



كلية: الآداب

القسم او الفرع: قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

المرحلة: الثالثة

أستاذ المادة: م.م. شمم إسماعيل عطوي

اسم المادة باللغة العربية: المسرحية

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Drama**

اسم المحاضرة الثانية باللغة العربية: خصائص التراجيديا الشكسبيرية

اسم المحاضرة الثانية باللغة الإنكليزية: **Characteristics of A Shakespearean Tragedy**

Characteristics of A Shakespearean Tragedy

1.The Tragic Hero

A tragic hero is one of the most significant elements of a Shakespearean tragedy. This type of tragedy is essentially a one-man show. It is a story about one, or sometimes two, characters. The hero may be either male or female and he or she must suffer because of some flaw of character, because of inevitable fate, or both. The hero must be *the most* tragic personality in the play. (Usually the hero has to face death in the end.). An important feature of the tragic hero is that he or she is a towering personality in his/her state/kingdom/country. This person hails from the elite stratum of society and holds a high position, often one of royalty. Tragic heroes are kings, princes, or military generals, who are very important to their subjects. Take Hamlet, prince of Denmark; he is intellectual, highly educated, sociable, charming, and of a philosophic bent. The hero is such an important person that his/her death gives rise to full-scale turmoil, disturbance, and chaos throughout the land. When Hamlet takes revenge for the death of his father, he is not only killing his uncle but inviting his own death at the hands of Laertes. And as a direct result of his death, the army of Fortinbras enters Denmark to take control.

2.Tragic Waste

In Shakespearean tragedies, the hero usually dies along with his opponent. The death of a hero is not an ordinary death; it encompasses the loss of an exceptionally intellectual, honest, intelligent, noble, and virtuous person. In a tragedy, when good is destroyed along with evil, the loss is known as a "tragic waste." Shakespearean tragedy always includes a tragic waste of goodness. Hamlet is a perfect example of tragic waste. Even though Hamlet succeeds in uprooting the evil from Denmark, he does so at the cost of his death. In this case, the good (Hamlet) gets destroyed along with evil (Claudius). Neither of them wins. Instead, they fail together.

3.Conflict

Conflict is another imperative element of a Shakespearean tragedy. There are two types of conflicts:

A. External Conflict

External conflict plays a vital role in the tragedies of Shakespeare. External conflict causes internal conflict in the mind of the tragic hero. Every tragic hero in a Shakespearean play is confronted with external conflicts that must be addressed. Hamlet, for example, is confronted with external conflict in the shape of his uncle, Claudius. He has to take revenge, but as a result of his uncle's craftiness and effective security, Hamlet isn't able to translate his ideas into action. This external conflict gives rise to internal conflict, which hinders Hamlet from taking any action.

B. Internal Conflict

Internal conflict is one of the most essential elements in a Shakespearean tragedy. It refers to the confusion in the mind of the hero. Internal conflict is responsible for the hero's fall, along with fate or destiny. The tragic hero always faces a critical dilemma. Often, he cannot make a decision, which results in his ultimate failure. Again, Hamlet is a perfect example. He is usually a doer, but over the course of the play, his indecision and frequent philosophical hangups create a barrier to action. Internal conflict is what causes Hamlet to spare the life of Claudius while he is praying.

4. Catharsis

Catharsis is a remarkable feature of a Shakespearean tragedy. It refers to the cleansing of the audience's pent-up emotions. In other words, Shakespearean tragedies help the audience to feel and release emotions through the aid of tragedy. When we watch a tragedy, we identify with the characters and take their losses personally. A Shakespearean tragedy gives us an opportunity to feel pity for a certain character and fear for another, almost as if we are playing the roles ourselves. The hero's hardships compel us to empathize with him. The villain's cruel deeds cause us to feel wrath toward him. Tears flow freely when a hero like Hamlet dies. At the same time we feel both sorry for Hamlet and happy that Claudius has received his proper punishment.

5. Supernatural Elements

Supernatural elements are another key aspect of a Shakespearean tragedy. They play an important role in creating an atmosphere of awe, wonder, and sometimes fear. Supernatural elements are typically used to advance the story and drive the plot. The ghost Hamlet sees plays an important role in stirring up internal conflict. It is the ghost who tells Hamlet his father was killed by his uncle Claudius and assigns him the duty of taking revenge.

6. Absence of Poetic Justice

Poetic Justice means good is rewarded and evil is punished; it refers to a situation in which everything comes to a fitting and just end. There is no poetic justice in the tragedies of Shakespeare, rather, these

plays contain only partial justice. Shakespeare understood that poetic justice rarely occurs outside of fiction. Good deeds often go without reward and immoral people are often free to enjoy life to its fullest. “*Do good and have good*” was considered an outdated ethos in the time of Shakespeare, which is why we don’t find any poetic justice in his tragedies. Good is crushed along with evil. Hamlet dies along with Claudius.

7. Comic Relief

Comic relief is our final key element. Shakespeare didn’t follow in the footsteps of his classical predecessors when writing tragedies. Greek and Roman writers didn’t use comic relief. But Shakespeare wanted to relieve the tension for the reader and lighten up the mood here and there. A few examples of comic relief scenes include the grave digger scene in *Hamlet*,

8. Good vs. Evil

Shakespearean tragedies play out the struggle between good and evil. Most of them deal with the supremacy of evil and suppression of good. According to Edward Dowden, a 19th century noted poet and literary critic, “*Tragedy as conceived by Shakespeare is concerned with the ruin or restoration of the soul and of the life of man. In other words, its subject is the struggle of Good and Evil in the world.*” Evil is presented in Shakespearean tragedies in a way that suggests its existence is an indispensable and ever-enduring thing. For example, in *Hamlet*, the reader is given the impression that something rotten will definitely happen to Denmark (foreshadowing). Though the reader gets an inkling, typically the common people of the play are unaware of the impending evil.

9. Hamartia

Hamartia is the Greek word for “sin” or “error”, which derives from the verb *hamatanein*, meaning “to err” or “to miss the mark”. In other words, hamartia refers to the hero's tragic flaw. It is another absolutely critical element of a Shakespearean tragedy. Every hero falls due to some flaw in his or her character. A good example of hamartia can be seen in *Hamlet* when Hamlet's faltering judgment and failure to act lead him to his untimely death. He suffers from procrastination. He finds a number of opportunities to kill his uncle, but he fails because of his indecisive and procrastinating nature. Every time, he delays taking action. In one case he finds an opportunity to kill Claudius while Claudius is praying. Still, Hamlet forgoes the excellent opportunity to achieve his goal with the excuse that he doesn’t want to kill a man while he is praying. He wants to kill Claudius when he is in the act of committing a sin. It is this perfectionism, failure to act, and uncertainty about the correct path that ultimately result in Hamlet's death and lead Denmark into chaos.