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Bureaucracy in the satirical works of Vincas Kudirka and Kurt Tucholsky in comparison

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Abstract. This paper analyzes the political satires of Kudirka (1858–1899) and Tucholsky (1890–1935), focusing on their portrayal of the dark side of bureaucracy within their respective historical contexts. Despite significant differences in form and content, the satires offer insights into the authors' political beliefs. Kudirka represents the perspective of a champion for national independence, while Tucholsky navigates the hazards of a democratic society threatened by political extremism and a latent antipathy towards the republic. Kudirka's satires not only showcase sharp commentary on bureaucratic malfeasance but also underscore the importance of national sovereignty. Through his works, Kudirka instills in readers a fervor for the pursuit of sovereign nationhood and casts a critical light on the oppression and exploitation imposed by occupying powers. His satires are marked by an impassioned tone and a clear rejection of the prevailing system. Conversely, Tucholsky finds himself in a democratic and free society where potential dangers emanate from political extremists and a general aversion towards the republic. In his satires, Tucholsky assumes the role of the observer, subtly and indirectly criticizing the status quo. His focus extends beyond bureaucratic issues to encompass the perils posed by political extremists, who threaten to undermine democratic values. Overall, the political satires of both Kudirka and Tucholsky explore the "shadows" of bureaucracy in distinct ways. While Kudirka embraces a nationalistic perspective and fights for independence, Tucholsky delves into the hazards facing a democratic society. Their works reflect their political convictions and offer a critical engagement with their respective historical contexts.

Keywords: Beamtensatire, satire, Vincas Kudirka, Kurt Tucholsky, inequality, liberating effect

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Introduction

The Lithuanian Vincas Kudirka (born in 1858) wrote between 1880 and 1899 and died at the age of 41 from tuberculosis. The German Kurt Tucholsky (born in 1890) began his work around 1911 and took his own life in 1935 at the age of 45. Both used satires to fight against the ills of life. Despite the fundamental similarities in their preference for the satirical form, the differences in the work of these two writers outweigh the similarities. While Kudirka wrote only a few

satires [1, 2], Tucholsky's satirical work was relatively extensive [3, 4], and his pieces were much shorter. Kudirka's satires range from 15 to 50 pages, whereas Tucholsky wrote quick punchlines for a more impatient audience.

Both authors belong to different generations, lived in different eras, and experienced different social power structures. Kudirka's period of work fell during the era of foreign rule under the Russian Tsar in Lithuania, marked by repression, censorship, and a strong policy of Russification. His work is deeply rooted in the developing Lithuanian national consciousness. Tucholsky, on the other hand, was born during the heyday of the German Empire and witnessed its collapse at the end of World War I. Through his texts, he accompanied and commented on the crises and unrest in Germany during the Weimar Republic and also took a political stand. While Kudirka had to spend much of his life underground to continue his literary work, Tucholsky benefited from freedom of the press and freedom of opinion, finding a wide audience during his lifetime.

A comparison of the two authors becomes interesting despite their divergent life paths when we consider the themes they address in their satirical works. Both Kudirka and Tucholsky mainly directed their criticism at the rigidity and incompetence of the ruling powers and parties, seeking to portray their inadequacies in an ironic way in their texts. Furthermore, both saw themselves not just as authors but primarily as political actors, with their literary works serving as a medium for raising awareness and enlightening people about the prevailing conditions.

The satires of both writers were created at a time in the history of their respective nations when a profound epochal change took place. For Kudirka, it was the revolt against the loss of Lithuania's independence, from which the national movement of the early 20th century emerged. In Tucholsky's case, it was the end of the Empire and the founding of the German Republic. These political, cultural, and social turning points are present in the literary works of both authors and become a lasting driving force for their literary activities. The criticism of the government apparatus is at the heart of their satirical engagements. Both authors criticize the bureaucracy in their nations, with a fundamental dissatisfaction with the political situations of their time always being visible. Tucholsky frequently commented on the task and function of political satire, as, for example, in a short essay from 1919. When asked what satire is allowed to do, he provocatively answered, "Everything," [5. Vol. 1. P. 77]. However, in his satires, he generally did not act according to this statement; he felt primarily committed to the truth, exaggerating, but still pointing to real existing grievances. He was largely guided by moral norms and did not mock individuals for innate characteristics or because of an unfortunate fate. Moreover, he usually refrained from attacking individuals, unless they were figures of historical significance. A review of his work shows, however, that he occasionally deviated from these guidelines [6].

This leads directly to the central question, which can be phrased as follows: What commonalities do the political satires of Kudirka and Tucholsky share, how do they differ in terms of formal and content-related aspects, and to what extent can conclusions be drawn about the political convictions of the authors?

