

**University of Anbar / College of Arts / Department of English**

**Instructor: Omar SaadoonAyyed**

**Subject: Introduction to Literature / First class**

## **Drama**

### **Characterization**

In the last unit you learnt that a play cannot be successful without people. This is not all that you need to know. Characters do not just occur in a play. Playwrights take care to create the right kind of characters to serve their purpose.

In the first place a playwright creates characters in line with his purpose; most of the time the characters are types. Typical characters are meant to represent certain categories of people in society.

In almost every play, there are characters that act prominent roles. These are called major characters. The others are called minor characters. The most prominent characters in a play is called the protagonist. It is possible to further describe characters in a play by finding out whether they are flat. Flat characters are those that embody certain qualities. They are not capable of growing (i.e. changing). They simply personify some values e.g. faithfulness, goodness etc. The individual identities of these characters are not established. They are found in didactic plays, a good example of which is *Everyman*. Round characters, on the other hand, are those that have individual identities. They can change in the course of a play. From all that we have said about characterization, it should be easy for you to guess what characterization is all about. It means the pattern adapted in the creation of characters in a work. This includes roles and tendencies assigned to particular characters.

#### **A- Dramatic Techniques**

This may be a convenient point to draw attention to some techniques that are commonly used in dramatic works. You will discover these techniques in the texts you are to study throughout the courses.

**Suspense**

Suspense is a technique by which the playwright keeps the reader/audience in anxious expectation of what will happen next. It is a good way of sustaining their interest in the play. It is a common strategy in drama.

**Comic Relief**

This is a moment of light or seemingly unserious action which is marked by laughter after some serious or tragic action. As the name suggests, it is intended to create some atmosphere of relief in a play. The comic relief is often provided by clowns (characters that are meant to entertain others) in the plays of Shakespeare. They crack jokes or do some other funny things that will make the audience laugh and thereby get rid of the tension that might have been created earlier by a serious action or experience.

**Flashback**

The flashback technique enables the playwright to bring an experience in the past to the present to illuminate a problem or our understanding of a matter.

**Foreshadowing**

This is a technique which enables a playwright to an experience in the future. It creates anxiety and anticipation of the experience.

**Dramatic Irony**

This occurs when an event or situation is seen in a particular way by a character in a play whereas the audience and some other characters have a proper outlook on it. It creates anxiety when it intensifies a tragic experience.

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