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SOME CONSTANT FEATURES OF MEDITERRANEAN HUMOUR FROM HOMER TO HELLENISM

Abstract: The Hellenistic collection of apophthegms and jokes known as the *Philogelos* has been used as a model of classification, as the jokes included in it are the sole source for exploring the aetiology and development of authentic "everyday" jokes in classical antiquity. By means of an analysis of examples, based in part on the criteria of the theoreticians Propp and Bergson and in part on the structuralist discussions of the communication act, the conclusion is reached that there exist certain constant features of the comical from Homer's time to the Hellenic era, and even to our own days (provided, of course, one stays within the Mediterranean context).

The central subject of this paper, the phenomenon of the comical aspects of the quotidian, could have been approached in two ways: on the one hand, the genres of classical literature in which the phenomenon appears had to be researched and the one that lends itself most easily to investigation selected among them; on the other, the term 'the comicality of the quotidian' itself had to be defined and the criteria devised which would enable a classification of the devices by means of which the humorous is achieved.

First, we need to clarify the concept of the 'comicality of the quotidian'. Simple definitions of the concepts 'comical' and 'humorous' would be that 'humorous' refers to 'everything that provokes laughter and appears in real life situations' and 'comical' refers to the 'realisation of the humorous in the dimension of artistic experience'¹. An upset of a certain order is regarded as a prerequisite for a humorous situation (in real life, of course). This upset does not have to be unexpected (one can laugh at the same thing again and again) but it has to be opposed to the order which has been recognised as order. However, it is worth noting that not every upset of order provokes laughter. Which upset of order will be perceived as humorous, depends on a range of contextually dependent circumstances. If the upset of order represents a part of everyday life and provokes laughter, one can talk about the humour of the quotidian (it is still

¹ Cf. M. Solar, *Teorija književnosti*. Zagreb ⁸1983, 199.

within the frame of real life situations); we refer to it as quotidian because the order (in its undisturbed, harmonious state) is familiar to most of the members of that society (so it belongs to something that happens to them every day). When such events are transferred into the literary form (or at least semi-literary form) and into the communication act between the sender and the receiver of the message, then, analogous to the perception of the notions ‘comical’ and ‘humorous’, one can talk about the comicality of the quotidian.

In the Classical period, there are works which address the theory of the comical and humorous and works which incorporate elements of the comical and humorous. The selected works which belong to the extant corpuses of both groups share common and correlated elements but also some ‘inconsistencies’ that we will attempt to point out.

Without addressing the theoretical dispute on classes and types, the literary type will be equated with a genre² and, in accordance with the requirements of Classical rhetoric, defined as a pre-set sample according to which the literary work is modelled³. The comical occurs in several types of classical literature: comedy, lyric poetry, mime, epigram, novel, satire – are all classical types where one can find many comical elements, and there is another series of types where one can find traces of such elements. The fact that all these literary types contain similar comical elements and similar comicality of the quotidian was a motive for analysis, for creating a system which would classify these similarities.

The basis for classification was the only remaining collection of jokes dating from the classical period, the *Philogelos* or *Laughter-Lover* collection, which is written in prose in ancient Greek and consists of 263 jokes⁴. This Hellenistic collection was probably written in the 4th century; however, it also includes many different layers and jokes dating even earlier. Traditionally, the collection is attributed to two fairly unknown authors, the neo-Platonist Hierocles and the grammarian Philagrius, who are said to have only added to the collection, which was probably composed by the mimeograph Philistion. The anecdotes were written in iambic trimeters⁵.

Why was the joke taken as a paradigmatic example (model) for creating the classification and how does the comicality of the

² Cf. M. Solar, *o.c.*, 124.

³ We will not take into account the modern theories which define the literary type as a frame in which the original literary works are created, because the classical types by definition do not correspond to such a definition.

⁴ The title of the original is: Φιλογέλωσ ἐκ τῶν Ἱεροκλέουσ καὶ Φιλαγρίου γραμματικῶν.

