

المأساة الكلاسيكية والمأساة الحديثة: الاختلاف والتشابه

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Classical Tragedy and Modern Tragedy: Difference and Similarity

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Even though the word catastrophe is frequently utilized freely to portray any sort of calamity or incident, it more absolutely refers to a work of craftsmanship that tests with high truth questions concerning the part of man within the universe. A tragedy is a drama with a tragic and depressing conclusion. The term "tragedy" is used to describe a serious, dramatic work in which a heroic character encounters or creates dreadful and awe-inspiring occurrences. Tragedy has gone through time from Greece through the Middle-Eastern and western societies into modern shapes of English. The tragedy is characterized as a genuine play (or other literary work)

that portrays the deplorable destruction and passing of a central character, the hero.

In this paper, the researcher tries to make a comparison between classical tragedy and modern tragedy, also to trace the characteristics and features of tragedy in both epochs. I also try to trace the features of a tragic hero in both periods to show the similarities and differences between them by taking two examples; Sophocles' *Oedipus* as an example for classical tragedy, and Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* as an example for modern tragedy.

Keywords: classical tragedy, modern tragedy, tragic hero, *Oedipus*, and *Hedda Gabler*.

المستخلص

على الرغم من حقيقة ان كلمة "كارثة" كثيرا ماتستخدم بحرية لوصف اي نوع من الكوارث او الحوادث، فانها تشير بشكل قاطع الى عمل حرفية يختبر اسئلة صادقة عالية تتعلق بجزء من الانسان داخل الكون. المأساة هي دراما بنتائج مساوية وكنيية. ويستخدم مصطلح "المأساة" لوصف عمل درامي جاد تواجه فيه شخصية بطولية او تخلق احداثا مروعة ومذهلة. لقد مرت المأساة عبر الزمن من اليونان مرورا بمجتمعات الشرق الاوسط والغرب الى الاشكال الحديثة للغة الانجليزية. توصف المأساة بانها مسرحية حقيقية (او اي عمل ادبي اخر) تصور الدمار المؤسف وموت الشخصية الرئيسية، البطل. في هذا البحث يحاول البحث اجراء مقارنة بين المأساة الكلاسيكية والمأساة الحديثة. يهدف الباحث الى تتبع خصائص المأساة في كلا الحقبين،، بالإضافة الى تتبع ملامح البطل الماساوي في كلتا الفترتين لاضهار اوجه التشابه والاختلاف بينهما من خلال اخذ مثالين: مسرحية اوديب للكاتب سوفوكلس كمثال للمأساة الكلاسيكية وهذا جابليير للكاتب هنريك ابسن كمثال على المأساة الحديثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المأساة الكلاسيكية، المأساة الحديثة، البطل الماساوي، مسرحية اوديباس، مسرحية هيدا جابليير

Sophocles and Ibsen are tragedian playwrights. Sophocles is considered the main and most important of the three great tragedians. According to the ancient sources nearly 113 or 123 plays were produced through his career life (Gregor, 2005, 277). Sophocles played a great role in developing the scope and design of tragedy. He added the third character because he

was deeply interested in characters. For him, a character is the most important element in the tragedy and he presented his skill in the character's role (lecture notes). Sophocles somehow comes to symbolize an ideal or standard type of tragedy. This has deep influences in the late Classical and Hellenistic ages. Thus, ancient literary criticism and biographical fiction influenced each other building up an image of Sophocles as a kind of "Mr. Perfect" in both poetry and life (Bill, 2017, 1).

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), on the other hand, is considered the first great modern dramatist. His plays presented a wide variety of styles, extending from *Hedda Gabler* as realism to the fantasy of *Peer Gynt*. He is fascinated by his technical mystery, symbolism, and deep psychological insight (Nagle, 2014, 45). Even though criticism and the pathological themes of his plays such as suicide, incest, corruption, deception, and death, Ibsen has risen to a distinguished position. Despite his reputation as a great dramatist, Ibsen always felt inferior inside him. However, Ibsen selected to practice his freedom and determination to climb the obstacles in his way rather than be submitted by them (Stone and Cheryl, 2013, 107).

