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Thinking Through Tragedy and Comedy: Some Provocations on Genre Matters

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Abstract

Following the inaugural symposium entitled *Thinking Through Tragedy and Comedy - Performance Philosophy and the Future of Genre* hosted by the Performance Philosophy Working Group "Genres of Dramatic Thought" which took place at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry ICI Berlin in December 2014, this contribution is a series of attempts to both recapture the debates of the symposium and stake out the field of inquiry for our Working Group's engagement within Performance Philosophy. By tracing philosophy's dramatic heritage within the history of genre theory and pointing to its current and future developments, this piece suggests how attention to genre can work to deepen and expand the emerging landscape of Performance Philosophy.

Keywords

genre, tragedy, comedy

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candidate at the University of Paris - Sorbonne (English Studies - Theater) and at the University of Kent (Comparative Literature) and holds a Masters in Philosophy from the Sorbonne. Her thesis traces a parallel between the development of theories of comedy and philosophy's increasing reliance upon dramatic techniques.

Tragedy and comedy describe manners of action as well as modes of thought. Philosophy's interaction with tragedy is well established while comedy has remained, until recently, something of a stepchild. Instead, the suggestion that one might think through drama and performance invites a closer look at the relationship between corporeality and thought, between philosophy and the theatre. Genre has long operated beyond the sphere of literary taxonomy as a vehicle of thought, be it as a tool for philosophy (e.g. Hegel, Nietzsche) or history (e.g. Marx; Hayden White) to reinvent itself. Likewise has the question of the death or rebirth of a genre been an issue of ethics instead of technics.

"Restoration comedy" is English comedy written and performed in

the Restoration period from 1660 to 1710. Comedy of manners is used as a synonym of Restoration comedy. After public stage performances had been banned for 18 years by the Puritan regime, the re-opening of the theatres in 1660 signalled a renaissance of English drama. Sexually explicit language was encouraged by King Charles II (1660–1685) personally and by the rakish style of his court. Historian George Norman Clark argues Read this essay on Comedy and Tragedy. Come browse our large digital warehouse of free sample essays. Get the knowledge you need in order to pass your classes and more. In a comedy the main characters and/or community, usually go through some hardship but at end they overcome their obstacles and live happily. There are typically two types of comedies, satiric and romantic comedies. Readers are constantly thinking that Mrs. Alving is living a tragedy, but in actuality the tragedy falls upon the two children Regina and Oswald. From the work of Richard Sewall's "The Vision of Tragedy", we can conclude that classifying Mrs. Alving as the tragic hero is inaccurate because of her actions in the story and how those actions affect others.