

WORD MOVEMENT IN WESTERN EUROPEAN COMEDY

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Abstract: This article is dedicated to the interpretation of Western European comedy on the Uzbek stage and the issue of stage speech in it. The main focus is on the action of words and is revealed on the example of the work "Doctor of Philosophy" by the Serbian playwright Branislav Nushich. In stage interpretation, the director's decision and acting skills in performance, targeted speech, and speech characteristics in creating laughter are discussed.

Keywords: uzbek theater, directorial solution, stage speech, comedy, stage interpretation, word movement, playwright, acting skills, laughter, creating laughter, speech character.

The name of the Serbian writer and playwright Branislav Nushich, author of such works as "The Wife of an Official," "At the Bar," "Children of Society," "The Donkey Chair," "Doctor of Philosophy," attracts the attention of theater critics with his depiction of human character, unexpected intrigues, and unique situations in the construction of events. Although his comedy "Doctor of Philosophy" was written almost a hundred years ago, the problems raised in the work are still relevant today. This work was staged in 2021 at the Uzbekistan State Satire Theater with the translation of H.Siddik and directed by Mansur Khalikov.

When staging the comedy, the director focused on the dramatic change of events and the serious struggle of the characters. In revealing the characters' personalities, the director aimed to build events in a system of "from joy to despair, from despair to joy," thereby ensuring the successful performance of the actors.

It is evident that to demonstrate vitality on stage, the director demanded that the actors transform joy into a true celebration and depression into a true tragedy. Perhaps that's why the audience senses in their heart and soul what will happen beforehand. In essence, the audience should witness unexpected incidents on stage. Perhaps the problem is that the actors weren't given even a little opportunity for free performance (improvisation). The general appearance of the performance, when misunderstandings, disagreements, passions, and conflicts clash, constitutes a grotesque situation and a comedy of characters. This easily digestible performance, built on sharp humor, begins with the plans of the entrepreneurially enriched millionaire Zhivota Tzviovic. But the work is not about how Zhivota became rich. On the contrary, it is about the misconception of the main character Zhivota, who believes that "everything in the world can be bought with money." His assistant, Blago, plays a major role in the implementation of Zhivota's plans. Because he handles all his financial and family affairs. The actor Muslim Nuraliyev played the highly skilled and resourceful Blago. His movements are agile, his speech is convincingly embodied by spreading his arms and wagging his fingers. Blago speaks in a gentle tone when expressing his opinion, and proudly when demanding money. Blago's resourcefulness and quick-wittedness can also be understood from the following dialogue with Givota:

Blago: Here, you got the diploma you wanted, now pay for it!

Jivota: What kind of fee?

Blago: Who advised you to educate poor Velimir in Freiburg instead of your foolish son?

Jivota: You have received your right.

Blago: How so?

Jivota: Even though she's older, I married your sister.

Blago: You married her because you fell in love with her.

In the scene where Jivota demands money, Blago appears as a character ready for anything for money. In turn, Jivota also demonstrates his stinginess, fighting over a single ruble. In this scene, one can observe the harmony of behavior and speech in the actors' performances.

Ghivota, aiming for the bright future of her son Milorad, who was her heir, spoiled, generous, and playful, wants him to receive a Doctor of Philosophy degree and sends him to study at a prestigious Swiss university. In portraying Milorad's character as playful, gentle, unstable, and incompetent, actor Zokir Abdukarimov employed sloppy movements and childish groaning. His father knew that Milorad, the heir, preferred revelry, feasts, and entertainment with girls to education. Instead of Milorad, he hired a talented young man named Velimir to study. Milorad leaves the city for the public eye so that people don't suspect him.

He travels across Europe, playing and laughing. Therefore, in Freiburg, a knowledgeable young man named Velimir, who is poor and in need of money, takes the exam and obtains an academic degree in the name of Milorad. As soon as Jivota hears this news, he attempts to further enhance his reputation by sending a suitor, on behalf of the promised minister's daughter, via kilometers of railway, hoping to arrange a marriage alliance. However, his plans fail. The character of Jivota is masterfully portrayed by actor Bobur Aytmagambetov, who skillfully ensures the harmony between actions and speech. In his verbal expression, one can observe moments of agitation, where he switches to a thin, trembling voice, as well as moments of inspiration, where he speaks with pride. Nevertheless, his speech remains pure, adhering to the norms of literary language. Through scenes such as Velimir studying in place of Milorad and receiving the diploma in his name, formalizing the marriage in Milorad's name, and Velimir entering Milorad's house with a child in the arms of his married bride Klara, the genre requirements of the performance are fulfilled. Moreover, the cheerful jokes and spirited speeches on stage influence the audience's mood and provoke laughter.

The character of Velimir is portrayed by actor Yusuf Fayziyev as a well-educated and literate young man. His speech is thoughtful and delivered in a low voice, and his appearance suggests timidity. In the performance, the speech of Jivota's household servant Maritsa (played by actress Oygul Egamberdiyeva) is also noteworthy. Despite her servant status, she speaks with courage and confidence, a reflection of her self-perception as intellectually superior to those around her. The actress reveals this trait by demonstrating her wise reactions to certain conflicting situations in the scenes. For instance, when Jivota becomes agitated after reading his son's list of debts, she calmly pacifies him by saying, "Have your coffee," recognizing the futility of his stress. In the scene where Jivota sponsors women from an orphanage to enhance his reputation, she satirically mocks the women's obsequious behavior and their attempts to flatter him with exaggerated gestures and affected speech. Similarly, when Jivota asks her to throw the diploma outside, she humorously emphasizes the importance of paying attention to his sleeve, as it is made of taffeta.

