



The Moral Function of Tragedy: Pedro Calderon de la Barca's *Life is a Dream* and Tawfiq al-Hakim's *The People of the Cave* as Cases

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Abstract:

There is considerable discussion about how to properly locate Arabic literature within World literature and Comparative literary studies today. The prospect of such an endeavor remains largely ambiguous. I propose focusing and adopting Tragedy—specifically, the ethical component it entails—as a literary form that allows for comparisons between Arabic and other countries' literatures. This paper examines tragedy's role by drawing on literary criticism, psychoanalysis, and philosophy. It takes as corpuses Tawfiq al-Hakim's (1898–1987) *The People of the Cave* (1933) and Pedro Calderon de la Barca's (1600–1681) *Life is a Dream* (1635), both which reflect the moral function of tragedy across different epochs, languages, and civilizations. Hence, this study employs a multidisciplinary comparative methodology, applying Aristotelian and Jungian concepts to the textual analysis of the two plays, as well as testing the premise that tragedy's ethical function is universal. The key finding here is that tragedy, when interpreted ethically, emerges as an essential component of comparative studies, with the shared aim of studying and foreshadowing the universal human experience beyond national limits. Evidently, this ethically universal paradigm for studying tragedy aids Arabic literature in gaining ground in the contemporary comparative arena.

Keywords: tragedy, moral function, Aristotle, Carl Jung, human virtue, universalism, Arab and World literature.

الوظيفة الأخلاقية لفن التراجيديا: "الحياة حلم" لبيدرو كالدرون ديل باركا و"أهل الكهف" لتوفيق الحكيم

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ملخص:

هناك نقاش كبير حول كيفية تحديد موقع الأدب العربي بشكل صحيح في الأدب العالمي والدراسات الأدبية المقارنة اليوم. يبقى احتمال مثل هذا المسعى غامضاً إلى حد كبير. أقترح في ورقتي البحثية النظر في فن التراجيديا—بالخصوص، العنصر الأخلاقي الذي تنطوي عليه—كشكل أدبي يخول المقارنة بين الأدب العربي والعالمية. تدرس هذه الورقة أهمية التراجيديا بالاعتماد على عدة مجالات كالدراسات الأدبية

والتحليل النفسي والفلسفة. تأخذ الدراسة كنموذجي تحليل كلا من مسرحيتي "الحياة حلم" (1635) لبييرو كالديرون دي لا باركا (1681-1600) و"أهل الكهف" (1933) لتوفيق الحكيم (1898-1987)، إذ نجد أن كليهما تعكس الوظيفة الكونية والأخلاقية للتراجيديا المتواجدة عبر مختلف العصور واللغات والحضارات. تتبنى هذه الدراسة في تحليلها منهج المقارنة وتستعين بمفاهيم أرسطو وكارل يونغ التحليلية لدراسة المسرحيتين، وكذلك لمناقشة هدف البحث: إبراز الوظيفة الأخلاقية والكونية للتراجيديا كفن أدبي. الاستنتاج الأساسي لهذه الدراسة هو أنه عند النظر إلى التراجيديا بشكلها الأخلاقي نجدها تلعب دورا رئيسا في تطوير الدراسات الأدبية المقارنة التي تهدف إلى تجاوز الحدود الوطنية ودراسة التجربة البشرية المشتركة. وهذا يسلط الضوء على اعتبار النموذج الأخلاقي الكوني في دراسة التراجيديا ذا أهمية كبيرة في السماح للأدب العربي بالتفاعل مع الأدب العالمي ودخول بوابة الأدب المقارن من بابه الواسع.

كلمات مفتاحية: التراجيديا، الوظيفة الأخلاقية، أرسطو، كارل يونغ، الفضيلة البشرية، الكونية، الأدب العربي والعالمى.

