

Outline of General Differences Between Tragedy and Comedy

Tragedy

Comedy

Men alone. Exalted loneliness. Emphasis on individual traits	Men in society. Common humanity. Emphasis on social manners and habits.
Pathos. Suffering, emotion.	Ethos. Cultural milieu.
Individual great and distinctive	Types, sometimes even "stereotypes," rather than special personalities.
Theoretical concerns. Timeless situations, legendary material. Outside of "history." Pursuit of eternal.	Practical and immediate concerns. The "here and now." Immediacy, sometimes historically fixed. More easily "dated."
Metaphysical, philosophical	Physical, unphilosophical, generally against "theory."
Formal	Informal
Earthly failure is inevitable. Sin & Death will win. Dignity due to aspiring despite doom.	Earthly failure is not inevitable. Common sense can win, love can win, laughter can resolve anything. Life can win.
Rebellious; against "nature"; proceeds by refusal to accept the "way of the world"; no compromising. Fights against conditions.	Drama of accommodation, integration and compromise. Curative rather than rebellious. Ultimately conformable to "nature."
Convulsing. A "disease: runs its course.	Effects its cures through delight, satire, laughter, reliance on instinct.
Vertical. Heaven (salvation) - (introverted) individual - Hell (damnation)	Horizontal (extroverted)
Motivation: Men act on will and intellect. Men have "principles". Men are agents.	Men act on instinct, drives. These outweigh "principles". Men as automatons.
Exalts men lending them dignity and heroism.	Reduces men by showing them as "antiheroic" and undignified.
Self-control	Lack of self-control
Aspiration limited by "Fate."	Aspiration limited by "banana - peel."
The End: Death or dismemberment. Destruction of False Order. The end of a "family." Suffering leads to its own physical extreme in death. Death is the fundamental principle.	The End: mating, marriage, engagement, sex. The establishment of a New Order. Love (or sex) is the fundamental principle.
Death before dishonor; punishment before compromise; suffering over easy happiness; death before consumption of marriages, etc.	Life over Death; reconciliation over punishment; comfort over suffering; common sense over martyrdom; reproduction over annihilation. Make love not war.
"Terroristic" conflicts	Conflict essentially unstable. anxious to resolve itself, seeking middle ground.
Conditions battled against. Only "assurance" is expectancy that things will end badly. Pattern of polarization.	Conditions merely accepted, or even celebrated. proceeds on "place of assurance" and without sense of defeat. Pattern of convergence
Causality brings tragedy upon self	
Three basic varieties of comedy defined in terms of what saves the Situation:	
1. Romantic Comedy: situation saved by love	
2. Social Comedy: situation saved by common sense	
3. Absurdist Comedy: situation saved by "universal laughter."	

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