Broadly, the word "tragic" can be described as anyone who is sad or has depressing accidents that cause trouble life. Also, indicate such catastrophic natural disaster as an earthquake which leads to the death of a lot of people, in addition to the death of lots of people in wars without reason. Describing something as a 'tragedy' elevates it above being normal and can be a way of presenting respect for the suffering of those involved (Swift, 2006, 1).

Foremost, the word "tragedy" probably comes from Greek "*trag (o)aodia*" which means "goat song", but what has goats to do with the tragedy? classical and modern scholars have suggested that the goat was an original gift for the tragic contest. Another suggested that Dionysus is accompanied by goat-men 'satyrs', merged with Aristotle's proclamation that 'tragedy originated from something rather satyric' (Aristotle, cha 4), led others to suggest that tragedy was so named from this original performer, tragedy is thus 'song of the goats' and *tragoidoi* 'the goat-singers' (Storey and Allan, 2005, 74). Or it may come from Greek "*traygodia*" which means "ode of the grape harvest" (lecture notes). On the other hand, Raymond Williams wrote in his book *Modern Tragedy* that the term "tragedy" is limited only to literature as other critics sought to do. This means denying the comprehensive real events that tragic drama allows on them. He adds, throughout history, one of the main aims of tragedy is to supply a means of understanding our real lies by fictional representation. Thus, tragedy is not only an artistic experience; it is rather a way of glorifying and making a sense of suffering "I have known tragedy in the life of a man driven back into silence, in an unregarded working life. In his ordinary and private death, I saw a terrifying loss of connection between men, and even between father and son: a loss of connection which was, however, a particular historical and social fact" (Williams, 1979, 13).

According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, "tragedy is a serious play representing the disastrous downfall of the central character, the protagonist (Baldick, 2001, 260). Classical epoch which starts probably from the fourth to the fifth centuries BC, a period which is represented by the most famous playwrights such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes who wrote drama and poetry that flourished in Athens.

Again Raymond Williams in his book *Modern Tragedy* defines tragedy as "the conflict between an individual and the forces that destroy him" (87). He underlines that in our literature there is an important tragedy before the release of personal energy, the emphasis of personal destiny which we can see in the complex process of Renaissance and Reformation (88).

Classical tragedy as we see in Aristotle's view deals with the fate of gods, kings, rulers, wars, and revenge. Besides, their themes and subjects are, for the most part, drawn from the heroic age, an idealized time about a thousand years before the classical age. All these themes appeared in the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides in contrast to a modern tragedy that deals with a secular world away from gods or kings. Most of the writers of modern drama adopted modern points of view deliberately and self-consciously. Moreover, the inner self and consciousness are the central preoccupation of the modern world. Also because this world is no longer trusting in God for spiritual guidance, people felt like strangers in an alien world, trying to come to control with issues that identify humanity and deal with the questions of survival of the race.

To follow the characteristics of classical tragedy means to follow Aristotle's theory. Yet, he did not invent drama, he used examples from the Greek playwrights' works, and he illustrated his main ideas according to their works. Aristotle defined tragedy as "an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these and similar emotions." (Aristotle, cha. 6). Then he clarified the plot as:

Plots are either simple or complex since the actions they represent are naturally of this twofold description. The action, proceeding in the way defined, as one continuous whole, I call Simple, when the change in the hero's fortunes takes place without Peripety or Discovery and complex when it involves one or the other, or both. These should each of them arise out of the structure of the plot itself, to be the consequence, necessary or probable, or the antecedents (Aristotle, cha. 10).

There is little similarity between Aristotle and the writers of the Renaissance period. Diomedes (4th c. AD), for example, declared that tragedy is a narrative about the fortunes of heroic or semi-divine characters. Isidore of Seville (6th-7th c.) announced that tragedy comprises sad stories about commonwealths and kings. John of Garland (12th c.) clarified tragedy as a poem written in the grand style about shameful and wicked deeds; a poem that begins in joy and ends in grief (Cuddon, 1998, 927).

Whereas modern tragedy and near the end of the right 19th c. two Scandinavian dramatists brought about a wholly unexpected revolution of tragic form and subject; Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg. Their works displayed the tragedy of disease, of the strangeness of bad heredity of madness, and more or less psychotic and emotionally morbid states. Their tragic vision exposed a diseased society; spiritually and morally corrupted and decadent. In Ibsen's case, the vision gave great and bitter offense. What he revealed was too close to the truth for almost anybody's comfort. One can say that their tragedies were unlike anything written until the present day (Cuddon, 1998, 932).