⁵ About the mentioned authors cf. *Der Kleine Pauly, Lexicon der Antike*. München, 1979., ss.vv.

quotidian function in a joke? The comicality of the quotidian occurs when humorous, everyday incidents are turned into a communication act and are seen as potential subject-matter for a joke. To turn a humorous incident into a joke, it must be put into words in a concise way and with a punch-line which expresses disorder and which the receivers can understand without explanation since both the order and the disorder are part of the receivers' experience. Quotidian events are events that are constants in life, such as birth, education, marriage, employment and death. However, a joke does not necessarily have to depend on a real incident; it can also create a reality of its own in a transition from the domain of *faction* to the domain of *fiction*. This transition is important for understanding how the joke functions, how it departs from reality, how it can appear as a literary form and its potential universality. A joke is a linguistic message which can be spoken or written. The written joke, unlike the spoken joke, is intended for a large number of receivers, and the folk written joke is often anonymous and generally concerns the comicality of the quotidian. The written joke, apart from having the function of a message within the communication act, is also the sender of the message, which makes the communication act complex. In the case of the *Philogelos* collection, the channel between the sender and receiver (if the receiver of the message is defined as a modern reader) is almost fifteen centuries long. This raises the questions of how these jokes managed to cross this enormous time barrier, why they have survived and, even more importantly, why are they still humorous. Mediators were naturally needed for the jokes to "survive", either by senders and receivers changing through the centuries or by one mediator, the joke translator, suddenly overcoming the time span, which in this case is fifteen centuries long. Jokes which reach us in a series of small time spans and jokes which are translated after a long time span but are understandable without explanation from the translator obviously have features which are constants in this Mediterranean region regardless of the time in which they were made.

An analysis of the jokes, based partly on the criteria of the theoreticians Propp⁶ and Bergson⁷ and partly on structuralist reflections on the communication act⁸, provides a new classification of the types of comicality of the quotidian according to the model of structuring, the ways in which the humour is achieved and the similarity of motifs.

⁶ Cf. V. Propp, *Problemi komike i smeha*. Novi Sad 1984. [1976.]

⁷ Cf. H. Bergson, *Smijeh. O značenju komičnog*. Zagreb 1987. [1961.]

⁸ Cf. R. Jakobson, *Lingvistika i poetika*. Beograd 1966.

Two basic criteria can be used for the classification of jokes. Since a joke always has a “plot” (that is, a system which is upset at the end), it can be viewed as a very short dramatic script or as a minimal form of drama. Therefore, the first criterion is based on the presence or absence of dialogue and the number of characters, thus differentiating between jokes delivered through mime, monologue or dialogue. This classification is superimposed by another classification, based on Jakobson but also including elements of Propp’s and Bergson’s classification, which views the contents of the joke as a communication or semiological/symbolical act⁹. This classification distinguishes the upset of order in relation to:

- the participants in the joke (the main subject – the sender, the secondary/passive participant – the receiver, and third parties)
- the means of establishing a connection between the participants (the code, message and channel)
- the context (established social norms, the usual chain of events, the usual ways of thinking, etc.).

This classification partly corresponds to Bergson’s: differentiation according to the characters in the joke corresponds to the comedy of characters; differentiation according to the means of establishing a relationship between the characters corresponds to a certain extent to the comedy of words; differentiation according to the context corresponds to the comedy of situation¹⁰. Within this final classification, there are sub-categories which are based on certain principles of Propp’s classification¹¹.

a) The comedy of characters

Most jokes feature a main character who is either the butt of the joke or who makes fun of someone else. This character has not only physical and character traits but also a profession or domicile. The biggest group (103 jokes) are jokes where the main character is

⁹ Propp, *o.c.*; Bergson, *o.c.*

¹⁰ Bergson’s criteria are much clearer than Propp’s, however the methods he mentions as ways of achieving the comedy of situation and comedy of words – repetition, reorientation and the crossing of series – can only be applied to major literary types, not to short forms such as a joke. These methods are easily observed in most types, but they can be applied to jokes only if all the jokes of the same category or sub-category are seen as a whole.

¹¹ In Propp’s classification, there are certain criteria that are too dependent on the subjective attitude of the classifier. Firstly, some categories coincide, that is, there are certain jokes which are hard to place in a specific category (for example, when physical inadequacies are laughed at, the criteria belongs to both the comedy of the human body and the comedy of characters.) Also, there are certain cases that can only be classified according to “feeling”, which is not a reliable criteria for a classification (for example, whether something belongs to an allogy or a lie is a matter of subjective judgement.)

