations of the real feelings.

The weapon of rationality: comedic consciousness.

The cultural enlightenment of the 18th century laid the ideological and theoretical foundation with rationality, morality, and human nature, and the citizens turned serious issues such as human education, social improvement and philosophical thinking over to literature, art and music and drama. In this process of emancipating language and thought, the growth of the subject's sense of comedy has been experienced, and the personality of the sense of comedy has been abundantly manifested. This kind of situation was difficult to appear before, because there was no equal demand for modernity and freedom in the ideology at that time, and there was no conceptual understanding of confrontation with the ideology of the ruling class group. The mature development of comic consciousness is highlighted with the rise and growth of the citizen class in the western world in the 18th century, especially the continuous and brave pursuit of independence, freedom and peace of the subject by elite intellectuals. It deduces the wonderful picture of human nature interpretation in a vivid, natural and appropriate way, leading the trend of western literature and art, becoming a real sharp blade to the autocratic culture.

In the 17th century, the European despots used various forms of literature and art to satisfy and strengthen their centralization psychology while showing off their royal power. Louis XIV is undoubtedly the most powerful representative, and the magnificent and majestic Palace of Versailles has become a symbol of supreme power. This French fashion continued unabated in the early 18th century, as every art form became involved in this extravagant and ostentatious ornamentation, losing much of its natural rationality.

Nevertheless, Britain, which took the lead in completing the bourgeois revolution, did not rush to the wind of luxury. The British anti-Catholic Puritans were full of hostility to the holy image and took the lead in advocating and returning to the natural and simple wind of reality. In the painting, we can see that the protagonist turned to the description of ordinary people's life and stories, and the architectural art loved rural houses (GOMBRICH, 2006). It was not long before the strong wind of real life from England reached France, which was regarded as a model of literature and art at that time. In 1715, with the death of Louis XIV, his successors had to admit that the supremacy of the monarchy was weakening. French court tastes have adapted to the historical shift, with a Rococo style favoring beautiful colors and elaborate interiors replacing the grand, swirling, flowing aesthetic of the Baroque period, and the monarchs' boundless admiration and pursuit of autocratic power now eclipsed. The poetic Rococo style of the painter Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) with elegant, chic and intimate effects is highly respected, and the exaggeration of showing off power is replaced by the sketch of ordinary people's life. Social reality allows them to escape from the once glorious aristocratic dream world, showing a relaxed and pleasant sensory enjoyment and the choice to avoid current political crises with the entertainment of life.

The literary creation in the 18th century also gradually got rid of the dominant palace flavor and gorgeous rhythmic constraints, and moved towards a more natural, concise, clear and humane metrical expression. At the beginning of this fashion, it was mainly manifested in the admiration and yearning for the style of the classical era, returning and imitating. In Athens, all kinds of flourishing literary and artistic practices were not only entertainment, but also a free part of education, belief and political life. The ancient Greeks advocated wisdom and debate, and pursued beauty but not luxury. As we can see, in the middle of the 18th century, many literary genres of the classical era revived and flourished again (such as narrative poetry, fables, satirical poetry and comedy). The natural rhythm was constantly imitated, and the natural rational movement advocated in literature became more and more prominent. The comedy representing the civil class is obviously a realistic choice to better adapt to this natural tendency.

The object nature and the subject nature

In the 1760s and 1770s, in order to overthrow the firmly rooted cultural traditions of the court, the substantive force they used to criticize must be an irrefutable authoritative classic. Thus, the ancient Greek ideas of freedom, democracy, humanity and literary forms were used as classics. They are eager to develop the forms and techniques of mass

culture that are more consistent with the purport of the citizens in the new era. They not only strive to improve their economic and social status, but also hope to keep abreast of ideological and cultural spirits. The real recognition is not the imitation outside the surface, but the inner consent of people as the subject, which is displayed naturally through the subject.

As we have seen, the cultural enlightenment in Germany, although it was later than that of England and France, initially aimed at the hegemonic status of French classical literary poetry, believing that it bound and destroyed the natural form of poetry that it should have. Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724-1803) discovered and respected the poetic style of the classical period. By imitating the rhythm and style of the classical period, Klopstock found the long-lost natural expression in line with his own characteristics, and thus created the free rhythm named after himself.