From all the above it can be concluded that tragedy has tended to be a form of drama concerned with the fortunes and misfortunes, and, ultimately, the disasters that befall human beings of title, power, and position. In classical tragedy, for instance: Oedipus, Agamemnon, Antigone, Hecuba, Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra, Hamlet, what make them tragic figures is that they have qualities of excellence, nobleness, and passion; they have virtues and gifts that lift them above the ordinary run of mortal men and women. In tragedy, these attributes are seen to be insufficient to save them either from self-destruction or from

destruction brought upon them. Moreover, there is no hope for them. There is hope, perhaps, after the tragedy, but not during it. The overwhelming part about tragedy is the element of hopelessness, of inevitability. (Cuddon, 1998, 927-28). Modern tragedians, on the other hand, dramatized the conflict between the alienated individual, who aspires to some alternative world of the imagination and narrow social conventions, designed to crush such aspiration (Wallace, 2007, 63). Raymond Williams asserts that by the time of Marlowe and Shakespeare, the structure known today was being formed; an individual man, from his ambitions, from his personality, set out on an action which led him to tragedy (88). Ibsen, for instance, introduced *Hedda Gabler* as an example of dramatic realism. It is a new genre that was rooted in the late 19th-century enchantment by examining human individuality as a story of cause and effect. The idea is to realize how the effect of the past- heredity, and experience- as well as the social and economic conditions of the present, impacted the nature of the behavior of the individual. Interestingly, these social and psychological 'causes' replaced the roles of gods and fate in the classical tragedy (Lyons, 1991, 63).

Let us start with the characteristics of the tragedy of each age. The main characteristics of Classical tragedy which is presented by Ruth Scodel in his book *An Introduction to Greek Tragedy* as:

- The main characters were noble, of high rank in society, though sometimes might be disguised as slaves or beggars.
- The chorus might take part in the action of the play such as recovering something private, but the chorus could not stop the act of violence.
- The fate of the characters was taken seriously.
- In Greek tragedy, we see the interference of god in the action which means that this world is controlled by the traditional god of Greek mythology.
- A god may transfer the prologue of the play or appear at the end to tell the character what they must do.
- classical tragedy took its subject from legend, since its themes are for the most part drawn from the heroic age, an idealized time about a thousand years before the classical age (5).

Whereas Raymond Williams in his book *Modern Tragedy* concludes the main characteristics of modern tragedy as:

- It is rooted like a particular character (hero), and his life ends by finding his limits; tragic limits, including the absolute limit of death.
- Much of new drama even when its reference points are familiar categories, takes its most active life from a consciousness of the self in a passing moment of experience; a self-consciousness that is now in itself dramatic.
- The breakdown and madness of a private experience are quite newly realized and explored.
- In modern tragedy class instead of rank. Rank denotes order and connection, class was only separated within an amorphous society.
- Power as a human motive and as a tragic motive has been replaced by the struggle for money.
- The main important theme in modern tragedy is the impossibility of finding a home in the world, the condemnation to a guilty wandering, the dissolution of self and others in a desire that is beyond all relationships.
- The increasingly confident identification of a false society as man's real enemy.

- By an act of choice and will, the person refused the role of a victim and became a new kind of hero. The heroism was not in the nobility of suffering, as the limits were reached. It was now, unambiguously in the aspiration itself. What was demanded was self-fulfillment, and any such process was a general liberation. The singular man, as a matter of speech, became plural and capital: Man (89-95).