The focus of the investigation is on the satirization of the bureaucracy. It will explore how the theme of bureaucratic satire was addressed by both authors at different times and under entirely different political and institutional circumstances, and how these circumstances are reflected in their works. Satire can make use of various literary genres, such as poetry, short stories, or essays. Additionally, it will be shown what type of satire each author's works belong to. This will be discussed through selected works from their respective literary oeuvres.

By integrating both formal and content-related aspects into the investigation, this study aims to go beyond a general stylistic comparison and highlight the thematic similarities in the works of the two writers. The formal comparison criteria include (1) the length of the texts, (2) narrative perspective, (3) the use of linguistic techniques, and (4) the medium in which the satires were originally published. On the other hand, content-related aspects will also be considered, such as (5) the proportion of reality and fiction in the narratives, (6) the characterization of the bureaucratic group compared to that of the people interacting with them, and finally (7) the dramaturgy of the satires, especially concerning the depicted conflict and its development and resolution, or lack thereof. These aspects were selected because they allow the differences in the literary satire production of both authors to be more accurately and precisely highlighted. They also serve as an analytical framework for answering the central research question.

The study will focus on Kudirka's satires "Viršininkai" ("The Superiors"), "Lietuvos tilto atsiminimai" ("Memories of the Bridge of Lithuania", further referred to as "LTA"), and "Vilkai" ("The Wolves") as well as the satirical works of Tucholsky, in which the critique is centered around bureaucracy. The selected works for this comparison include "Die Beamtenpest" ("The Bureaucrat Pest"), "Die Ämter" ("The Offices"), "Noch immer..." ("Still..."), and partially "Wir Negativen" ("We the Negatives"). These works were chosen because their focus is on the satirical portrayal of the bureaucracy and its forms in the respective periods.

Political Satire in Kudirka and Tucholsky

Since the 1980s, when the literary form of satire became established as an independent research field in comparative literature studies [7], models and attempts at definitions have been proposed, without a final description of what can be considered satire. According to Siegfried Kohlhammer, the central feature of satire is that, although it appeared in connection with varying literary genres depending on the era, it is fundamentally cross-genre. For him, the most important factor in classifying literary satires is their significance for the form of the respective text [8]. He distinguishes between a purely "accessory" use of satire as a stylistic device and a "substantial" use, where satire permeates the entire text and shapes both its form and intention [8. P. 1–2].

Given the various definitional approaches, an approach that focuses on the transhistorical attributes that characterize all forms of satire, and which are

frequently mentioned in discussions about the nature and essence of satire, seems appropriate. These are: aggression, reference to norms, and indirectness. Consequently, the goal of satire is always to engage in a distanced, literarily alienated confrontation with criticize-worthy conditions, usually perceived as morally reprehensible, with the intention of negating them and subjecting them to ridicule [9]. The focus of criticism is either specific individuals, institutions, or entire political systems, with both the target of derision and the content of the satire providing insights into the beliefs of the author. In Germany, the development of satire in the late 19th century was significantly shaped by the magazine "Simplicissimus." It mercilessly mocked the emperor's eccentricities, the behavior of the administration and the bureaucracy, as well as military circles, but also dealt with the behavior of the "average citizen" and their supposed misconceptions. As a result, the magazine repeatedly came under the scrutiny of the judiciary and sparked heated political and literary debates. In Lithuania, however, satire could only develop underground, in the Lithuanian language, meaning it was fundamentally hindered in its development and impact.

Kudirka's Political Satire in Lithuania at the End of the 19th Century

At the end of the 19th century, Lithuania was subjected to a repressive Russification policy by the Russian Empire, during which the use of the Latin alphabet was initially banned and later the publication of Lithuanian texts was heavily restricted [10]. These measures fueled nationalistic tendencies in the country, in which writers played a significant role. Due to the repression and enforced censorship, the political scope of satire was severely limited [11, 12]. Criticism of the prevailing conditions was banned from the public sphere and pushed underground. At the same time, satirical content, precisely because of its potential for distancing, decoding, and alienation, became a popular medium for cultural actors and often the only means to express their dissatisfaction. Popular themes in satirical texts were the Russian occupation policy and administration, as well as the complacency or deliberate collaboration of local authorities. Against this backdrop, Lithuanian literature of the late 19th century, regardless of form or content, should always be understood and evaluated as a testimony to political resistance [13]. In addition to criticizing political circumstances, the authors also sought to inspire the Lithuanian people to fight for their own nation.

Kudirka's work focused on the ideas of freedom and the liberation of the Lithuanian nation from tsarist Russia [14]. He became a political fighter and, in 1888, founded a student group at Warsaw University called "Lietuva," which published the illegal underground newspaper *Varpas* from 1897 to 1899, with Kudirka as the editor-in-chief. Kudirka saw literature as a means of persuading Lithuanians. However, the Tsar ordered the closure of the printing presses, so the editorial office had to be moved to Naumiestis. Due to illness, financial difficulties, and being under the scrutiny of the tsarist government, Kudirka was only able to engage in writing to a limited extent. Nevertheless, he actively participated in the Lithuanian struggle for independence.