a know-it-all (σχολαστικός- a word which has a somewhat pejorative meaning in its original)¹². The most frequent character traits that are made fun of in jokes are stinginess, an inclination to cheating, boastfulness, stupidity, grumpiness, ignorance, cowardice, laziness, envy and drunkenness¹³. The most frequent physical traits made fun of are obesity, old age, hernia and bad breath.¹⁴ A large number of jokes refer to the residents of certain towns (Abdera, Kyme and Sidon) who have an explicit chauvinistic attitude¹⁵. Certain professions are also frequently made fun of: doctors, teachers and lawyers¹⁶. An important element in the comedy of characters is whether the butt of the joke is the subject, the object-receiver or a third person; naturally, the subject is the butt of most of the jokes and a third person the butt of the least of them, while a certain number of jokes makes fun of both the subject and the object-receiver.

b) The comedy of situation

The humour in a large number of jokes derives from a situation which departs from the expected. These situations encompass several categories: departure from traditional social norms, from a normal series of events or from a traditional way of thinking¹⁷. Sometimes, to emphasise the humour in a situation, the following techniques are used: self-deprecation, a stupid and obvious lie, or total absurdity¹⁸.

c) The comedy of words

The comedy of words implies the upset of order connected with the means of creating a relationship between the characters in the joke¹⁹, that is, a code (then it has a metalinguistic function), a

¹² Cf. *Facet*. 9. Σχολαστικός θέλων τὸν ὄνον αὐτοῦ διδάξαι μὴ τρώγειν, οὐ παρέβαλεν αὐτῷ τροφάς. Ἀποθανόντος δὲ τοῦ ὄνου ἀπὸ λιμοῦ, ἔλεγε· Μεγάλα ἐζημιώθη· ὅτε γὰρ ἔμαθε μὴ τρώγειν, τότε ἀπέθανε.

¹³ Cf. *Facet*. 197. Ἀφῆς γραμματικὸς ἐρωτηθεὶς· Ἡ μήτηρ Πριάμου τίς ἐκαλεῖτο; ἀπορῶν ἔφη· Ἡμεῖς κατὰ τιμὴν κυρίαν αὐτὴν καλοῦμεν.

¹⁴ Cf. *Facet*. 118. Ἀβδηρίτης περιπατῶν εἶδε κηλήτην οὐρούντα, καὶ εἶπεν· Οὗτος ἔως ἐσπέρας οὐ ἐξουρήσῃ.

¹⁵ Cf. *Facet*. 125. Ἀβδηρίτου στρουθίον ἀπέθανε. Μετὰ ὃν χρόνον ἰδὼν στρουθοκάμηλον, εἶπεν· Εἰ ἔζη τὸ στρουθίον μου, ἦδη ἂν τηλικούτον ὑπῆρχε.

¹⁶ Cf. *Facet*. 3. Σχολαστικῶς τις ἰατρῶ προσελθὼν εἶπεν· Ἰατρέ, ὅταν ἀναστῶ ἐκ τοῦ ὕπνου, ἡμιώριον ἐσκότωμαι, καὶ εἶθ' οὕτως ἀποκαθίσταμαι. Καὶ ὁ ἰατρός· Μετὰ τὸ ἡμιώριον ἐγειροῦ.

¹⁷ Cf. *Facet*. 2. Σχολαστικὸς κολυμβῶν παρὰ μικρὸν ἐπνίγη· ὄμοσε δὲ εἰς ὕδρα μὴ εἰσελθεῖν, ἐὰν μὴ μάθη πρῶτον καλῶς κολυμβᾶν.

¹⁸ A stupid, obvious lie is a way of achieving humour and is classified by Propp in a category called *allogy*. An example of the absurd joke: cf. *Facet*. 29. Διδύμων ἀδελφῶν ὁ ἕτερος ἐτελεύτησε, σχολαστικὸς οὖν προσελθὼν τῷ ζῶντι εἶπε· Σὺ ἀπέθανες, ἢ ὁ ἀδελφός σου.

¹⁹ Aristotle had already introduced the difference between “the comical in words” and the “comical in things” (Cf. *Tractatus Coislinianus*, V.).

message (poetic function) and a channel (phatic function). Most of the jokes in the selected corpus use a play on words so the humour is almost always achieved through the poetic function²⁰.

d) Motifs

The motifs which appear in the *Philogelos* collection are divided into two categories. The first category consists of jokes that include motifs which are universal and so appear in other literary genres and in contemporary jokes. The second category consists of jokes which are characteristic of the classical world or the Greek civilisation in particular and cannot be referred to as universal because they do not function in the present. Both categories refer to constants in human life: birth, marriage, employment, death etc. When such events have no particularities, they come within the comicality of the quotidian, which functions in the same or similar manner in most epochs and periods²¹.