According to Aristotle's definition of tragedy, and according to Scodel, Sophocles' *Oedipus* is a fit. It presents a middle tragedy. Sophocles reflected his understanding of the form of Greek tragedies. He also created a typical tragic hero as suggested by Aristotle. Oedipus at the beginning of the play is a great ruler. He is a Sophoclean hero who combines "genuine wisdom with a genuinely noble devotion to others" (Ahrens Dorf, 2009, 10). He succeeds to save Thebes from the cruel monster, the Sphinx, who threatened the city with destruction for many years. By his wisdom, Oedipus solves the riddle and kills the Sphinx. By doing so, Oedipus also displays his nobility when he saved the city though he was a foreigner. Oedipus has no personal benefit behind that, what he did was only an act of generosity, free of any self-interest or obligation. His satisfaction is that "For we are in thy hand; and man's noblest task is to help others by his best means and powers" (Sophocles, 1938, 314-15). And even when he becomes the king of Thebes, it is a Theban's will, though he was unknown and stranger. Through his reign, the city has developed and flourished and people praise Oedipus as a good ruler, Oedipus is speaking to his people "Oh my piteous children, known, well known to me are the desires wherewith ye have come: well wot I that ye suffer all; yet, sufferers as ye are, there is not one of you whose suffering is as mine. Your pain comes on each one of you for himself alone, and for no other; but my soul mourns at once for the city, and for myself, and for thee (Sophocles, 1938, 370). In these lines, Oedipus expresses his love for Thebes and its people.

Unfortunately, for the second time, the city is threatened with destruction (from the plague), and again people come to Oedipus to help them as he had helped them at the first time, Oedipus: "Tell me, then, thou venerable man since it is thy natural part to speak for these--in what mood are ye placed here, with what dread or what desire? Be sure that I would gladly give all aid; hard of heart were I, did I, not pity such suppliants as these" (Sophocles, 369). His speech proves that he is a good king. Oracle tells Oedipus to find the killer of Laius and punish him. But when Oedipus discovers that he is the murderer of Laius and he is the reason for the plague, for the first time he does not believe and he has accused Creon that he wants to take his throne. Oedipus speaks to Teiresias:

o wealth, and empire, and skill surpassing skill in life's keen rivalries, how great is the envy that cleaves to you, if for the sake, yea, of this power which the city hath put into my hands, a gift unsought, Creon the trusty, Creon mine old friend, hath crept on me by stealth, yearning to thrust me out of it, and hath suborned such a scheming juggler as this, a tricky quack, who hath eyes only for his gains, but in his art is blind! (Sophocles, 1938, 380).

His condition is changed; he is no longer reasonable and understanding. Even though, he gives up his power and punishes himself when he knew that he is the murderer (Ahrens Dorf, 2009, 10-12).

Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* is a reflection of modern tragedy. To prove that, we need to analyze the play and to see if it follows Williams' requirements of modern tragedy. Hedda is the daughter of the general. She belongs to the upper class. We know that from Aunt Julia's speech "Well, you can't wonder at that- General Gabler's daughter! Think of the sort of life she was accustomed to in her father's time. Don't you remember how we used to see her riding down the road along with the General? In that long black habit- and with feathers in

her hat? (Ibsen, 1891, act I). Her marriage of Tesman is just for social security, not for love at all. Before her marriage, she and Lovborg had a love affair. Later she has disguised the manuscript of Lovborg when she tricked him into taking a drink. Thereafter, Lovborg confesses to Hedda that he lost his manuscript which considers his dream, and instead of giving him, she encourages him to commit suicide by giving him her father's postil and she succeeds. She also burns the manuscript; she does that because she feels jealous of his success and any successful person. But when Judge Brack tells her that he knows the truth, she becomes afraid of scandal, and also she cannot endure anyone exercising power over her, thus she shoots herself.

Hedda Gabler has a desire to control others. She is extremely jealous and has a desire to hold power over others "I want for once in my life, to have power over human being's fate" (Act I). She always tries to find ways to insult and hurt people around her. She tries all the time to intrude herself in the lives of others, not to help them but to be in her hands and then to destroy them. Hedda lacks all the good qualities as a wife and as a human being. She is harsh and mean with Aunt Julia and Mrs. Elvsted and contacts a devious association with Brack, she says to him "... So I am in your power, Judge Brack, You have me at your beck and call, from this time forward" (Act IV). Besides she is ungrateful for everything her husband does for her. She treats him emotionlessly and indifferently.

Through the analysis of both plays, it can be understood there is no sameness between Oedipus and Hedda neither in their position in society nor in their troubles and sufferings, nor even in their personalities. Oedipus is a good king, and all his people love and respect him and he loves them in turn. He did a lot of good things for his kingdom, thus all people of Thebes trust him in contrast with Hedda Gabler. From the beginning of the play, she hates everyone even her husband and has a desire to hurt and destroy all people around her without any reason. She is a sadistic person who finds pleasure in hurting others.