Naturalness became an important criterion for measuring literature and art, and the French Enlightenment thinker Rousseau also affectionately put forward the slogan of returning to nature. He highly praised Italian opera buffa. The free melody trend and flexible tonal contrast brought people endless imagination and hearty emotional expression. It should be noted that Rousseau's nature is essentially different from the nature believed by the classicists. The classicist's nature is an imitation of the beauty of human commonality, following the principle of unity; Rousseau's nature is a depiction of the individual's natural feelings, the true return of individuality.

At the same time, the German Enlightenment's contemplation of nature also led to a bolder and more historically progressive interpretation of the nature of art. With the revolution and development of the natural sciences, in the late 18th century, there was even a unique natural philosophy in Germany, showing that the Germans were different from the French in their understanding of natural phenomena, as the British natural science historian Stephen F. Mason said: German philosophers believe that nature is infiltrated by the same mental activity, so that all the processes of nature should be compared and explained by the inner activity of the mind, and should not be explained by purely external, moving matter (WANG, 2006).

As a result, the imaginative creativity of human beings was recognized and appreciated, and at the same time, it also evoked the humanistic connotation of Romanticism, which contributed to the development of German classical aesthetics in the spirit of humanism. On the title page of the Symphony *Pastoral*, Beethoven once said that the expression is more than the description, which is a strong proof of this concept change, implicitly criticized the early 18th century using biological mimicry as the basis of musical aesthetics, word-by-word sound and painting limited the development of music imagination. In fact, this is not an accidental phenomenon in music, and composers are using their own ways to declare themselves, explicitly or implicitly, not only to imitate nature, but also to naturally express the passions, ideas and creative ecstasy of the mind, rather than the materialist of material nature.

Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) and Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), leaders of the German *Sturm Und Drang*, went further in their understanding of nature. Hamann even believes that natural language should be the embodiment of triple

personalization, that is, the aggregation of national personality, personal personality and emotional personality. While Herder pointed nature to the creation rules of artistic works, what he was concerned with was the formation principle of artistic works, that is, how to establish a new aesthetic theory based on the internal development of artistic works, without involving specific content and form. In essence, nature is no longer just the artist's representation of the object, but the subject of artistic creation.

It is true that the interpretation of the connotation of nature can be a focused observation of the process of Enlightenment thought, gradually developing from advocating and returning to the laws of nature in ancient Greek literature and art to the inner concept of nature. From seeing nature as a formal technique of convention to experiencing it as a content of what is truly felt, from a powerful refutation of the divine right to the soul calling that follows nature. Nature has gradually realized the transformation from ontology to cognition, and has become the most powerful weapon in the process of bourgeois cultural change.

In addition, the understanding of nature also reveals the changes and development of the aesthetic concept of comedy in the 18th century from one side, whether art imitates nature or expresses nature is deeply reflected in people's understanding of comedy, so the interpretation of naturalness is particularly important for the understanding of comedy. This process arose at different stages of the entire bourgeois Enlightenment and in different countries, and literature and art also jumped from the pastimes of the court and nobles after tea and dinner to a powerful metaphor for the middle class's struggle for liberal democracy. Of course, the German enlighteners with more radical ideas took a more thorough and powerful way of thinking about nature- humanity than the pragmatic French enlighteners.

The strong proof of comedy: the expression of humanity and the expression of morality.

It is undeniable that since the Renaissance, with the change of current politics, social culture, and literary drama, comedy narratives with different goals have emerged. By the 18th century, the wind of reversal of the status and value of comedy was blown and landed by the trend of natural rationality, forming a mixed climate of popularity and sublime. People's understanding of comedy is no longer narrow, it can also express a deep and noble interest, a powerful carrier of humanity and morality, and this taste and cognition also secretly act on public life.

