

**The Character in the Neoclassical Drama****Creative and Performing Arts**

**Keywords:** Neoclassicism, Sidi, Poetics, Criteria, Character.

**Emin Emini**

**PhDc at the Academy of Albanological Studies, Tirana, Albania.  
University of Prishtina. The Faculty of Arts. Dramatic Arts. Republic of Kosova.**

**Abstract**

Reasonable probability for the doctrine of French neoclassicism resulted in the criterion of mass and harmony that finally should have had an artwork. Through this criterion in neoclassicism it was aimed to be achieved the structural composition of an artwork, but its content should be transmitted either to the reader or to the bystander as reasonable and correct, even though the content was not the epicenter of a neoclassic artwork. Even in this regard, Greek and Roman classicism is compared with neoclassical style, because for Aristotle the characters do not act to show their tempers. but they act according to their roles, which means that a character has a stable character structure and conform to what the structure is, s(he) operates and consequently through the action, the reader, and especially the viewer, is able to recognize the content, source, and the motive of the action of the character.

**Introduction**

For didactic reasons, if we treat the tragedy “Sidi” of P.Korney, I remind, it is necessary, first of all, to remind some of the principles of the doctrine of french neoclassicism according to which this work was written. However, “Sidi” and his author, who was at the same time and one of the founders and theologian of neoclassicism, to some extent broke these principles of the stylistic-dramaturgy formation of the era, not long after his birth.

In that era, in the XVII-XVIII centuries, the development of philosophical, literary and aesthetic thought in Europe, especially in France and England was characterized by the establishment of some quasi-rigid creative norms, and this stage is defined by the term classicism and in contrast to the Greco-Roman class, was also called neoclassicism.

The founder of French classicalism or neoclassicism as regards drama as a creative genre is considered Pierre Corneille, although this literary stream in France begins with the poet François de Malherbe (1555-1628), who was the royal court poet at the time of Henry IV and Louis XIII.

In this period we have a fruitful development of the theoretical thought in France and the one distinguished with his views was Jean Chapelain (4 December 1595 – 22 February 1674), “who about 30 years before the publication of the theoretical treatise of Bualos for the poetic art, will form some of the fundamental requirements of French classicism. According to this doctrine, literature is a set of clearly defined rules, which represent the art form, while the content is given by nature itself.<sup>9</sup> This regulation requires the artist-writer to imitate the nature and the man should be the epicenter of that nature, while the environment, landscape, decor, etc..are the framework in which a man works with his habits, character, and his passions. While the next rule for the art of French classicalism was the support of the creator in the Greek or Roman preliminary models of

<sup>9</sup> Vinca, A. *Kursiteoriveletrare*, Prishtinë, Librishkollor, 2002, fq. 115

classical works. But in the doctrine of neoclassicism, the criterion of reason must definitely function, because by adhering to this criterion, the artist of neoclassicism can achieve “nearness with probability – French word for this is *La vraisemblance*.”<sup>10</sup>

The likelihood criterion is an element of art defined in the treatise so-called “Poetics” written by Aristotle and since then it is required by the artist to deal with what may happen, thus probability, which has its grounds in the reason rather than what it can be considered true.

The reasonable probability of the doctrine of French neoclassicism resulted the criterion of the measure and of the harmony that should have an artwork and this criterion, this rule “the French call it with the word *bienséance* while in English it means *decorum* or *propriety* and in Albanian could be translated as comely behavior, courtesy or correctness.”<sup>11</sup>

Probabiliteti i arsyeshëm për doktrinën e neoklasizmit francez rezultonte kriterin e masës dhe të harmonisë që duhet ta kishte një vepër arti dhe këtë kriter, këtë rregull “francezët e quajnë bienséance, kurse anglezët decorum ose propriety dhe në shqip mund të përkthehej si sjellje e hijshme (good behaviour), mirësjellje (courtesy) or korrektësi (correctness)”.