Introduction

Humans are storytellers. Their existence depends firmly on narrating and transmitting tales of all kinds. Throughout human history, there has never been a time where stories were not at the heart of our Being in a Heideggerian sense. Every age and each society develops certain narrative techniques to meet their specific requirements. Nonetheless, there are always works of art that transcend their spatiotemporal contexts and universally unite everyone under the same experience. What exactly is this experience? What impact does it have on us as humans? And how can we get a greater understanding of it? These are the primary issues addressed in this paper. This study believes that analyzing tragedy from an ethical stance gives a solid platform for resolving these questions. The theoretical base of this study stems mainly from literary theory, philosophy, and psychoanalysis. We first investigate how Aristotle transitions from a formal examination of Tragedy to arguing for its moral function in his *Poetics* and *Nicomecan Ethics*. The focus then shifts to the modern era, with Carl Jung's psychiatric investigations into the nature of the collective unconscious and the individuation process. Jung's contributions are important because they are congruent with what Aristotle first established and correspond with what this article seeks to demonstrate through a comparative examination of both Pedro Calderon de la Barca's *Life is a Dream* and Tawfiq al-Hakim's *The People of the Cave*. The second section is a literary examination of the two tragedies in hopes of extracting the characteristics that make them universally moral. The third and last one is a critical overview of our assertion of tragedy's universal ethical function, the criticism it receives, and how it aids Arabic literature in structuring itself within the comparative realm.

1. Aristotelian and Jungian Perspectives on Tragedy

Aristotle, like Plato, considers tragedy to be an imitation. He believes, however, that it is "an imitation, not of men, but of action and life" (*On the Art of Poetry* 9). Aristotle valued tragedy above all other forms of creative expression, including the Greek epic, because of its structure. He employs a formalistic analysis to develop a textual understanding of tragedy. Although he recognizes its performative aspect, Aristotle states in his *Poetics* that the plot and character are the most crucial components of a good tragedy. First, he asserts that that plot is "at once the first and the most important thing in a Tragedy" (39). Second, he thinks that in the "characters there are four points to aim at. First and foremost, they must be good" (55). This point about being good is important to remember because it will be essential to the upcoming discussion on Aristotle's *Nicomecan Ethics*. For Aristotle, the remaining elements of tragedy, such as diction, music, and spectacle, are considered incidental. In many cases, they assist to detract tragedy from

its moral function by turning it into a circus show. Therefore, in his *Poetics*, Aristotle advises tragedians to prioritize the development of plot and character over other elements. The focus on these two elements assists him in developing a case for poetry's ethical role. To him, tragedy is capable of arousing feelings of pity and fear, both of which are crucial to help the audience proceed towards the experience of catharsis.

Aristotle points out that "tragedy is an imitation of personages better than the ordinary man, we in our way should follow the example of a good portrait-painter, who reproduce the distinctive features of a man...without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is" (57). He hints here at how tragedy might be used for ethical purposes. The tragic hero, who is more handsome than ordinary men, reflects humanity's ideals and the level of virtuosity that may be obtained by striving to be good. However, it is critical to recognize that this tragic hero does not become virtuous just by possessing the attribute of a protagonist. To argue for the importance of tragedy in ordinary people's lives, Aristotle purposely accentuates the problem of tragic flaw in the features of tragic heroes. He claims that there is still "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" (50). In this sense, the tragic hero represents a typical human being who is prone to making mistakes. However, it is the intentionality behind the mistake that makes all the difference.

To demonstrate for the need of a flawed character in the development of a good play, Aristotle uses Sophocles' tragic figure Oedipus from *Oedipus Rex*. He regards Sophocles' work as the best tragedy ever written because it accurately portrays the characteristics of a man who falls from grace due to an error of judgment. Oedipus is a flawed character. He has problems, which is reasonable considering that his tragic story begins with him murdering his father and ends with him marrying his mother. On the other hand, and much to everyone's surprise, Oedipus grows up and becomes a decent man whose life flourishes in bliss when he learns from his inadvertent blunders. When a tragedy depicts its protagonist in this manner, it shows the audience how humanity may develop from a totally tragic state to a prosperous one. Aristotle asserts in *Nicomachean Ethics* that "life that conforms with virtue is thought to be a happy life, but virtuous life involves serious purpose and does not consist in amusement" (194). That is, virtue is not synonymous with happiness. A tragic hero who is noble undergoes hardship. It is through endurance that a virtuous life can be found. Virtue might thus be defined as the accumulation of one's own failures and, more crucially, one's own progress because of them. Only through virtue does a human achieve a state of Eudaimonia.¹

How does one achieve such a state of Eudaimonia? For Aristotle, all it takes is a little practice. He states in Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that virtues do not develop in individuals "by nature...nor contrary to nature...rather {humans} are adapted by nature to receive them and are made perfect by habit" (23). Put differently, human goodness results from a constant process of becoming. Morality and human goodness are, in this view, an action, a process, and, most significantly, a practice of the virtues. Humans, according to Aristotle, are born good, but their virtuousness only functions properly when they act on it. That is why he