The mentioned criteria help us easily move backwards in time from the *Philogelos* collection, tracing the literary genres in which the criteria appear, and move forwards to find a connection between Hellenistic and contemporary jokes.

Different aspects of the comedy of characters occur in different genres: even though the epic poem is not really a genre where one would look for elements of the comical, we come across the beginnings of comical literary form in the works of Homer. When Odysseus in the second book of the *Iliad* punishes the chatty Thersites by beating him, the others just laugh at it (οἱ δέ, καὶ ἀχνύμενοι περ, ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἠδὺ γέλασσαν)²², also because of Thersites' ugly appearance which becomes tragically comical in its ugliness²³. In the first book of the *Iliad*, the Gods laugh at their companion, Hephaestus, because of his limp, showing that laughter, or rather mockery, is not just reserved for mortals²⁴. Both examples are easily related to the comedy of characters, that is, the mockery

²⁰ Cf. *Facet*. 133. Σιδωνίῳ ἀλῆϊ λέγει τις. "Ἐχει τὸ κυρτὶν σου παγούρους. Ὁ δὲ μανεῖς ἀπεκρίνατο: "Ἐχει τὸ στήθος σου καρκίνους. There are a lot of jokes in which the point is expressed through the comedy of words and are untranslatable and incomprehensible without further explanation. Cf. *Facet*. 232. Ὁζόστομος συνεχῶς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καταφιλῶν ἔλεγεν. Ἡ κυρία μου, ἡ "Ἡρα μου, ἡ Ἀφροδίτη μου. Κάκεινη ἀποστρεφόμενη ἔλεγεν. Ὁζεύς μου, ὄζεύς μου.

²¹ Some of the universal motifs that we will attempt to prove are: the bad relationship between father and son, fever (illness), sexual relationships between younger men and older women, laughing at stinginess, inheritance, misogyny, etc.

²² Cf. *Il.* B 270.

²³ Cf. *Il.* B 217-219.

²⁴ Cf. *Il.* A 599-600: ὄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἐνώρτο γέλωσ μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν, / ὡς ἴδον "Ἡφαιστον διὰ δῶματα ποιπνύοντα.

of certain physical traits. We come across the comedy of characters in classical comedy with Aristophanes, who presents it in its drastic form of self-deprecation when he mocks his own baldness²⁵. Certain character traits are also frequently made fun of: moroseness is emphasised in the title of Menander's comedy Δύσκολος, and stinginess is ridiculed in the Classical period in, amongst others, the Roman tradition (Plautus' *Aulularia*) and in epigrams (in Martial's works and the *Anthologia Palatina* collection²⁶). Certain professions are also an object of ridicule: doctors, teachers and lawyers are the most frequent targets. These professions were good targets (and those that have remained still are today) because of their public nature, their lucrative nature, their low social status or their susceptibility to charlatans. Examples can be found in Martial's works and in the *Anthologia Palatina* collection²⁷. Making fun of someone's origins often implies a collective ridicule of the people of a particular nation, region or town and almost always involves a racist attitude: in the Classical period, the residents of the town of Abdera were proverbially stupid, so they were mentioned in jokes and in negative contexts by writers such as Cicero, Lucian and Demosthenes. Such jokes are frequently told even today but with a different set of towns and inhabitants: in Croatia these are jokes about two Bosnians called Mujo and Haso.

The comedy of situation can be found in all its aspects in various literary genres. A frequent comical situation found in jokes is that of travelling by boat, the dangers connected to the journey and the writing of a will before the journey²⁸. An almost identical situation can be found in Juvenal's works: the residents of Rome do not go out in the evening without a written will²⁹. Another example that springs to mind is the similarity between Horace's satire about a bore and the joke about the two bores who spend the night follo-

²⁵ Cf. Ar. *Pax*, 767-773; However, we need to emphasise that one of the most important characteristics of classical comedy is mocking *ad personam*. The comedy of character and situation moved over time from being original and having a unique spiteful trait, which was adapted for a specific moment, to a set form in classical comedy (where it had a cosmopolitan and contemporary character), a form that was then taken over by Roman writers of comedy.