According to the classical drama tradition, tragedy and comedy are a group of opposite drama styles and expressions, and they should strictly follow their own rules of fit in rhetoric, and should not be confused. Molière (1622-1673), in the tradition of French classical literary drama in the 17th century, was fearless of power, but became a French comedy master who was good at realistic satire in the tragic era dominated by monarchical court culture. In the preface of his play *Tartuffe*, he said: comedy is a beautiful poem that accuses people of their faults through meaningful lessons. A serious

lesson, even the sharpest, is often less powerful than irony: there is nothing more effective in exhorting most people than to portray their faults. Vices become the laughing stock of everyone, and they are a major fatal blow to them. One can easily be blamed, but one cannot endure ridicule. A man would rather be wicked than funny. It can be seen that he was the first to break away from the contemptuous attitude, advocating a new concept of comedy, in order to improve the status of comedy in literature and art and society. He regarded comedy as the most sensitive art that reflected reality, and wrote a number of new plays with profound practical significance (MIAO, 2011). Nevertheless, he has not yet escaped the rules of the French classical theory of drama *classical unities*, whose dramatic structure of satirical comedy is relatively simple.

As mentioned earlier, by the 18th century, Diderot of France had proposed the concept of serious comedy in terms of theater theory, and Pierre Beaumarchais (1732-1799) had made his main contribution in the practice of drama creation. In his comedy *The Marriage of Figaro* (1778), the image of the third-class servant is even more dazzling, which is not only a masterpiece of serious comedy, but also regarded as a literary manifesto of the French Enlightenment. Just because of its radical and rebellious, dangerous and suspicious political tendency, the first performance was postponed for 6 years. After the play was publicly performed in Paris in 1784 after several twists and turns, it went on and on, with huge repercussions, and was even considered to set off the curtain of the French Revolution. It can be said that Diderot and Beaumarchais, who are good at the ideological enlightenment and good at the literary enlightenment, first of all, they are not as dramatic reformers, but as social reformers to praise comedy, they are like Molière, to get rid of the bad habits as their own responsibility, but the idea is larger, the mission is higher, more extensive influence.

Therefore, Diderot and Beaumarchais and other enlightenment fighters' theory and practice of serious comedy not only played an important role in the Enlightenment, but also had a revolutionary impact on the development of western comedy theory. They once again challenge the western tradition that tragedy and comedy are at cross-purposes. In this sense, the serious comedy of Diderot and Beaumarchais is also a kind of enlightenment, a kind of theatrical enlightenment.

The Italian dramatist Carlo Goldoni (1707–1793), known as Molière of Italy, rejected the tradition of the magnificent heroic drama, as well as the improvisational comedy tradition of gags, low jokes and free play by the actors, and created the genre *Dramma Giocoso*. It is characterized by mixing noble elements and popular factors, combining the sentimental or even tragic colors with the comical, revealing the serious purpose and aesthetic taste of comedy. He advocated that comedy should face reality and play the role of praising virtue and mocking vice in accordance with the principle of punishing evil with ridicule (LIFU, 1979). He also engaged in the creation and adaptation of comic opera script, and made nearly 80 comic opera scripts. It can be said that as a literary reformer, Goldoni's comic opera scripts made these comedy creations that did not conform to the routine rich in dramatic connotation and Enlightenment moral consciousness, and helped comic opera grow into an important music genre throughout Europe in the 18th century. The script of the Italian composer Niccolò Piccini's comic

opera *Labuonafigliuola* (1760) came from Copernicus. Joseph Haydn's operas *Lo Speciale* (1768) and *Le Pescatrici* (1769) in the 1760s also use Goldoni's plays as scripts (DOWNS, 2012). At this point, people's understanding of comedy is no longer narrow and biased, and the relaxed and funny way of expression can also have a deep and sublime connotation.

The Revival of Shakespeare in Germany

In the second half of the 18th century, with the rapid development of class consciousness, the civic class no longer imitated the living conditions of the nobility in a graceful manner, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832, Schiller, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803, Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739-1791), Johann Joachin Winckelmann (1717-1768), Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), and others wrote and enthusiastically refuted and responded. They represent the emerging aesthetics of the German people, determined to develop their own national drama. At this time, the defamed William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of the Renaissance was vigorously revived in Germany, and Shakespeare's works became popular in Germany, especially among the enlightened and the citizen class. As they were translated into German, after the 1770s, all kinds of theaters of large and small staged his works, exerting a profound influence on German literature and art.