¹ This is the Greek word for happiness. However, there is some disagreement concerning the meaning of this term. Many regard "happiness" as a poor translation of Eudaimonia. Scholars favour the term "flourishing" because it implies that individuals progress towards happiness rather than stumble upon it randomly.

writes that “we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, and courageous by doing courageous actions” (23). When human virtue is functioning properly, it produces a steady character that, once again, always does the right thing at the right time. There is, however, an issue with this conclusion. How does one distinguish between virtue and vice? According to Aristotle, it is extremely difficult to revert to vice once you have become virtuous. A vice is defined as an excess or lack of virtues. Virtue is thus the point where there is neither abundance nor scarcity in practice. Aristotle, for example, considers courage to be a virtue while considering cowardice and rashness to be deficiencies and excesses that result in vice. He also believes that people learn to be good by observing others, whom he refers to as moral exemplars. Individuals can achieve Eudaimonia and avoid vice by following in the footsteps of such role models. This concept is used by Aristotle in his *Poetics* to assign tragic heroes the role of moral exemplars.

The aim to grasp humans from an objective scientific position lies at the heart of Aristotle’s philosophy. Aristotle’s logic stems from his scientific naturalism. His ethics are not metaphysical and are not dependent on a divinatory force. Therefore, he seems to hold people accountable for their actions and encourages them to choose virtue. Aristotle’s conclusion continues to be of high significance today as it is present in postmodern existentialist philosophies and their understanding of free will. Carl Jung, on the other hand, opposes both Aristotle and his psychoanalytic colleagues. His mystical investigation of the psyche, collective unconscious, and the individuation process differs from Aristotle’s naturalistic technique. Jung famously stated in *Man and His Symbols* that “we refuse to admit that we are dependent on ‘powers’ that are beyond our control” (82). According to him, we must broaden our consciousness to reach the depths of unconsciousness to access the component of our inner self. Such development is only conceivable through the process of individuation, a Jungian notion that describes how individuals progress through life stages to achieve entire transcendent knowledge of life and themselves. Unfortunately, in the early stages of life, when individuals are obscured by their inability to access the unconscious, this waking experience is difficult to have. The individuation process also occurs unintentionally. That is, humans cannot change themselves overnight. The process of individuation occurs organically as people mature and their perspectives shift. Jung digs into his idea of the collective unconscious to further his individuation research. The collective unconscious may be considered as both a genetically transmitted heritage of symbols from ancient to modern cultures and a fundamental intrinsic mechanism endowed with the human mind.

Archetypes are sometimes difficult to define unambiguously, but Jung consistently associated them with symbols important to humanity. As observed with Aristotle, tragedy helps the audience to sympathize with the tragic hero’s journey from wretches to virtue. This journey becomes an archetype, a symbol, and a narrative that has been recounted so many times throughout history that it has become a part of the collective unconscious. We recognize these archetypes automatically because we are endowed with them yet are unconscious of them. Jung is also a big fan of mythology, since he acknowledges, like Aristotle, that myths are aesthetic expressions of humanity’s inner truths. Cultures all around the world passed on such myths, sometimes altering only the plot but retaining the archetype and moral story. In volume ten of his *Collected Works*, Jung asserts that “he who is rooted in the soil endures. Alienation from the unconscious and from its historical conditions spells rootlessness” (106). In other words, an

individual must be conscious of the collective's role in his life as well as the role he plays in favour of the collective. We are trained to feel that we are demigods in today's capitalist society, yet it is these same expectations that have us disoriented and confused when we find ourselves impotent. Jung was critical of this problem, and he always emphasized that humans are historical beings gifted with a universal collective understanding.

During 1930 and 1935, Jung gave seminars at Princeton University. In one of the seminars, he claimed that "only life and what we do in life makes the individual appear. You cannot individuate by locking yourself up in a cell. You can only individuate in your concrete life. You appear in your deed. There you can individuate and nowhere else" (Visions 758). It is self-evident that what Jung implies is that individuation is a voluntary process. It is the individual's choice to separate from the false self they present to society and learn more about their true nature, align with it, and become whole. In certain circumstances, however, external events impose individuation on the person. Traumatic experiences such as the death of a loved one, pain, and tragedy are all transformational. They bring the individual to a new knowledge of life and, as a result, to a new personality. This is critical to understand in the context of tragedy and how it portrays its protagonist as a hero transitioning from an unconscious to a highly conscious state of being. Another conclusion is that the process of individuation is not an easy process. It comprises the most severe form of suffering. Nonetheless, it is an experience that eventually transforms pain into happiness and proves to be rewarding.

