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LITERARY MODELS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE PSYCHOLOGY IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH DRAMA AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The comparative-typological analysis of female psychology in A.N.Ostrovsky's "The Dowryless Girl" (1878) and G.B.Shaw's "Mrs Warren's Profession" (1893) yields results that can be generalised beyond the two plays themselves, as literary models of how nineteenth-century Russian and English drama represents female psychology. Combining the comparative-typological method with the theory of dramatic poetics, the article defines two such models, the fatal-economic model and the argumentative-reformist model, and establishes their significance for comparative literary scholarship as an analytical tool applicable beyond the dissertation's own material.

Keywords: literary model, female psychology, dramatic poetics, comparative-typological method, Russian drama, English drama, literary scholarship, Ostrovsky, Shaw.

INTRODUCTION

The preceding comparative analysis of female psychology in "The Dowryless Girl" and "Mrs Warren's Profession" establishes a typological commonality and a set of national-historical differences between the two plays. The task that remains is to generalise these findings into literary models that can be stated independently of the two plays themselves, and to determine what such models contribute to comparative literary scholarship beyond this particular dissertation.

The theory of dramatic poetics supplies the categories needed for this generalisation. M.Pfister distinguishes the levels at which a character's inner life becomes accessible to an audience [1]; K.Elam treats stage objects as signs carrying meaning additional to the spoken text [2]; A.Ubersfeld separates what a text states from what performance makes visible [3]; and M.Issacharoff distinguishes diegetic from mimetic modes of presenting a character's experience [4]. Together these provide the vocabulary needed to describe a literary model as a structure rather than merely to summarise a plot.

The aim of the article is to define the literary models generalised from the comparative analysis of Ostrovsky and Shaw, and to establish their significance for comparative literary scholarship.

METHODS

The generalisation of the results obtained by the comparative-typological method, following Zhirmunsky's distinction between typological commonality and genetic relation [13], Ďurišin's theory of the interliterary process [14] and Remak's definition of comparative literature [15], was combined with the categories of dramatic poetics

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supplied by Pfister, Elam, Ubersfeld and Issacharoff [1–4]. Close reading of the primary texts [16; 17] verified that each proposed model is grounded in the structure of the play rather than imposed upon it.

RESULTS

1. The Fatal-Economic Model

The first model, exemplified by Larisa Ogudalova, represents female psychology as determined by an economic condition the heroine cannot alter. Her inner conflict is externalised chiefly through monologue, a diegetic mode in Issacharoff's terms [4], and through stage objects, Paratov's steamer, the gold mines of his bride, the coin tossed by Knurov and Vozhevatov, which Elam's semiotics of theatre would read as signs marking Larisa herself as an object of exchange [2]. The model resolves tragically, the heroine's death standing as the terminus of a fate decided before the action begins, consistent with the Russian psychological realism Dobrolyubov and Lakshin trace through Ostrovsky's late plays [5; 6], and rooted, as Zhuravleva shows, in the closed social world of the Russian merchant estate [7].

2. The Argumentative-Reformist Model

The second model, exemplified by Vivie and Mrs Warren, represents female psychology as a position within a social argument rather than a fixed destiny. Conflict is externalised chiefly through dialogue and debate, the mimetic mode Ubersfeld identifies with a character's reasoning confronted by another character [3], most clearly in the Act II exchange between Mrs Warren and Vivie, which stages economic argument as dramatic action in its own right. The model resolves as an open question rather than a closed fate, consistent with the 'drama of ideas' that Holroyd and Bentley trace from Ibsen through Shaw [8; 9], in which, as Gainor observes, the heroine functions as a vehicle for social argument rather than a victim of circumstance [10], against the background of the widening access to education and professional work Showalter and Vicinus document for the English fin-de-siècle 'New Woman' [11; 12].

3. The Shared Deep Structure and Its Scholarly Implications

Both models share a common deep structure: the dependence of female fate on an economic arrangement the heroine does not control. They differ in the dramatic means by which that structure is made visible on stage, monologue and object in the fatal-economic model, dialogue and argument in the argumentative-reformist model, and in the degree of closure given to the heroine's fate. The table below summarises the comparison.

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Category	Fatal-Economic Model	Argumentative-Reformist Model
Exemplar	Larisa Ogudalova	Vivie Warren / Mrs Warren
Structural device	Monologue; symbolic stage objects	Dialogue; argumentative debate
Mode (Issacharoff)	Diegetic	Mimetic
Generic affiliation	Russian psychological realism	'Drama of ideas' (Ibsen–Shaw)
Resolution	Closed; tragic	Open; reformable

DISCUSSION

The significance of these two models for literary scholarship is threefold. First, they offer a replicable analytical tool, independent of the two plays used to derive them, for the comparative-typological study of female psychology in nineteenth-century drama more broadly. Second, they demonstrate that Russian and English drama, though historically unconnected, encode the same underlying social problem through two formally distinct poetics, monologic and object-based in one case, dialogic and argument-based in the other, confirming the value of combining the comparative-typological method with dramatic poetics. Third, the models carry implications for gender-oriented criticism, since the degree of narrative closure given to a female character's fate is itself a historically variable literary device, not a neutral feature of plot.

CONCLUSION

1. It was established that the comparative analysis of Ostrovsky and Shaw can be generalised into two literary models, the fatal-economic model and the argumentative-reformist model, each defined independently of the plays from which it was derived.

2. It was shown that the two models differ in the dramatic means by which female psychology is externalised, monologue and symbolic object in the Russian case, dialogue and argument in the English case.

3. It was proved that both models share a common deep structure, the dependence of female fate on an economic arrangement beyond the heroine's control, which confirms their typological rather than merely descriptive status.

4. It was substantiated that the two models carry scholarly significance beyond the dissertation's own material, as a replicable analytical tool for comparative, gender-oriented literary scholarship on nineteenth-century drama.

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