His literary works revolve around the Lithuanian nation and the role of the individual. In satire, he recognized an artistic way to express criticism of tsarist oppression in a coded manner. At the same time, his satirical texts also targeted the attempt to retroactively polish Lithuanian culture and history. Geographically squeezed between Poland and Russia, Lithuania appears in his writings as a threatened and simultaneously oppressed nation, which must constantly fight for its right to exist. The biting and often subtle humor in his satires thus also serves as a valve to alleviate the pronounced gloom of the stories [14]. The political satires of Kudirka could, due to their closeness to reality, also be called documentary prose. For example, the reader can quickly reconstruct real events through the names of cities.

In most of Kudirka's satires, an omniscient and all-seeing narrator leads the narrative. As a (city) person, he speaks several languages and uses his own jargon. For example, the language of superiors from abroad is also translated into this language. Kudirka knew this language and was able to use it effectively. He translated the names of superiors mostly from Russian and repeatedly mixed expressions or elements from this language into his satirical texts, which usually received a negative connotation. The setting for the satires is usually the everyday life of people in both rural and urban areas at the end of the 19th century. The target of his mockery are the Tsar's employees, who oppressed and exploited the people. Often, the stories are based on real events that the author either experienced or was told about.

Criticism of Bureaucrats in Kudirka's Work

As discussed, bureaucrat satire, or criticism of the behavior of officials, is the central focus of this essay. Therefore, the analysis is confined to satirical works that primarily target officials. In three of his satirical pieces, Kudirka takes a particularly sharp aim at the bureaucracy in the then Russian-occupied Lithuania. Kudirka depicts tsarist officials as corrupt and morally indifferent figures, whose authority is grounded in fear and arbitrariness [15. P. 134]. "Viršininkai" (The Superiors), "Lietuvos tilto atsiminimai" (Memories of the Bridge of Lithuania), and "Vilkai" (The Wolves) were written during the last period of the author's work, where his growing bitterness over the seemingly unchangeable conditions is reflected in the aggressive tone and sharp mockery of his texts.

Below, the results of the formal and content analysis of the three satirical pieces will be presented. The respective statements are assigned to the formal and content categories (1) to (7) mentioned above, with numerical references.

Viršininkai (The Superiors)

The central conflict of the piece is the depiction of an incident by the writer Pstrumskis, which cannot be processed by the superior named Krugloduovas, because it does not fit into the predefined categories. The superior had been instructed by the authorities to take decisive action against advocates of

Lithuanian independence ("Lithuanians") as well as supporters of socialism. However, the boundaries between these two categories blur in the described incident, leading to the fact that the violation cannot initially be forwarded. The key to the actual conflict lies in the inflated and unstructured bureaucratic apparatus, whose mechanisms Kudirka mockingly exposes. It is the bureaucracy that prevents a swift reaction from the authorities. Instead, the plot revolves around the fundamental question of how this incident should be evaluated. The irony of the story lies in the functioning of the bureaucratic system, which was originally established to facilitate the administration of Lithuania by Tsarist Russia. In this case, it has the opposite effect and slows down the intervention of state power. Furthermore, the inability of the officials themselves to find pragmatic solutions is also targeted by the satire. It is this limitation of the depicted government officials, who can only think within the small categories assigned to them, which ultimately causes their failure and prevents the incident from being resolved.

The depiction of the officials is equally unsavory. They are portrayed as highly bribable, opportunistic, and lazy. The laws of the Tsarist administration they represent appear to be of little concern to them. Kudirka repeatedly points out that the hierarchy of this administrative apparatus is not based on performance, but rather on the willingness of individuals to arrange themselves with their superiors. Amoral actions, careerism, and the pursuit of honor and money dominate the actions of the superiors. What makes the portrayal of the officials particularly telling is that they are aware of their corruption and criminality and only make a limited effort to conceal it. When the main character, Kruglodurovas, is reassigned at the end of the story, he is pleased because his new post is in a city with a prison, where he would otherwise have ended up in a different way. This description characterizes the relationship of the officials with the rest of the population (6).

The interaction between the administration and the common people is also part of the satirical message. While the district superior lives off the bribes from the lower-ranking clerks and local leaders under him, these, in turn, accept bribes from the local population when they come to them with a request. A climate of mutual distrust exists between the officials and the common people. The locals have little hope in the abilities of the officials but are dependent on cooperating with them to resolve problems or conflicts. At the same time, the officials show little interest in the concerns of the people and instead pursue their own material goals. They know how to exploit their position of power for their own benefit, while their actual vocation fades into the background. The entire plot of the story revolves around the motif of mutual bribery. Help is only given to those who offer a counterservice. Once again, the critical characteristic of the relationship between the bureaucracy and the population in Lithuania is demonstrated (6), which also forms the central dramaturgical element (7).