Jung experienced a distress period. There is a well-known incident in which he nearly committed suicide if not for a dream he had. He dreamed that he was in Liverpool and found himself in a house with floors, and each level's architectural design changed from one century to the next, from ancient cultures to his day. Surprisingly, Jung felt at home in all of them. As he awoke, he realized that dreams are not arbitrary. That they have an intrinsic purpose and are attempting to communicate essential signals to the individual that his conscious self cannot access. Jung's suicide attempt was averted when he reflected on his dream as a form of enlightenment, a means of escaping his bewildered and constrained conscious view. To him, dreams have been a source of inspiration and study in the collective unconscious ever since. Jung's first work is a biographical investigation in memory and dreams. *The Red Book*, widely regarded as his finest and most controversial work, contains a collection of his dreams over the years, as well as how they influenced the development of his views. Occasionally, humans rush through thinking about their dreams. However, if they were to concentrate on, say, a key picture from a dream for many days, they would conclude that it is more than just a dream and that it represents an inner truth.

Looking at dreams from diverse perspectives may also indicate that you may one day reflect on the dream image and how it affects your feelings differently. Let us suggest that you start writing about one of your dreams for five days and see how it influences your thought stream. The outcome will show that what looked to be an absurd dream image has been incorporated into the conscious self and is now directing your life in many ways. To summarize, understanding the nature of dreams and how they awaken and inspire us to do better is crucial. "An advance always begins with individuation, that is to say with the individual, conscious of his isolation, cutting a new path through hitherto untrodden territory," Jung states in volume eight of his *Collected Works* (111). Then he goes on to declare that if the individual "successfully gives collective validity to his widened consciousness, he creates a tension of opposites that provides the

stimulation that culture requires for its further progress” (111). Although individuation is a personal process that transposes people, Jung’s observation implies that it also serves a societal function. It is what permits humanity to grow in wealth and progress. This also emphasizes the interconnectedness of the individual and the communal.

In conclusion, Aristotle’s and Jung’s contributions are both critical to this paper. We may argue that in Tolstoy’s *What is Art* there exists a bridge where both Aristotle and Jung can agree on the same ground. Tolstoy highlights the idea of literature as a tool of communication. He believes that there is a mutual relationship between the artist and the audience through which meaning is created. He also considers literature to be “a means of union among men, uniting them in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity” (85). There is a convincing argument here that connects Aristotle’s formal study of tragedy with Jung’s explorations into the individuation process. Both views look to literature for guidance. Jung and Aristotle both agree that there is something that takes place in literature that the audience is paying attention to. This study believes such item to be the universal characteristic of tragedy. In other words, no matter who you are, what nation, culture, religion, or background you come from, tragedy will affect you morally. The section that follows expands on the theoretical assertions made in this part and advances toward a literary examination of the two tragedies at hand.

2. *Life is a Dream* and *The People of the Cave* as Moral Tragedies

Even though one was written during the Golden Spanish Age and the other in modern Egypt, both tragedies of al-Hakim and Calderon share one important feature: their plots are arranged according to Aristotle’s suggestions. They also use Close Theatre as the main vehicle for their tragedies. The focus of the Close Theatre is largely on dialogue and narrative. It is more concerned with the plot than with the aesthetic display of the play and it is evident that both tragedies in question accomplish this. We, as readers of the plays, come to interact with something more than just an entertaining story. The tragedian succeeds in creating a dramatic environment for the audience that allows catharsis via lengthy and personalized monologues. Calderon and al-Hakim are also interestingly close in that they both employ meta-theater. Meaning, the characters in both plays are conscious that they are characters acting in a play, and this style of storytelling is increasingly common in movies nowadays. Once again, meta theatre offers for a unique experience with which the audience may identify. In many respects, it transforms the audience into a character who enters the play and performs inside it rather than remain outside. It is obvious then why the plots of these tragedies stimulate our mental faculties and allow our perception of the events to open new channels of thought and our intellect to extend beyond its day-to-day limited reach. The key to this achievement is that both tragedians carefully considered Aristotle’s suggestions and structured their work appropriately.