### **The units of dramatic neoclassical work**

The most controversial issue among writers especially critics of the neoclassical era it is the issue of the three units of action: of the action, of the time and of the place.

Çështja më e diskutueshme ndër shkrimtarët e posaçërisht të kritikëve të epokës së neoklasizmit është çështja e tri njësive të veprës: të veprimit, të kohës dhe të vendit.

The first two units have been discussed and are elaborated (either directly or indirectly) in the Aristotle’s “Poetics” treaty, which states that the tragedy is “an imitation of an action”<sup>12</sup> (action of unit), which can not last more than one rotation of the sun (time of unit).

Dy njësitë e para janë diskutuar dhe janë shtjelluar (qoftë në mënyrë të drejtpërdrejt, qoftë jo të drejtpërdrejt) në traktatin “Poetika” të Aristotelit, i cili thotë se tragjedia është “imitim i një veprimi” - (njësia e veprimit), i cili nuk mund të zgjasë më shumë se një rrotullim i diellit (njësia e kohës).

About the issue of the units of the dramaturgy work, Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) in the capacity of the theoretician and the dramatist of neoclassicism has given his very valuable contribution, although in his era of exclusion (the difference) of the rule of units of the act was an absurd of its kind.

Corneille has given his contribution by defending the idea that the unit of time in a work may be much longer, whereas depending on the structure of the work, it may also change the place

<sup>10</sup> Aty, fq. 116

<sup>11</sup> Aty, fq. 117

<sup>12</sup> Aristoteli, *Poetika*, Prishtinë, Buzuku, 1988, fq. 62

of the event, so it can change the place of the action (the unit of the place). These criteria have been practically broken by the work "Sidi", as it has broken also the principle of likelihood.

"Sidi" is a dramaturgical work that does not adhere to the unit of time, because its event involves a much longer period of time than 24 hours limited by neoclassicism, even, time as a physical unit, even after the end of the fable, does not end, does not conclude, because the main character, Sidi, remains to be subjected to the fate of time until she decides for her future, so the time will decide the fate of the hero:

*Endure until that despair is softened*

*And the rest: leave it to the time ... ..* <sup>13</sup>

### **How does the fable of the drama "Sidi" begins?**

The hero of Sidi is faced with many insoluble conflicts, with tensions and dramaticity of a pronounced level, because Sidi's father, Don Diego, is wrongly offended by Don Gomez, the father of Shimea, whom she loves foolishly.

Don Diego is looking for his son Don Rodriguez to retaliate for his honor and for the whole family, to retaliate for the humiliation that Don Gomez had done by slapping in the conflict they had with Don Diego's choice of the prince's teachers of Castile by King Don Fernandez.

Don Gomez can not agree with the king's decision why he is not his choice to teach his son the martial art, because he was at the height of fame and glory and therefore accuses Don Diego:

*"As an old man - cunningly and with flattery, you have gained my deceit."* <sup>14</sup>

Don Rodriguez after encouraging retaliation, is left to seek out a fight with Shime's father Don Gomez. This is his first trial and he is placed before a fatal dilemma:

*"Alas, from where to scold; my heart to betray-*

*Or to live with shame."* <sup>15</sup>

This dilemma reminds us the great Hamletan words "To live or not to live" in the following sentence:

*"Oh, I am worried to live spotted and concerned to live with a bad fate."*

<sup>13</sup> Kornej, P. Sidi, Prishtinë, Rilindja, 1972, fq. 100

<sup>14</sup> Aty, fq. 24

<sup>15</sup> Aty, fq. 28

## Corneille's style and the poetry language at "Sidi"

Sidi's dilemma is also presented through the technique of writing by Pierre Corneille. It is presented through an extremely functional poetical work and it is structured in such a substantial way through a verse divided into two verse and two opposite attitudes:

*"Father, friend, favour, love"* <sup>16</sup>

This verse is built with the verse unit that necessarily requires determination, resolution of the dilemma, although none are close to the way of solution: The father is one way, the friend (she) is the other way.