Through this depiction of a society built on corruption, Kudirka intends to provide a realistic representation of Lithuania during his lifetime. Although the individual characters are exaggerated and the central conflict is intentionally

absurd, the author strives for an authentic description of the conditions. The fantastic element is therefore limited to the plot, while the situation in the country remains very close to reality. This means that the satire is mostly based on the Lithuanian reality of the late 19th century, while the fictional portion takes a backseat (5).

This insistence on a realistic portrayal is important for the author, in order to gain the approval of his intended audience. The events in his satire thus appear as an exaggerated reflection of a crisis-ridden reality, but they always contain an element of truth. In the fictional narrative, the actual shortcomings and failings of the administration are merely emphasized and brought to the forefront through exaggeration.

In terms of the language used, Kudirka prefers to employ exaggerations. In the first sentence, he refers to the new superior Krugloduovas as the "District God," pointing to his overpowering authority. This godlike position is then further deepened throughout the story. The concept of the divine also carries power that ultimately needs no explanation and stands above all earthly matters. Similarly, the authority of the superior is never questioned, despite his incompetence and corruption. Rather, this power places him in a privileged position to act with impunity, breaking worldly laws.

Formally, it is notable that the satire, with a length of only a few pages, comes very close to that of a short story or novella (1). Kudirka adopts the perspective of an omniscient narrator (2).

Lietuvos tilto atsiminimai (Memories of the Bridge of Lithuania)

The central focus of this story is Mrs. Janučauckienė's journey through the authorities to receive the pension owed to her. However, this forms only the background for a lengthy biographical narrative of the woman's life, which is retold along with the history of the bridge over the Šešupė River at the border with what was then Prussia. The bridge witnesses various scenes, such as the tantrum of the superior Baran Rylosujevas, as well as the complaints of the elderly woman. Due to the episodic structure of the story, no resolution to the presented conflicts takes place. Instead, they stand side by side as symbols of the many problems the people had to deal with at that time.

The depiction of the official Rylosujevas builds on the characteristics already evident in "The Superiors". He is described as irritable, moody, and aggressive, with a tendency to emotional outbursts (6). In a sub-narrative, the corruption and lack of moral conviction among the officials are once again addressed (5, 6, and 7). By highlighting the immorality of the administration, Kudirka draws on a typical feature of satire: to clearly point out the flaws of various kinds.

In this case, the members of the bureaucracy are depicted as oppressors who exploit and rob the local population of their savings. The exploitation of the Lithuanian people in the construction work done by the Tsarists on the bridge is illustrated. As they attempt to smooth over its imperfections, they nearly alter its appearance beyond recognition. This process symbolically represents the

relentless Russification policy of the occupiers, which extends far beyond administration and affects all areas of life. Accordingly, the manner in which the officials interact with the locals is portrayed as cold and demeaning. The locals, in turn, approach the officials with fear and reverence, trying to placate them with money and valuables. An extreme inequality exists between the two groups, which is both material and behavioral, and it is accepted by both sides. However, at the same time, the realization grows among the Lithuanians that the Tsarist officials cannot be trusted, and that their help ultimately serves only for personal enrichment.

Unlike in "The Superiors," "Memories of the Bridge of Lithuania" is primarily an allegorical narrative with only some satirical inserts (5), where the satirical element is considerably less present. The allegorical nature of the story is also reflected stylistically, as Kudirka's language is highly visual and full of symbols (3), with references to Lithuanian history and culture. In the lyrical-melancholic tone of the anecdotal accounts, biting irony and genuine sorrow are mixed. The bridge symbolizes the Lithuanian people themselves, who over the centuries have suffered under prolonged periods of foreign rule, tormented and whose culture was reshaped. Yet it does not fall, instead swearing to remain standing as long as any part of it is Lithuanian. This is an unmistakable indication that the Lithuanian people will exist as long as their culture has not been fully absorbed by another. Kudirka thus links the legitimacy of Lithuanian autonomy to its cultural independence. As an allegorical representation, the image-based and fantastical elements serve as a glorification of the real conditions (5). It is also worth mentioning that this satire is described from the perspective of an omniscient narrator (2) and is longer than *The Superiors* (1).

Vilkai (The Wolves)

In his final satire, "Vilkai," Kudirka revisits some of the themes from his previous stories. There is no central conflict; rather, the piece is a loose collection of ten fragments that resemble a gallery of portraits of various superiors from the district of "Vilkpilė" (meaning Vilkaviškis). The depiction of the officials is defamatory and devoid of any humanity (5, 6). Like wolves, they show no mercy or compassion for the weaker ones but delight in destroying other existences. The wolf metaphor also refers to the strict hierarchy between them and the collective mentality they follow in their actions. Kudirka uses this animal comparison to emphasize the cruelty of the administration and condemn it as particularly reprehensible (7). This becomes especially clear in contrasting the officials' behavior with that of the local population, which, according to the continuity of the metaphor, becomes prey, helplessly at the mercy of the rulers. The motif of the people's fear of the brutal acting officials is further heightened by the naturalistic symbolism, gaining an existential quality (6).