²⁶ Cf. Mart. 1.98; 4.85; 9.98; AP 11.165 (Lucilius): Οὐ γλήχωνι Κρίτων ὁ φιλάργυρος, ἀλλὰ διχάλκῳ / αὐτὸν ἀποσφραίνει θλιβομένου στομάχου.

²⁷ Cf. AP XI, 112-126, 131, 280-1. Mart. 1.30; 1.47; 5.9; 6.53; 8.74; For example Mart. 9.96: *Clinicus Herodes trullam subduxerat aegro: / Deprensus dixit 'Stulte, quid ergo bibis?'*

²⁸ Cf. *Facet*. 25. Σχολαστικός ἐν τῷ πλέειν, χειμῶνος σφοδροῦ ὄντος, καὶ τῶν οἰκετῶν κλαιόντων. Μὴ κλαίετε, ἔφη. πάντας γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐν διαθήκαις ἐλευθέρους ἀφήκα.

²⁹ Cf. Juv. 3.272-274 ...*possis ignavus haberi / et subiti casus inprovidus, ad cenam si / intestatus eas...*

wing each other home³⁰. Jokes about snobs and the situations they get into remind us of Petronius's *Trimalchion*.

Most scoptic epigrams are also based on the comedy of situation³¹. Comical scenes of beating are very frequent: we find them in Homer's works and they are always present in Aristophanes' comedies³². If we had enough space, the list of comical situations would be much longer.

The comedy of words does not often belong to the comicality of the quotidian because it is so difficult to translate. This is especially true of the comedy of words in literature, where one needs to know the context, lexis, and historical and mythological facts and also the experience and knowledge of the receiver of the message³³.

Universal motifs are the clearest evidence of the existence of the comicality of the quotidian. Misogyny was as popular in classical jokes as it is now: animosity towards women is very frequent in classical jokes, appearing in iambs (for example, the works of Hipponax) and epigrams; today it occurs in the very popular jokes about stupid blondes³⁴. A bad relationship between a parent and child is often presented humorously in comedies, both Greek (Aristophanes' *Νεφέλαι*) and Roman (Terence's comedy *Heautontimorumenos*). Relationships, including sexual ones, between younger men and older women is another frequent theme: the young man commits himself to the old woman because of her old age, illness and wealth, waiting for her to die; this motif is easily transferred to the present day, but now the roles are somewhat changed – younger girls and older men. Jokes with sexual themes are today among the most widespread (it is interesting to note that they were very rare in Classical jokes) as is the theme of the cheated husband³⁵.

³⁰ Cf. Hor. *S.* 1,9 ; *Facet.* 20. Σχολαστικοὶ δύο ἀπὸ δειπνοῦ ἀλλήλους ἀποκαθιστῶντες κατὰ τιμὴν, οὐκ ἐκοιμήθησαν.

³¹ Cf. Mart. 1.19: *Si memini, fuerant tibi quattuor, Aelia, dentes: /Expulit una duos tussis et una duos. / Iam securus potes totis tussire diebus: / Nil istic quod agat tertia tussis habet.* In the first distich, Martial describes a situation where he makes fun of Elia's old age and physical flaws, but this isn't done obviously (if it wasn't for the second distich, the first one on its own wouldn't point to mockery). In the second distich, Martial emphasises the situation he has already mentioned, but now, instead of the expected pity, he openly makes fun of Elia.

³² Scenes of beating: cf. Ar. *passim*.

³³ Cf. Mart. 7.57: *Castora de Polluce Gabinia fecit Achillan: / Πῦξ ἀγαθός fuerat, nunc erit ἰππὸδαμος.*

³⁴ Cf. *Facet.* 248. Μισογύναιος νοσήσας ἐν ἀπογνώσει, τῆς δὲ γυναικὸς αὐτῷ εἰπούσης, 'Εάν τι πάθης, ἀπάξομαι. 'Αναβλέψας πρὸς αὐτήν εἶπε: Ζῶντι μοι τοῦτο χάρισαι.