The cavemen from *The People of the Cave* and Segismundo from *Life is a Dream* are tragic heroes because they suffer the consequences of an error, as Aristotle phrased it. Segismundo is fated to a life of brutality and wildness since his father was a fervent believer in astronomy and refused to allow him to grow up in a civilized environment and prove his nobility. It was the contrary; Segismundo had to live in a dark, savage, and violent environment before being thrust into the role of king. Obviously, one’s nature cannot be transformed overnight. The fact that, despite all of this, Segismundo triumphs over his harshness and shows his virtuosity at the end of

the play elevates him to the status of a great tragic hero. Likewise, the cavemen did not choose to sleep for three millennia. They were destined to endure for a purpose, and it is that reason that makes them great and honorable. Their motivation was religious. To remain a Christian while serving as a violent and immoral ruler is a mark of virtue. The cavemen were rewarded for their virtue by miraculously waking up after three hundred years of slumber. They were also spared execution throughout the reign of their emperor, demonstrating once again how individuals who choose virtue are protected by a cosmic power, be it God or any other metaphysical entity, one which always leads them through hardships. Segismundo also alluded to his belief when he stated that we dream of life in its terrestrial form only to reject and act irresponsibly based on such dreams. He draws a parallel and extends it to the hereafter, regarding this waking life as a dream from which we only awaken after death. This just helps to highlight how metaphysics and morality are inherent in all tragic protagonists and, as Jung stated, ask for a greater power. In the instance of the two tragedies at hand, this higher power is resembled in the Christian deity.

At the level of literary and textual structure, these plays overlap on multiple levels, the most notable of which is the shared thematic procedure of dreaming and waking up. The concept of the dream is fundamental to the development of the story in Calderon's play, and it really forms the play's major argument toward delivering a moral judgment. Segismundo is a character who cannot tell the difference between reality and fantasy; he was raised to be a confused person without an identifying system. However, when things become clearer to him, Segismundo evolves into a moral character that Aristotle may approve of and rises above his flaws to blossom in virtue. Likewise, al-Hakim's tragedy takes the dream's material and its metaphysical parts and transforms them into a full narrative that serves the story of the cave's residents. "The absolute life, abstract from every past, from every connection, and from every cause, is less than nothing, but there is never nothing, nothing is but life," al-Hakim writes (*People of the Cave* 110). Obviously, he is asserting here that life, beyond all complexities, is worth contemplation and that dreaming is yet but another way of contemplating the real. Similarly, Calderon, through Segismundo, asks: "What is life? A frenzy. What is life? A vain hope, a shadow, a fiction. The greatest good is fleeting, for all life is a dream and even dreams are but dreams" (*Life's a Dream* 132).

Dreaming and waking up from the dream are central themes to our study. Both *Life's a Dream* and *The People of the Cave* use dreams purposefully and in a structured manner that resembles the need to understand it on a deeper level. As Bradburn-Bruster asserts in his article on Calderon's play, "throughout the world, the metaphysical traditions have held that phenomenal reality corresponds to a transcendent world, and that dreams, far from being only a counterfeit of material reality, may give us a clue to that noumenal realm" (40). He also contends that "the lowest stage of consciousness is the normal waking state; above that lies dreaming" (45). This ability of dreams to influence individuals in their decision making is of high importance. Both the protagonists of Calderon's and Tawfiq's have an awakening experience because of their dreams. They awaken questioning not only the dream, but also the nature of reality in general. This is when Jung comes in handy. Dreams, he explained, are a fantastic source of inspiration. Similarly, dreams in both tragedies are intended to be tied to reality. Segismundo is unsure if he is dreaming or if he is awake. For all we know, his entire narrative may be a dream. However, it is this skeptical dilemma that leads him to believe that doing good all the time would save him from sliding into vice. Both when awake and when dreaming,

Segismundo aspires to be good and, most importantly, aspires to work for the good of others. The same is true for the cavemen. They recognize that their stay in the cave is a test of their faith in God. Even within a dark cave and in a life that appears to be a dream, it is this faith that allows them to become sacred themselves.