In summary, Kudirka's three selected satirical pieces stand out for almost entirely avoiding fictional additions. Most of the events described are historically documented, and the names of persons and cities are barely encrypted. The

typically distorting element of satire is thus rendered absurd. The author's aim is much more to display the real conditions in an unadorned, accusatory manner. However, the critique, which targets not only the bureaucratic machine but also the mentality of the population that is forced to live under such conditions, seems unambiguous.

Tucholsky's Political Satire in Germany at the Beginning of the 20th Century

Although there was no direct political censorship in Germany after the mid-19th century, there were repeated trials based on controversial media content. Nevertheless, satire was an integral part of public discourse in the late 19th century and, as such, could no longer be imagined without being part of the literary present. Satirists, in particular, benefited from the modern range of media expression as well as the flourishing press industry, allowing satirical content not only to spread faster but also to reach a significantly larger audience [16]. After the end of World War I, satire increasingly became an instrument of politically organized public opinion and defamation strategies. Ultimately, the conditions in the democratically constituted Germany of the Weimar Republic were fundamentally different from those in Lithuania at the turn of the 20th century. While press freedom and the freedom of speech were legally protected in Germany, Lithuania was under a repressive foreign rule that suppressed any form of expression. This contrast must be considered when comparing the civil servant satires.

Kurt Tucholsky was a moralist [17, 18]. It is the morality of the revolutionary as a teacher of the people, against all forms of coercion. What he encountered after returning from the war was the petty bourgeois, the subject, the philistine, shaped by the spirit of the barracks and caste. As an exposé of a system of coercion, he rejects all forms of militarism and is pushed far to the left, developing a kind of love-hate relationship with all things German, especially those that come from Prussia in Berlin. "Hatred out of love" becomes the driving force of his satires. In "We, the Negatives," he writes on March 13, 1919, under his name: "We stand before a Germany full of unheard-of corruption, full of crooks and tricksters, full of three hundred thousand devils, each claiming the right to remain untouched by the revolution for his own black self. But we mean him, and especially him, and only him. And we have the option to choose: do we fight him with love, do we fight him with hatred? We want to fight with hatred out of love." This must inevitably distort his worldview. But throughout, the tone remains: "We love this country!" His (satirical) prose is vivid, precise, and judicially ruthless. Tucholsky wrote most of his works during the time of the Weimar Republic.

Tucholsky began to think early on about the nature and artistic means of satire. In 1912, he published his first article in the *Dresdner Volkszeitung*. While *Simplicissimus* was, in the years before 1914, Tucholsky's most important reference in terms of the artistic substance of satire, *Vorwärts* was the medium from which he derived his political insights. Tucholsky pricked up the problems

with sharp wit, mocked the authorities, and preferred using satire to precisely address an issue or situation. Tucholsky despised Germany in which the civil servant apparatus had become an end in itself. The civil servant apparatus was a means and an opportunity to trample on the bent backs of the subjects.

In contrast to the civil servant satires by Kudirka, Tucholsky's satires are sometimes of the utmost brevity, concise and designed to be publicly effective. They testify to his enjoyment of political debate and provoked contradictory opinions upon their release. They are entirely in line with his own liberal-socialist convictions, for which he dedicated his writing. For comparison with Kudirka, only those satires dealing with civil servants will be considered, namely "The Civil Servant Plague," "The Offices," "Still," and "We, the Negatives." The first three satires were written in the final years of the German Empire, when Tucholsky was still at the beginning of his literary career and far from the popularity he achieved in the 1920s. Their analysis follows the same content and formal criteria as with Kudirka. The results of the comparison will then be juxtaposed.

Criticism of Civil Servants by Tucholsky

The Civil Servant Plague. In "The Civil Servant Plague," Tucholsky portrays the overly complicated, wasteful, and bothersome mechanisms of bureaucracy as he sees them. The satire is full of examples of how the simplest processes are intentionally complicated and delayed due to incompetence, laziness, and a lack of pragmatism (5, 6, and 7). Sometimes the required forms are unavailable, or numerous pages must be added and filled out by the citizens themselves. The bureaucracy is depicted as an inflated, self-created monster, disconnected from the real-life experiences of the people, based on absurd regulations, unattainable demands, and rules whose sense is no longer understandable. A solution to this conflict seems unattainable, especially as, in Tucholsky's view, citizens have become complacent and lazy, thus complicit in this mismanagement by accepting it.