³⁵ Cf. Catul. 83: *Lesbia mi praesente viro male plurima dicit: / haec illi fatuo maxima laetitia est. / Mule, nihil sentis? Si nostri oblita taceret, / sana esset: nunc quod gannit et obloquitur, / non solum meminit, sed, quae multo acrior est res, / irata est. Hoc est, writur et coquitur.*

Inheritance, wills and inheritors are an eternal topic of contemporary literary works, jokes or film scripts³⁶. Dying from an illness is an universal motif and an integral part of human life, so it is not surprising that illness (even if it is serious) becomes a means of ridicule³⁷. As can be seen, the motifs are varied (childhood, marriage, old age, death, even the inheritance after death) and include all the stages and important moments in life.

There are various theories on comedy and its application. The classical theories of the comical came from philosophers and rhetoricians who dealt with how effective the comical was in conveying a serious understanding of the world³⁸. They did not consider the comical and humorous as two independent categories but as together serving a more serious aim; for the philosophers, the aim was understanding the world, while for the rhetoricians, the aim was persuading the listener of the validity of their own viewpoints. Even so, the comical occurs in at least four aspects in the classical period: first, it appears in the early works as an important element for understanding the world (an example is Aristophanes); second, it serves for relaxation from life's "serious" struggle (with philosophers); third, it appears as irony and sarcasm (as with Archilochus or Juvenal); fourth, it enhances effective communication (in rhetoric).

However, there is a discrepancy between theory and practice. All the theorists stress that a basic requirement of comedy is that it should be painless; however, the mechanism of the humorous generally does not function without the element of mockery.³⁹

³⁶ Cf. Facet. 104. Φιλάργυρος διαθήκας γράφων εαυτὸν κληρονόμον ἔταξε.

³⁷ Cf. Mart. 10.77: *Nequius a Caro nihil umquam, Maxime, factum est, / Quam quod febre perit: fecit et illa nefas. / Saeva nocens febris saltem quartana fuisses! / Servari medico debuit ille suo.*

³⁸ Even though one can trace the development of the theory of the comical in Classical Greece, to fully understand the notion "comical" it suffices to mention Aristotle and his theory. The theory can be reconstructed from a few saved fragments (cf. Fr. ed. Rose 621, 22, 24, 28, 30), his *Poetics* (cf. Ar. Po. 1448-9) and *Tractatus Coislinianus* (v. R. Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy*, London 1984.). The history of the aesthetics of the comical in general cf. A. Plebe, *La teoria del comico. Da Aristotele a Plutarco*. Torino, 1952.

The main source for research of the Roman aesthetics of the comical are the works of Cicero and Quintilian. Most of the relevant facts can be found in Cicero's *De oratore* (II, 216-289), and also *Orator* (87-90) and *De officiis* (I, 103-104). Quintilian mentions laughter in the sixth book of his *Institutio oratoria*, as one of the most important weapons for speakers. Cf. M.A. Grant, *The Ancient Rhetorical Theories of the laughable*, Madison, 1924.; *Le Rire des anciens*, Paris 1998.; E. de Saint-Denis, *Essais sur le rire et le sourire des Latins*, Paris, 1965.

³⁹ Cf. Chilo. Ed. H. Diels, p. 521, 19: μή κακολόγει τοὺς πλησίον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἀκούσῃ ἐφ' οἷς λυπηθήσῃ. Anach. Arist. EN X, 6,6, 1176 b33 παίζειν δ' ὅπως σπουδάζῃ. Democr. Ed. H. Diels, p. 405, 15 ἄξιον ἀνθρώπους ὄντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων συμφοραῖς μὴ γελᾶν ἀλλ' ὀλοφύρεσθαι. Pl. *Phlb.* 49e; Arist. *Po.* 1449a; Quint. *Inst.* VI, 3, 26 2-4; Cic. *de Orat.* II, 236, 1.

Modern theories confirm the impossibility of this requirement made by classical philosophers and rhetoricians, stating that laughter is by nature one of mockery and that the most frequent type of laughter is derisive⁴⁰. The comical is always in direct or indirect relationship with man and all aspects of his life, which is confirmed by examples from both contemporary and classical literature.

The list of similarities could surely be longer; however, even these mentioned show that the comicality of the quotidian follows a pattern in its development from the classical times until today and that there are connections and similarities in the ways in which this comicality is achieved. This development is very much connected to this region and also to the western European civilisation, even maybe to the Mediterranean culture, although it sometimes even crosses all these cultural-historical and spatial-civilizational borders.

⁴⁰ Cf. S. Freud. *Dosetka i njezin odnos prema nesvesnom*, Beograd, 1969. [1960.] and V. Propp, *o.c.*