The second part of the verse also has the great dilemma that requires Sidi's definition: his determination for honor or for love.

The verse "Father, friend, honor, love" was broken into two units in a single dilemma; this verse would have this poetic structure: father-honor and she friend-love.

Why does not the author write it by using the form of units that would be functionalized in the form of phraseology as a unit of comprehension and then intricate it to introduce the dilemma, but uses the verse with the two-parts structure and with two-units that have the dilemma within them?

Because, the verse with two units and in dilemma as a structure is much more powerful, while the second part of the verse, which is also structural continuity, also divided into two units and a dilemma greatly strengthens the string content. Consequently, the intent of the author has been to allow the reader or drama viewer to increase the dramaticity of the conflict of the ever-active character's internal conflict and to present as much as possible the character's psychology.

The discourse of building this poetics is followed loyally to all the characters of the "Sidi" drama, although there are many cases, ranging from its main character to episodic characters, their character remains only in a black and white contrast.

## Black and White Contrast

The black and white contrast is also present in the monologue of Sidi (Don Diego) on the seventh scene of the first act, which, after a great psychological struggle with itself saying:

*"If I'm bleeding, the contempt is awaiting for me*

*Everywhere I look around: one is betrayed – the other one is not deserved."* <sup>17</sup>

And then he decides for one of the two ways:

<sup>16</sup> Aty, fq. 29

<sup>17</sup> Aty, fq. 29

*“For the sake of love, with a blurred spirit,  
To die ashamed?  
How seriously I was wrong!  
I'm delaying revenge, how am I blaming myself?”<sup>18</sup>*

### **Conclusion: "Sidi" — is it a tragedy or drama?**

The end for Don Rodriguez and Shimea does not bring fatality. Both of them stay alive. Both of them remain hopeful. Both of them expect a new and common destiny. And, this conclusion is not tragic. So, “Sidi” in my opinion is a work of the genre of drama and does not belong to the genre of tragedy. “Sidi” is a drama. Because, according to basic principles, the genre of dramaturgy work not only determines fate of the hero, but also and the event’s development and the fate of the hero at that event. Despite many vicissitudes, many events that have connotations, even, very tragic in “Sidi”, despite Don Rodriguez’s assassination of Don Gomez, this assassination does not support the genre such as tragedy, because Don Gomez is not the hero of the artwork.<sup>19</sup>

But why “Sidi” is a drama, while “Edipus is the king” is a tragedy, although the two main characters of these two works have the same undeniable commonalities: Sidi and Edipus do not conclude life with *exitus letalis* – death. But “Sidi” work is a drama and the work “Edipus king” is a tragedy, because Sidi and Edipus have an essential and extreme distinction in their destiny: Sidi as the character remains in hope, when saying: *“While hoping, I feel happy...whereas Edipus as the character remains ruins of a man in the full sense of the word.”*

Although “Sidi” was created according to the principles of French neoclassicism for the “resurgence” of the tragedy, nevertheless this work is not regarded as (tragedy) by a critic and a scholar Frye, who ascertains that “in France the establishment of the tragedy was part of the intellectual revolution... to attract tragedy towards the heroic romance, Sidi (La Cid).”<sup>20</sup>

### **References**

- Vinca, A. *Kurs i teorive letrare*. Prishtinë, Libri shkollor, 2002, fq. 115-117.  
Aristoteli. *Poetika*, Prishtinë, Buzuku, 1988, fq. 62.  
Kornej, P. Sidi, Prishtinë, Rilindja, 1972, fq. 24, 28, 29, 100.  
Frye, N. *Anotomia e kritikës*, Prishtinë, Rilindja, 1990, fq. 385.

<sup>18</sup> Aty, fq. 29

<sup>19</sup> Poaty.

<sup>20</sup> Fraj, N. *Anotomia e kritikës*, Prishtinë, Rilindja, 1990, fq. 385