

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SATIRICAL NOVEL

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Abstract

In this article the problem of contemporary American satirical novel has been put forward. Comic genres in every national literature play a significant role as they reflect cultural and historical peculiarities of people. Thus, American literature is not an exclusion, American comic literature despite all of its merits has not yet been thoroughly investigated. Therefore, this article is an attempt to define the phenomenon and to generalize all the existing theories in the field of comic.

Keywords: American satire, comic genres, satirical novel, theory.

Even though nowadays there are various approaches to defining the phenomenon of satire, a universal definition has not yet been accepted. Therefore, it is important to consider the origin of satire, which traditionally is considered to be the period of antiquity. Famous representatives of ancient satire are Menippus, Aristophanes, Horace, Juvenal, Quintilian. The last satirist was the first, who defined satire as ridiculing social vices. However, over time, satire has turned not into a separate genre of literature, but into a special form of artistic depiction of reality, found in all types of art. [1]

If satire was originally a poetic genre, today it is present in the works of musicians, artists and writers. Accordingly, satire has become one of the most controversial concepts in modern literary criticism.

The classic definition of satire was formulated by Friedrich Schiller in his treatise *Naive and Sentimental Poetry*: "In satire, a higher reality is contrasted with an ideal and an unsatisfactory reality." [2]

The next popular definition of satire was given by literary critic Arkady Gornfeld, who characterized satire as "a type of comic that differs from other types (of humor) in the sharpness of its exposure." Here the author categorizes satire as "comic," which means socially significant "funny." [5]

Satire is also considered as an ideological and emotional coloring of a phenomenon that creates a special genre system (satirical novel, satirical story, etc.). The difference between satirical literature and any other lies in the sudden revelation of hidden true nature by means laughter. In this vein, L. Ershov's monograph is of particular interest, where the exact definition of the specifics of a satirical novel was set out. In particular, the disclosure of conflicts "using the means of laughter, the main characters find themselves in situations that are objectively

comic.” As a result, the image in a satirical work is a comic image, which is revealed by laughter. However, the reader does not always perceive a satirical image as a comic image due to objective and subjective reasons. [3]

The peculiarity of modern American satire is that it acquired unprecedented proportions with the coming to power of Donald Trump and continued to develop under the current President Joe Biden. The objects of satire are representatives of the political establishment, including the president. Of course, the heyday of satire occurs during periods of economic crises, warfare and social instability, so satire becomes “political”. Consequently, public disagreement with the policies pursued by the state, both foreign and domestic, does not result in open opposition and criticism of the system, but in a protest veiled with ridicule and exposure of social evil. Thus, cartoons, memes, monologues by stand-up comedians, songs and narratives appear, which, in addition to laughter, awaken civic consciousness and thoughts about the discrepancy between reality and election promises and other programs.

Generalizing all the existing scientific attempts and theories it could be stated that satire is not a genre, but a certain mode which by its nature is both comic and critical. Taking into consideration a controversial phenomenon of satire, one can formulate a definition of satirical novel. By its genre satirical novel represents a modified novel in which the genre features of the novel are preserved, but at the same time the composition, plot, and system of images are subordinated to the satirical way of depicting life. In addition, in satirical novel it is important to identify the subject of a satirical image, a system of characters, conflict and means of satirical typification as these elements form the core of the study of a satirical work.

The satirist, in his intention to expose the negative aspects of objects and phenomena, chooses satire not just as a genre variety, but as a special ideological and artistic way of depicting reality. The originality this way lies in the satirical object. Most satire researchers agree that the subject of satirical ridicule is everything negative, this can be human and social vices and shortcomings. This idea can be traced from Aristotle to modern researchers. Considering that a satirical denunciation of an object or phenomenon is impossible without comedy, there is a need to consider the category of the comic. Summarizing all theories of the comic, we can conclude that the comic is a kind of contradiction that can exist between form and content, between appearance or pretentiousness and the true essence.

Moreover, investigating satirical literature, its more common to use the term “comic” as this category is wider and encompasses such comic forms as irony, satire, wit and sarcasm. The comic novel in US literature has been formed and exists in several main types related to its specific ideological content, plot organization, and the interaction of the comic element with the non-comic. Each type of novel can be considered from the point of view of its internal specificity and in the historical context, since it represents a historically natural phenomenon of American literature. [4]

The major study in American comic novel was done by Anatoliy Likhodzievskiy, who proposed typology of the satirical-humorous novel genre in American literature. He distinguished the following typological varieties:

1. The “Cervantes type” of the novel that appeared in early American prose.
2. A satirical and at the same time philosophical allegory, a dystopia in the form of a comic journey.
3. Comic political novel (caricature, cartoon, grotesque in connection with specific phenomena of American political reality).
4. A humorous novel that comically depicts American life, the morals and habits of Americans, and their funny adventures. [4]

In each type of comic novel scientist pointed out peculiar features. Those features are determined by the nature of the relationships between various elements in novels. Thus, it became possible to trace the process of formation of American comic literature both from the point of view of ideological content and the artistic merit.

Summing up all the points mentioned above, it could be concluded that the study of comic genres in American literature, despite lack of research, seems to be very promising. It is also of crucial importance due to the fact that in American literature comic element has been present at each period of its development. Therefore, comic genres reflect national and cultural peculiarities of the country's development.

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