The performance of the supporting actors in crowd scenes, along with the placement of props and decorations, contributes significantly to the artistic integrity of the production. For example, from the very first scene, the "large, monumental diploma" brought onto the stage remains the focus of attention for both the actors and the audience until the final scene. This diploma represents the central character Jivota Tsviyovich's dream, and thus, the play narrates the pursuit of a goal and the events surrounding it. Although the play is a comedic work, it possesses profound meaning and offers three important moral lessons. The first concerns the protagonist Jivota himself. Through relentless effort, he has become a successful businessman and a wealthy individual. He consistently pursues promising, well-planned ventures, earning recognition as a professional entrepreneur. Furthermore, he is generous in his charitable acts. His business success has allowed him to secure family prosperity and wealth that can be passed down for generations. In society, he holds the status of a master of his craft—the "entrepreneur"—achieved through honesty. However, in recent times, he has learned to attempt to buy everything with money. Like anyone, he has personal flaws, which serve as moral lessons. Despite all his

achievements and status, he is vain. His vanity makes him preoccupied with what others think and say about him. Unfortunately, this flaw has recently begun to compromise his honesty. In pursuit of greater respect in society, he seeks to have his son earn an academic degree and intends to leverage this to establish a political alliance with the Prime Minister through marriage. Jivota is fully aware that his son lacks the knowledge and competence required to obtain a doctoral degree in philosophy, and that his son's understanding is superficial, as exemplified by the attitude of "my father has money, so I can manage." Consequently, he sends another person to study in his son's place for a fee. In this pursuit, he stops at nothing; the ultimate goal is simply to obtain the document. All of his misfortunes originate from this act of deception. Had he valued the reputation and fame he had already earned and been content with the wealth acquired through honest labor, he would not have cared about others' opinions, would have lived righteously and honestly as always, and these problems would not have arisen.

The second moral lesson in the play relates to Jivota's family. It provides insight into child-rearing practices in affluent, wealthy households. The protagonist's grown son, Milorad, is spoiled, loves amusement, has never accomplished a task independently, and is therefore irresponsible; his laziness results from a lack of work ethic, and his arrogance stems from never needing anything. Consequently, he lacks ambition, relies entirely on his father's wealth, and has no specific desires in life. His mindset is fixed—he believes everything is permissible and allowed for him. Despite the father's repeated scoldings, questioning, and efforts to guide him toward the right path, the son continues to indulge in pleasures and spend money for amusement, under the impression that this constitutes paternal affection. As a result, Milorad's sound reasoning, sense of responsibility, and human virtues gradually atrophy. In essence, he finds no motivation to act or to think independently. This is Milorad's tragedy, and his parents are the architects of it.

The third moral lesson concerns Jivota's position in society, specifically issues of fame and social standing. Worthiness is primarily determined by the evaluations of others and defined by societal norms. Cognizant of this, Jivota seeks to enhance his respectability and appear wealthier in the eyes of the public. In this pursuit, he is even willing to exploit his son. The problem lies in the fact that he acts contrary to his child's wishes, disregards his abilities and competencies, and manipulates him to achieve his own ends. In the play, Jivota devises a fraudulent scheme to secure an academic title, taking actions that prove disastrous not only for his family but also in terms of societal consequences. From a humanistic perspective, the protagonist genuinely intends the best for himself, his family, and his son's future. This intention is valid, but the resulting misfortune demonstrates the error in his approach, which is fundamentally due to dishonesty. He did not pursue a righteous path. He sought to achieve his dreams by exploiting his son, despite knowing that his son was narrow-minded, lacked scholarly abilities, and could not even articulate a coherent sentence. Nevertheless, he attempts to advance his son's academic career, which ultimately places both of them in embarrassing situations before society.

This performance can be fully understood only through careful reflection and thoughtful consideration. However, during the viewing, the rapid developments, sudden twists, and dynamic events of the play do not allow the audience sufficient time for deep contemplation. The unfolding action compels not only the actors but also the viewers to experience events in real time and with immediacy. The complexity of this comedic work lies in the requirement that actors simultaneously portray the grotesque (exaggerated, hyperbolic) aspects of their characters in various situations in a manner that is both humorous and credible. In some scenes, the naturalness and realism of the performances were somewhat lacking, which slightly affected the overall impression of the play. For instance, the actors portraying the protagonist's son Milorad (Zokir Abdulkarimov) and Velimir were less successful. Milorad appeared insecure, and Velimir's portrayal was somewhat weak. Additionally, the hired couple witnesses exaggerated

their roles excessively. Actress Zarifa Ismoilova, in the role of the protagonist's wife Mara, portrayed the character in a simple yet grotesque style, achieving a balanced and effective performance. The slight frivolity and indulgence inherent to the character, as suggested in the script, contributed to the vividness of her portrayal. Ismoilova skillfully and confidently embodied the character. Similarly, actress Sayyora Mirxodiyeva, in the role of the suitor Draga, employed grotesque and exaggerated techniques effectively. The performances of other characters emphasized naturalness, contributing to the artistic cohesion of the production. For example, the foreign professor Rayser was portrayed by Hayitali Nizomiddinov, Jivota's daughter Slavka by actress Nargiza Nodirova, and Velimir's wife Klara, married under Milorad's name abroad, by actress Dilafruz Mameshova. The play concludes with Jivota's reflective confession: "Everything can be bought with money, except wisdom."

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