Lessing once argued with Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766) on the development direction of German drama. As a supporter of the French classical drama tradition, the latter believed that Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) and Jean Racine (1639-1699) were the models of the sense of form of German drama. But Lessing refuted him, thinking that Corneille and others did not understand nature, and therefore could not understand the people in nature, but immersed in courtly and artificial tragedy – nor did they examine whether the French drama was compatible with the German way of thinking. English tastes are more suited to our German tastes than French ones. We must see and think more in our tragic works than the terrible French tragedy can give us. If people had translated Shakespeare's masterpiece to us Germans with a little change in the past, I am sure that its consequences would be much better than those of introducing Corneille and Racine. He declared the importance of Shakespeare to Germany in the new era in a high profile. In *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, he used Aristotle's theory and Shakespeare's practice as weapons to expose the pseudo naturalness of the French drama tradition, and stressed how Shakespeare demonstrated the universal truth and naturalness of mankind as the starting point for his creation.

Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1813), the great German poet of the emotional style, also praised Shakespeare, and Wieland strongly refuted the reproachful remarks about his lack of structure, the jumble of comedy and tragedy, and the fickleness of mood, as the natural and unpretentious expression that is our goal. In Shakespeare's works, the performance of humanity and nature is brilliant, and the psychological activities and

personalities of all kinds of characters are depicted in vivid coordination. Therefore, in 1762-1766, he was the first to translate the entire works of Shakespeare into German, which was undoubtedly of great significance to the development of German culture. In 1771, the young Goethe, in his speech *Shakespeare Day*, prepared for Shakespeare's Anniversary, paid deep respect to this genius master who could depict the kaleidoscopic nature and real world. He could not help shouting with enthusiasm: "Nature, nature! There's nothing more natural than Shakespeare's characters!" (LIFU; JINGZHI, 2009, p.423).

Herder also sharply refuted and criticized the French neoclassicists. The purpose of *Shakespeare* (1773) is to reguide people to correctly understand the development direction of German national drama. In his opinion, the integrity of Greek tragedy comes from its dithyramb connotation and imitative improvisational implied meaning. As a natural presentation, its plot is simple and its language is elegant. But, as time has passed, the seemingly brilliant neoclassicism, strictly followed by Corneille, Racine and Voltaire (1694-1778, has not been the glorious reproduction of Greek tragedy, and it has not evoked the sympathy and pity that Aristotle called it, and is at best a decoration without spiritual life. Instead, Shakespeare gets the true manifestation of this vitality of nature, the integration of different classes, lifestyles, ideas, nationalities and linguistic categories, aimed at the event reduction of life itself. Thus he did not hesitate to praise: Out of such wretched materials he has created something majestic and wonderful that stands before us alive! He saw not pure national character and national character, but the level of heavy and complicated, lifestyle, ideas, ethnic and linguistic category, for the former there is no sadness is useless, so he put the various levels and all kinds of people, all kinds of ethnic groups and all kinds of language, the king and court jester, jesters and Kings made a solemn wonderful whole like that! He did not discover such a simple nature of history, of plot, of action; he took history as he found it, and with the creative genius made a marvelous whole out of disparate materials (XIAOFENG, 2006).

Shakespeare's tragedies and historical plays, with their high degree of thought and artistry, are regarded as rare treasures of theatrical art, comedy is to emerge from the simple joy of entertainment, towards the mature romantic spirit of personal natural comedy creation, and then infiltrated into the comedy with tragic elements (different from the simple mixture of tragicomedy), has a more profound philosophic thinking.

Shakespeare's 13 comedies are unique and influential in the world of comedy, with characters that transcend the traditions of flat buffoon parody and satire and highlight the celebration of positive character. Although Shakespeare and Molière were contemporaries, they were different from the exposed criticism and spicy irony of renaissance fashion comedies, and they were better at depicting sincere and romantic love, showing how young men and women cleverly solved doubts, broke through resistance, and bravely and tenaciously pursued true love. and cleverly overcome all kinds of resistance and obtain a happy ending (SHOUZHU, 1983).