Many people see Segismundo and the cavemen's experiences as tragic and far from noble. Returning to what we discussed with Aristotle and Jung, what these individuals do exemplifies the possibility that exists for all beings, the possibility of a change in one's own life, despite all scientific and logical arguments to the contrary. Yes, tragedy allows people to put their reasoning skills to the test. This is exactly what Jung meant when he claimed that the conscious self is restricted in its perspective and that it can only extend to possibilities that only the unconscious is aware of through collective experiences. In other words, both Sigismund and the cavemen have reached a stage where they can see beyond the plain curtain of conscious existence because of their dreams. They choose to change, and this transformation does not imply, as Aristotle indicated, a search for happiness. Al-Hakim's tragedy is typically seen as gloomy and morally bankrupt, as everyone dies for no good. But goodness endures even after death. This is what Aristotle emphasized throughout his ethical investigations. Death should not always be depicted in a negative picture. On the contrary, a good person is always willing to die for their virtue. Through this, the protagonists gain the audience's respect and are labeled as moral exemplars. They become someone you look up to when you are going through a difficult period and are scared to turn to vice.

Aristotle would agree with the above in general. The goal of tragedy is to construct a flawlessly structured community. Or, at the very least, attempt to have as little existing vice as feasible. And, as we conclude our literary study of the two tragedies, we argue that the justification for universal ethics remains strong. Despite their different historical and cultural circumstances, both al-Hakim and Calderon are striking examples of practicing this universality, and both plays are rich in ethical components that manifest in every aspect we examined in this section. On the other hand, there exist other intellectual and literary perspectives that challenge this moral understanding of tragedy. The next section reflects on this opposing viewpoint and posits the moral function of tragedy in front of the criticism it receives.

3. Beyond Cultures and Nations: Tragedy as a Universal Expression of Ethical Values

Aristotle's views continue to influence other thinkers and are frequently used in literary and comparative studies today. This paper was encouraged to begin its quest because of Aristotle's vision. It sought the potential of conducting a comparative study based on world literature theory with the goal of comprehending the universality of tragedy, first as an artistic expression and then as a collective ethical authority. Nonetheless, contemporary philosophies have shifted away from this conception of morality. They surely reject the universality of all things and prize art's individualized qualities over its societal purpose. There is much emphasis on the individual alone, not in relation to society. One kind of opposition to Aristotle's point of view is radical autonomism, a critical theory that refuses to assess the aesthetics of art on moral grounds. This theory is prominent in our times as it influences the liberty of art and making art for art's sake. It regards the artist as a free agent, creating art to demonstrate his skill for himself rather than ethically contributing to the growth of his community. Friedrich Nietzsche maintains the same

belief and categorically rejects any moral judgments of art and of life. Choosing morals or ethics, he says, reveals an incapacity to transcend one's weak nature.

Individuals, according to Nietzsche's philosophy, agree subjectively on the virtues or vices they embrace or avoid. This reasoning leads him to refer to ethics as slave characteristics. Morality, he believes, restricts the possibility of an individual's evolution, and allows society to dominate over him. Thus, for Nietzsche, art is useful but ought not be ethically assessed. The aesthetic worth of a work of music, art, or literature is more than merely its ethical or social function. What matters is the effect it produces on the individual. In his debut work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, he examines the purpose of art and, by extension, literature. "What, when seen through the prism of life, is the meaning of morality?" he asks. "It is asserted that art, not morality, is the true metaphysical activity of man." He continues, "the provocative sentence recurs that the existence of the world is justified (Gerechtfertigt) only as an aesthetic phenomenon" (8). Nietzsche advocates aesthetic examination of works of art in this passage. In contrast to Aristotle, he believes in the freedom of art and its ability to heal humanity by its aesthetic capacities. This transcendence, on the other hand, is in no sense ethical. Good art, according to Nietzsche, can provide an aesthetically overpowering sensation without being morally correct.

Evidently, Aristotle evolves into a moralist who considers works of art devoid of morals to be inadequate to those that do. A tragedy will fail if it lacks morality, and its beauty will crumble since aesthetics can only work in line with morals. If it lacks morals, it is no longer a tragedy, but rather a comedy. On the other hand, from the standpoint of a radical autonomist, Nietzsche criticizes this conception of tragedy, believing that the aesthetic quality of a work of art overcomes its morale. Both philosophers discuss the role and influence of art on humanity, with one supporting morality and the other advocating the exact opposite. One believing that art educates, while the other asserting that art is a process of emancipation, possibly an endeavour to become something more than human, to become a superman in Nietzsche's terms. Literature is a representation of people and existence, particularly of the human experience within the constraints of this universe. In doing so, literature invariably addresses the moral aspects that distinguish humans from other species. Nietzsche rejects this requirement, claiming that power is the sole incentive for humanity. This negative view of human nature cannot be true because there are numerous examples of people considered vicious acting on their natural goodness and becoming virtuous. According to Aristotle, Nietzsche would be making the mistake of elevating virtue to the level of excess or deficiency. Humanity incorporates both virtue and vice, but one cannot help but notice how virtue triumphs over vice in making this world a better place. Only a determinist would describe reality from one point of view while dismissing the other. Aristotle is more pertinent in this case because, while acknowledging the existence of evil and battling it with virtue, he develops a non-deterministic approach and is receptive to all possibilities.