The civil servant is portrayed as lazy and materialistic (6). He is concerned only with his secure salary and pension payments. According to Tucholsky, much of the work done by civil servants is unnecessary, serving only to control and patronize taxpayers. Their supposed superiority comes from their rank and public status, which Tucholsky believes they don't deserve (6). They are not specialists but merely sticklers for rules, performing duties by the book. This pride in their position and the power it grants them is often directed at ordinary citizens, whom they scrutinize with disdain. Tucholsky accuses them of poisoning the political climate and contributing to growing social coldness (5 and 6).

Typical of Tucholsky is the grotesque exaggeration of reality to achieve a comedic effect (5). His satires pretend to be set in the everyday world but feature deliberate exaggerations that clarify the political message. Reality and fiction intertwine, making a clear distinction between the two impossible (5).

Linguistically, Tucholsky's tone is predominantly mocking. Alongside numerous exaggerations, he uses many elements of spoken language, such as

sentence fragments or ellipses (3), which relax the text and increase its vividness and entertainment value. Tucholsky proves to be extremely consistent in terms of his style. In this regard, "The Civil Servant Plague" already contains all the linguistic elements characteristic of his satires, which can also be found in his later works.

The Offices. In "The Offices," Tucholsky again criticizes the civil service and calls on the people not to finance this "bunch of busy do-nothings" with their hard-earned money. The story does not depict a conflict but rather serves as an inventory of the civil service's position in Germany. Tucholsky sees the authority of civil servants as constructed and thus calls for its rejection, as it creates a divide between state employees and ordinary people (6 and 7). He also points out that each civil servant, in the presence of a colleague, is just a citizen among many, and that civil servants and citizens are not distinguished by their inherent qualities but rather by an administrative division into the population and the government. According to Tucholsky, this is unacceptable and exacerbates social tensions. He appeals to social cohesion and urges people to see themselves as citizens of the same nation, entitled to the same rights. This is the central message of the text (7).

Regarding the description of civil servants, Tucholsky reproduces many of the stereotypes already present in "The Civil Servant Plague." Civil servants are once again portrayed as extremely lazy, cold-hearted, and self-interested (6). He also accuses them of merely pretending to be busy while actually accomplishing nothing all day. Their desire to elevate themselves above others is seen as an obstacle to the unification of Germany's deeply divided society. Given the open insults Tucholsky directs at the civil servants, one could argue that he, too, as a political actor, contributes to this fragmentation, though he completely ignores his own responsibility and the position of state employees themselves (7).

Still. In "Still," the aforementioned criticism of the civil service is embedded within a broader reckoning with the political and social state at the beginning of the 20th century. In the text, Tucholsky discusses a series of developments that he saw as symptomatic of the situation at the time and in which he perceived the entire nation's misery. His criticism is systemic, targeting all state institutions equally. In addition to the ubiquitous corruption (6), he criticizes the arrogant behavior of authorities and the incompetence of the powerful (6). He accuses them of creating a climate of mutual slander and intrigue that pervades all areas of life, most prominently manifesting within the bureaucratic apparatus of the Empire. For Tucholsky, the offices, where people without particular knowledge rise to positions of authority over others, are proof of the state's overall failure.

In his portrayal of the civil servant type, he builds on earlier texts but focuses more on the influence of bureaucracy itself on a person's character (6 and 7). Bureaucracy grants individuals great power and good pay, and therefore it is populated by those who are primarily interested in authority and have no interest in improving the situation for the majority of the population. Instead of addressing pressing issues, they regulate trivialities and make people dependent on the whims of bureaucratic decisions. This has reached a point where public life cannot function without the interference of the offices.

We, the Negatives. Tucholsky's critique of monarchism, militarism, and the state takes a turn with the collapse of the German Empire, for the political system he had been protesting against no longer existed and was replaced by a young republic. In the first year of the Republic's founding, Tucholsky's goals can be comparatively clearly determined. They are shaped by the slogan "We, the Negatives." The most important and certainly most telling article is "We, the Negatives" [5. Vol. 1. P. 52], but "The Accidental Republic" [5. Vol. 2. P. 219] is also relevant. In "We, the Negatives," Tucholsky takes an extensive stance on major global political issues, defending his own views. The accusation that he is against everything is countered by his argument that true renewal is only possible through the complete eradication of the remnants of the imperial form of government. One of these relics, for him, is the civil servant type, which, with its drive for authority, has no place in a democracy (6). Additionally, for Tucholsky, the figure of the civil servant symbolizes the patriotic bourgeoisie, which is largely responsible for the resurgence of chauvinism and the outbreak of World War I.