Back to *Oedipus*, it is obvious the falling of Oedipus from his high status of fame and glory and suffer a total 'reversal of fortune'. He does not commit any mistake or fault except his desire to know the truth about his lineage. (Shanker, 1992, 220), and probably this is his fault. He was proud and stubborn to know the truth that brings about his collapse. According to Sophocles, a person of high rank becomes stubborn and proud, can commit an act of hubris and then god sends Ate (Greek goddess) upon him. Eventually, when he knows that he murders his father and marries his mother, he turns to be wild and grief and even he blinds himself. In the end, we see Oedipus, the great king who protected Thebes in the past and at whom people looked at their rescuer, becomes polluted-outcast and the cause of plague raging in the city. As we see, Oedipus suffers a total 'reversal of fortune' and his dilemma increases the feeling of pity and fear. Ultimately we see Oedipus groping his unseen way into the unknown. It is the amazing end of an amazing hero (Shanker, 1992, 221). In modern tragedy, the tragedy is different here, because tragedy in *Hedda Gabler* is within the person. It agrees with Raymond Williams' definition of tragedy that the action is rooted like the hero. Hedda suffers indecision, she cannot decide what she wants, and she is afraid of her past and tries to keep it away. Thus, when she finds herself in a difficult situation when she knows that this is an impossibility, and also she cannot get what she wants and there is no hope absolutely, she escaped by killing herself. And this is another fault in her personality. Moreover, in the time that she cannot decide what she wants, or face her problems, she tries to shape the lives of others. She wants to rule them. Thus, in the case of Hedda, we have no pity or sympathy for her (lecture notes). In modern tragedy, the problem within the character, thus Ibsen introduced the character's study. He is analyzing Hedda's personality; it is called a

psychological study. Ibsen wrote "The title of the play is *Hedda Gabler*. 'My intention in giving it this name was to indicate that Hedda, as a personality, is to be regarded rather as her father's daughter than as her husband's wife. It was not my desire to deal in this play with so-called problems. What I principally wanted to do was to depict human beings, human emotions, and human destinies, upon groundwork of certain of the social conditions and principles of the present day" (Lauvrik and Morison, 1905, 435).

As a result, we see different features for the tragic hero. As we know, the tragic hero is considered the main part of the story in which all the events roll around him. We will start with the features of the hero of classical tragedy, according to Aristotle's definition:

There remains, then, the intermediate kind of personage, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment, of the number of those in the enjoyment of great reputation and prosperity... the change in the hero's fortunes must be not from misery to happiness, but on the contrary from happiness to misery; and the cause of it must lie not in any depravity, but in some great error on his part; the man himself being either such as we have described, or better, not worse, than that (Aristotle, cha 15).

According to Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero, Oedipus is a fit for Aristotle's concept. He is considered a morally good personality. He tried to avoid the unbearable fate, thus he left his family to avoid the crime and ran away. He is also afraid to commit any mistake, yet as a tragic hero, he has a typical fault or 'hamartia' which is represented by his pride. He is too proud and arrogant and assumes too much about his comprehension and his power to control his life. Also his hot-tempered and error of judgment, and according to Aristotle, the error of the tragic is the 'error of judgment'. In the time of Sophocles, to challenge your fate would be considered a great crime. Maybe Oedipus could have averted his ill-destiny, if he had known how to safeguard himself, for instance, if he controlled his temper when he encountered his father consequently, he would never marry his mother, eventually, he would have done better.

Oedipus' suffering is greater than any other one, because his suffering is for no fault of his own, besides his suffering is not action, it is decided before his birth. His suffering continues and even follows his children later, so the whole generations suffer. Oedipus's suffering continued for a long time; as a son, he suffers, as a father, he suffers, and as a husband, he suffers, so all these sufferings accumulated in his persona. In addition, his suffering is for a fault committed not by him but by his grandfather and his father (lecture notes). What Sophocles wants to say is that not only be you will punish for your wrong deed but also your generation will be punished.

His sufferings arouse the pity of the audience because of the reasons we mentioned above and his tragedy rouses fear because he is in the same difficult situation as us, though he was a great man. Oedipus is just opposite from the beginning of the play; he was a hero, a powerful man, and king, leaving Thebes as a falling man, a destructive man, from prosperity to nothing.