This paper, on the other hand, believes that such a postmodern and amoralist logic cannot contribute to the study of tragedy as a universal art form capable of opening portals for communication between different literatures and cultures. In other words, such a medium does not urge comparative research to investigate how civilizations progress through literature and integrate as one collectivity. This is an important problem to pause and contemplate on. Comparative literature is now considered a field in crisis, unable to stand on its own two feet. Most of the criticism tackles the discipline's concentration and shift towards theory. Nonetheless, this study believes that this is not the most serious issue that comparative literature should be

concerned with. On the contrary, the field is losing its most true feature, which no other literary area can reach; simply turning to the humane. The postmodern situation has blinded the field to one of the most fundamental realities about human cultures: that they are symbolic of inner truths. Tragedy is often forgotten because of its mythological connotations. However, as this paper suggests, mythical narratives and their protagonists contain a symbol, a concept, or an archetype that everyone can identify with. Such an art does not master this ability to depict human nature through an act of absurdity or by chance. There are undoubtedly some universal principles at work that allow tragedy to transcend the spatiotemporal and national barriers to emerge as a form of art that expresses the human condition and experience.

A comparatist recognizes that, despite cultural differences, all humans have a fundamental moral code. After all, comparison occurs not just on a literary level, but also on a transcendental one, where a higher cultural collectivity arises. It is crucial to note, however, that this research does not dismiss the uniqueness and distinctiveness that each culture possesses. On the contrary, it praises the social as well as the individualized aspects of human nature. There is no risk in depending on the most subjective components of our human nature. After all, it is only there where the fundamental truths of existence may be discovered. Yet, it should be highlighted that when a person crosses the line with his communal character, a complex dilemma arises. Without an identity, the individual is lost, searching in the subjective for answers that only the community can supply. We may thus certainly argue that tragedy masters the art of conveying both the personalized and the communal in a literary form. Because tragedy relies significantly on ethical precepts in its projection, there is no getting around the fact that it is also the art of virtue teaching. All the data supports our assertion that tragedy plays a part in a universal ethics, making it a crucial matter for Arabic and comparative literature. It seems that the topic that interests Arab comparatists now is the value, heritage, and significance of Arab literature as well as its merit in contributing to the current academic scene of comparative studies. This study thus suggests that turning toward Tragedy can fuse all these interests into realities that internationalize authentically Arabic literature and looks past the culturally specific details to examine the morally and globally shared characteristics. This viewpoint makes the cultural differences across nations appear insignificant considering the ethical universality that connects them in both reality and literature.

Conclusion

This research paper concentrated on the tension between tragedy and ethics. It demonstrated the relevance of both Aristotle's and Jung's assertions to the process of analyzing the two tragedies in the first extensive theoretical section, as well as stating the claim of tragedy's ethical and universal character. The second section delved into the intricacies of both tragedies while referencing Aristotle and Jung, all with the aim of demonstrating how, despite the geographical and chronological differences, both tragedies come to depict mankind in one light: an ethical one. This section also discusses the recurring themes of dreaming and waking up to life as basic literary elements of ethical comparisons in tragedy and, specifically, of the two plays under study. The third and last section focused on the criticism existent against this paper's assumption of the universality of ethical tragedy. It examined Nietzsche's disregard for morality and appreciation for art only for its aesthetic value. In response to this critique, the paper's thesis was strengthened to emphasize the possibility of a connection between Arabic and Western literature

through the study of tragedy as a literary form endowed with an inherent ethical discourse. Our claim on the universally moral function of tragedy went outside its small area of study to address the difficulties that comparative literature has nowadays. To sum up, this study believes that by returning to and focusing more on tragedy, Arabic and comparative literatures would reveal their long-standing ambition to connect with the field's early roots, when world literature was respected for its humanitarian and universal qualities. At the heart of all ethnic and ideological differences is the essence of humanity: coexistence. The ethical tragedy paradigm has demonstrated that it is the best at bringing forth this coexistence and making it a lived reality.

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