In "We, the Negatives," themes from post-war Germany are satirically outlined: The Citizen, The Officer, The Civil Servant, The Politician—all appear as closely interconnected representatives of a group that Tucholsky refers to as wage earners. This name embodies the central trait attributed to them, namely the greed for money and power (6). Otherwise, the portrayal of the professional groups remains very general, relying on the previously mentioned stereotypes.

The core of his criticism is the opposition between the powerful and the common people, which led the country into World War I and thus contributed to the destruction of countless lives (7). Their pursuit of profit at the expense of the lives of ordinary citizens, whose interests were never considered, is seen by Tucholsky as the root cause of the military escalation. His statements on "militarism" form a sort of developmental chain that reflects his increasing internal and external distance with age. The fear of the traumatic war experience being repeated serves as the motivation for his journalistic aim to educate. In one of the "Militaria" installments, Tucholsky addresses the work of the War Press Office, accusing the "sad office" of delivering a false picture of the war's progress to the common people through deceitful propaganda, while also legitimizing the unjust distribution of war burdens. The victim here is the "little man," the proletarian, the simple soldier ("guy"), the artisan, and the factory worker, all of whom were driven into a devastating war by an elite class, which included civil servants, and now bear the harshest consequences (6 and 7).

Linguistically, Tucholsky works more than in other texts with generalizations and disparagements (3). Terms like "civil servant," "citizen," or "politician" function as typological shells (3) loaded with various attributes. As such, they create the image of a society clearly structured hierarchically, where individuality is lost. The personal traits and beliefs of individuals take a back seat to a collective professional or class-specific habitus, which is transferred to all members of a group. For Tucholsky, this depersonalization is a necessary dramaturgical tool (7) to maintain the severity of his political message and simultaneously expose the

political mechanisms behind individuals. To achieve this, he even accepts the simplification of facts and criticizes all those with integrity who have advocated for reforming the system from within.

Formally, it is important to note that the satire "We, the Negatives," in which Tucholsky precedes a Schopenhauer quote on Aeschylus, was written in 1919, shortly after the end of World War I, and spans just over seven pages (1). It introduces various human types (citizen, officer, civil servant, politician; (6)) and describes them ironically-sarcastically. Often, questions are chosen to highlight the overarching theme of criticism, such as with the civil servant: "What do you think of an administration where the employee is more important than the measures, and the measures more important than the issue?" [5. Vol. 2. P. 175]. By deliberately exaggerating and dramatically portraying the subject, Tucholsky stays close to reality but sometimes reaches the boundary of fiction (5).

Comparison of Kudirka's and Tucholsky's Political Satire / Criticism of Bureaucrats

The texts of Tucholsky are significantly shorter than Kudirka's, often spanning just a few pages (1). While Kudirka writes from an omniscient narrative perspective, Tucholsky frequently shifts perspectives (2). Both authors use satirical exaggeration, but Kudirka employs this device more sparingly, while Tucholsky often uses "black humor" to achieve his goals. Kudirka's few satires mainly appear in the newspaper *Varpas*, while Tucholsky had access to a wide range of print media, including *Die Weltbühne*, *Simplicissimus*, and the SPD-aligned *Vorwärts*, etc. (4). The proportion of fiction is more pronounced in Tucholsky's works than in Kudirka's (5). Both authors describe the character of bureaucrats and their relationship with the general population with mockery, scorn, and contempt (6). They employ similar dramaturgical techniques (7).

Conflicts Addressed

Kudirka's stories focus on the oppression and exploitation of the Lithuanian people by the tsarist foreign administration. Tucholsky's satires criticize the arbitrariness of the bureaucratic system and its increasing alienation from the concerns of the people it was originally meant to serve. While there are fundamental differences in the focus of their critique, there are overlaps in the works of both authors. These relate to the experience of helplessness and being at the mercy of the system, which the ordinary person faces when dealing with bureaucracy or interacting with local authorities. Both the tsarist government apparatus and the bureaucracy in Germany in the early 20th century are depicted as deeply corrupt and utterly incompetent. Despite historical and cultural differences, the satires of both authors revolve around the failure of the authorities to fulfill their actual duties.

The victims of this incompetence in both authors' works are the common citizens, whose concerns are not taken seriously, and who are left to face the

opaque administrative machinery alone. However, the consequences for the citizens and the extent of the arbitrariness differ. In Kudirka's works, the amorality of state institutions is directly the main cause of the population's impoverishment. In contrast, Tucholsky's criticism is more directed at the loss of national unity and the increased inequality that has arisen from the power imbalance. The price of bureaucratic corruption is not the loss of wealth or existential hardship, but the solidification of a two-class society, which *de facto* existed in Kudirka's Lithuania. Consequently, the powers of the bureaucrats reach much further, as do the attempts of the people to buy their favor. When Tucholsky speaks of bureaucrats living off the citizens, he refers to their salaries funded by taxpayer money. In Kudirka's case, this is immediately visible when bureaucrats accept bribes from Lithuanians.