With his colorful character expressions, he has woven a complex real-world net, especially the portrayal of clown-style comedy characters, which has captured countless praises. The clown is not only an ugly imitation or mimicry in ancient comedies, but also

a transformation of me, the mirror of the real world, which is endowed by Shakespeare with a deeper expression connotation. His subversive clowns are often insightful tropes, metaphors or prophets of the real world. Their words foretell and symbolize the development of the plot, and they are the true wisdom of the whole play, the puppeteer of the play, or even the virtual body of Shakespeare himself, who criticizes, admonishes and warns the world through this role. This role carnival calm positive and negative dialectical expression, but also give him the image of cynical philosopher, alternative clown makes him more dramatic effect at the same time alluding to social criticism. Comedy, then, is not, as is often said, a low form of expression lacking in depth.

Summary

In the 18th century, enlightenment thinkers advocating rationality picked up the spirit of nature, humanity and democracy in the classical era, and blew up a strong wind of archaeology, ancient worship and ancient thinking, which were used as weapons to launch a battle with the French classical literary and artistic fashion representing the Divine Right of Kings. They stressed that literature and art should not only pursue beauty, but also reflect truth and goodness, and should be linked with morality and education, so as to improve society. Comedy is more consistent with this concept, it is a euphemistic expression of the human weapon. Philosophers in the 18th century emphasized not the coming of man, but the possibility of salvation and reconciliation. Therefore, it is essentially a comic concept. However, in order to avoid simplifying humanities into purely overly optimistic entertainment posture, secular should be related to politics, economy, history, society and psychology, these humanistic concerns are all closely related to the enlightenment and those enlighteners with outstanding ability.

In comedy, where the appropriate subject is secular and non-sacred, a happy ending and a dialect style are the salient features of comedy, which is very much in line with the tastes of the civic class of the 18th century. However, with the improvement of their self-sufficiency consciousness and the pursuit of the concept of freedom and equality, dialect expression may be able to parody holiness, and the use of simple language on noble themes has overturned our conventional assumptions about noble and vulgar diction.

We can find that the comic process of nature was not smooth sailing in the 18th century, but continued to move forward in contradiction and one-sided and narrow understanding. From the imitation of ugly and vulgar folk characters to the demonstration of creative comedy consciousness, from exposing, teasing or even abandoning physical or personality defects to the release of human nature or praise of virtue with intellectual and spiritual purification, it shows the development from the description of object things to the expression of subject's unique emotion, in which the complex situation is both belittled and praised. There are not only unexpected difficulties, but also the confusing situation. Its flickering, bright and dark, sad and happy show the inquiry process of truth self-manifestation of the subject's comic consciousness. The comic interest and cognition in the western literary and artistic fashion of the 18th century are moving forward slowly

in such a broad cultural situation. The exploration of public consciousness culture points to the harmony, reconciliation and coexistence of different levels in an intelligent and euphemistic expression.

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- **RESUMO:** *No século 18, os pensadores iluministas que defendiam a racionalidade enfatizavam que a literatura e a arte não deveriam apenas buscar a beleza, mas também incorporar a verdade e a bondade, focar na ligação com a moralidade e a doutrinação e apoiar o papel de melhorar a sociedade. O gosto e a cognição da comédia neste processo cultural, tornou-se uma tendência literária e artística proeminente, mas raramente é discutida. O despertar e ascensão do espírito cômico ocorreu discretamente no século XVIII, passando da tradição do riso à reflexão estética de uma mistura de tragédia e comédia. A ascensão da consciência cômica do sujeito lidera a tendência da literatura e da arte ocidentais e se torna uma verdadeira espada para esfaquear a cultura autocrática feudal. A reversão da comédia e o renascimento de Shakespeare tornaram-se uma forte prova da busca da humanidade e da expressão moral pela moda literária e artística do século XVIII.*
- **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *O século XVIII; reflexão estética; moralidade humana; comédia; mistura de tragédia e comédia.*

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