Turning to modern tragedy to see the main characteristics of its hero, this can conclude as:

-The most important point according to the protagonist of a modern tragedy is that he/she is an ordinary person in tragic situations.

- concerning the protagonist, is no longer exemplifies powers in the ethical order; he/she acts as an individual. Modern tragedy according to Hegel "adopts into its own sphere from the start the principle of subjectivity. Therefore it takes for its proper subject matter and contents the subjective inner life of the character who is not, as in classical tragedy, a purely individual embodiment of ethical power" (Moland, 2011, 137). He also adds the traditional themes are not absent completely "a basis of specific ends drawn from the concrete sphere of family, state, church, etc., is never missing" (137). What he wants to say is that the modern tragic protagonist deals with his/her aim in different ways. For instance, the protagonist does not see her/himself as an instantiation of the power of the family; instead, a modern agent will concentrate upon her attitude toward that power. Thus, the subjectivity evolved in morality and civil society. In other words, this power is an unchangeable part of the protagonist's agency.
- The protagonist is acting impulsively.
- Self-destruction can be seen in modern tragedy.

We cannot consider Hedda Gabler as a tragic hero as Oedipus as she lacks all the qualities of classical tragedy. Hedda does not have any positive influence in the world; she destroys what she cannot accept. Hedda undoubtedly is responsible for what has happened to her; she is responsible for her suffering and her suicide because of her flaws. Even when she shoots herself, she could not gain the feeling of sympathy of the audience, even there is no pity or fear because she is aware and in complete control of her actions as she aims. Everything happened to her just because she is still living in her past with her father. She refuses to accept her new position. Unfortunately, her self-realization ends with killing herself. She can be considered a tragic victim, a victim of herself, as Raymond refers in his book *Modern Tragedy* that the tragic hero turns to a tragic victim who has no way out, but who can try, in death, to affirm his lost identity and his lost will (104).

Eventually, we see that Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is a fit classical tragedy and also a fit to the definition of Aristotle in which the plot is not simple; it is complex because at the end of the play there is recognition and reversal. Here is a total 'reversal of fortune'. Oedipus is no longer a king, he loses everything, his position, his family and even himself. Recognition is represented by his realization of the truth, but it is too late. It also achieves all the characteristics of classical tragedy by pursuing Aristotelian requirements of a tragedy as a serious topic with unity of plot which includes a beginning, middle, and end. Also as a classical tragedy, the chorus takes a role, though it is limited, besides the interference of gods. Last but not least, the subject matter of Oedipus is from a legend in contrast to modern drama, *Hedda Gabler* does not submit to the rules of Aristotle, thus, the unities are not observed. The action of the play is simple, not complicated action, besides, the heroine is a real character, and she is not a high born person. As a modern tragic hero, she is acting impulsively when she gives the pistol to Lovborg, and even when she shoots herself. She acts without a plan. According to Raymond Williams:

"the Greek tragic action was not rooted in individuals, or in individual psychology, and not a human history alone. Its thrust came, not from the personality of an individual but from a man's inheritance and relationships, within a world that ultimately transcended him. What we then see a general action specified, not an individual action generalized" (88).

Unlike, modern time 'tragedy' includes, as we see above, a loss of life either immediately or eventually. It is more than the destruction of the characters; it may lead to the death of those characters who are involved, usually either in the hands of other people or in the forces of nature (Storey et al, 2005, 72). Just like a Greek tragedy, modern tragedy tends to raise larger issues about humanity and about nature and the place of human beings in that great sketch. Thus, in modern tongue 'tragedy' means death and destruction in an unexpected and unnecessary pattern, with a tangible 'dramatic' line of events and an overwhelming accompaniment of grief and sorrow, not only for those who involved in the action directly but anyone who reads or watches the story (Storey et al, 2005, 72-73).

Both, Sophocles and Ibsen depicted reality, but not a photographic copy of reality. Sophocles and Ibsen reflected on what they saw around them. Sophocles showed what he saw in human nature, Ibsen, on the other hand, presented the reality of his age. And just like a Greek tragedy, modern tragedy is also universal. It can happen every time and everywhere.

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