Fiction / Reality

In Kudirka's texts, fiction and reality overlap, blurring the line between the two. Many of the described scenes are based on actual events, which have only been altered for use in his texts. Several of the people described can also be identified this way. Kudirka's satires consistently strive to remain as close to reality as possible. Even conflicts without a real background do not appear far-fetched, as they could have happened in this way. Occasionally, the documentary approach is interrupted by allegorical or symbolic elements, elevating the narrative to a universal level.

In Tucholsky's satires, the blending of reality and fiction is so advanced that they can no longer be distinguished. Absurdity is a fixed part of the everyday experience in his texts, underscoring the unreality of the conditions described. As an author, Tucholsky is committed to a literary approach based on observing the world and its phenomena, which would later influence the emergence of New Objectivity in the 1920s. He avoids allegorical inserts or metaphors, as these align with a bourgeois literary tradition, which he actively rejects.

Portrayals of Bureaucrats

The greatest similarity in the satirical works of both authors lies in their depiction of the bureaucrat type, which shows an astonishing trans-cultural and chronological continuity. Both authors depict characteristics such as corruption, laziness, vanity, lust for power, and indifference to their assigned duties. In both Kudirka's and Tucholsky's works, bureaucrats act as the antithesis to the honest and hard-working common citizen, whose work provides tangible benefits, while the bureaucrats do no honorable work but are well compensated.

The bureaucrats in both authors' depictions appear as embodiments of selfish power figures who either endanger or, in the case of the tsarist representatives, consciously work against the social peace of a community. Additionally, the bureaucrats in both Kudirka and Tucholsky are marked by a pronounced materialism, which harms the well-being of others, and the willingness to exploit

subordinates to achieve their personal goals. This widespread lack of empathy within the privileged classes, symbolized by the bureaucrat, is seen by both authors as the root of the grievances suffered by the people.

Form and Language

There are significant differences in the form and language of Kudirka's and Tucholsky's satirical works. Kudirka's satires are fewer in number but more extensive. Tucholsky's satirical output, on the other hand, is very broad, with individual texts usually being modest in scope. These formal differences point to a crucial difference in the significance of satire within the works of the two writers. For Tucholsky, the primary aim was enlightenment, typically adjusted to the journalistic format of the publications in which his texts appeared. Kudirka, however, had primarily a literary goal. His satires are usually embedded in other, more ambitious literary forms and are used there for contrast, estrangement, or distraction. Unlike Tucholsky, Kudirka did not see himself as a satirist but as an author who employed elements of satire in his works. In contrast, Tucholsky worked as a publicist, writing for a defined target audience, making this his primary livelihood.

Accordingly, the language of the two authors differs greatly. In Kudirka's works, satire often exists alongside lyrical or prosaic passages or is even integrated into them. Thus, it spans a vast range of emotions and mental states, from sadness and resignation to the pathetically absurd. The bitter sarcasm of the satire frequently acts as a counterpoint to the heavier, more profound tone that predominates in his works. In Tucholsky's case, the language is consciously not literary but follows the vocabulary and style of his target audience. The sentences are concise, and the expression is raw. Unlike Kudirka, who resorted to name changes to disseminate his texts, Tucholsky is very explicit in his criticism. However, both authors use typological categories, such as the bureaucrat, whom they chose as the target of their critique.

Conclusion

After a comprehensive analysis of the political satires by Kudirka and Tucholsky, the conclusion is that both writers focus on the "dark sides" of bureaucracy, each bringing them into the spotlight of their narratives like through a magnifying glass, framed within their respective historical contexts. Despite significant differences both formally and in content, their works reveal clear insights into the political beliefs of the authors. Kudirka represents the perspective of a dedicated fighter for national independence, while Tucholsky lives in a democratic and free country, where, however, dangers from political extremists and a latent hostility towards the republic are present.

Kudirka's political satires not only stand out for their astute presentation of the issues within bureaucracy but also for their focus on national independence. Through his works, Kudirka succeeds in inspiring his readership to strive for a

sovereign nation and in drawing attention to the oppression and exploitation by the occupying power of the time. His satires are marked by a combative tone and a clear rejection of the existing system.

In contrast, Tucholsky finds himself in a situation where he lives in a democratic and free country. Nevertheless, his satires reveal a latent threat from political extremists and a general dislike of the republic. Tucholsky takes on the role of an observer and offers his critique in a more subtle and indirect manner. He focuses not only on the issues within bureaucracy but also on the dangers posed by political extremism that can threaten democratic values.

Overall, the political satires of Kudirka and Tucholsky show that they each address the "dark sides" of bureaucracy in different ways. While Kudirka takes a national perspective and fights for independence, Tucholsky deals with the dangers that threaten a democratic society. Their works reflect their political beliefs and provide a critical engagement with the respective historical situations.

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