

A Comparison between certain comic and tragic characters in five shakespearean plays

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Abstrak

It is sometimes thought that a comedy is a play which makes us shake with laughter and that a tragedy is a play at the end of which we will have swollen eyes and lots of wet handkerchiefs. This superficial idea of comedy and tragedy is only partly true, for a comedy is not only meant to excite laughter, nor is a tragedy merely performed to make us cry. Both comedy and tragedy, especially Shakespearean comedy and tragedy are written with a purpose other than that of making us laugh or weep. The term Shakespearean indicates a play written by William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon, and since drama is in Hamlet's words to hold the mirror up to Nature, to show virtue her own feature... it should help people to see them-selves as they really are. Drama should also reveal to them their virtues and vices. Comedy has been said to be beneficial because it: 1. cures us of our follies by exposing them on the stage, 2. affords us a chance to laugh at our neighbours. Heywood, cited by Northrop Frye, defines the dual function of comedy as being to reform and to refresh, by which it is clear that, aside from evoking laughter, comedy also reforms. Comedy imitates the joys of social life and the follies of those who stubbornly try to maintain their own ridiculous ways against society. The joy of social life is usually manifested in a wedding or a happy reunion at the end of the play. The tendency of comedy is to include as many people as possible in its final society, the blocking characters are more often reconciled or converted than simply repudiated.