

## Shakespearean Drama

### Elements of drama:

**Setting:** time, place, mood

### Characters

- i. main characters - protagonist: the central character (or "Tragic hero") with whom we identify as we watch the play  
- antagonist: the main opponent of the protagonist
- ii. secondary characters: all the people whose actions have some bearing on the advancement of the main conflict
- iii. Minor characters: those whose actions have no bearing on the advancement of the main conflict

**Plot** 5 part development of a conflict (protagonist vs. one or more of: nature, himself, other characters)

- i. introduction (exposition)
- ii. rising action
- iii. climax
- iv. falling action (denouement)
- v. conclusion

**Aside:** a character in the play utters his thoughts to the audience or to another character; the remaining characters on stage do not overhear the aside.

**Crisis:** the turning point in the action; the protagonist's fortunes begin to fall irreversibly.

**Dramatic Irony:** Situation in which the audience knows facts of which the character(s) is/are unaware.

**Tragic Flaw:** weakness which causes the hero to be vulnerable, and which subsequently causes his fall.

**Foil:** a character or situation that sets off another by contrast.

**Irony:** the use of 2, usually opposite meanings in language.

**Soliloquy:** a character utters his thoughts aloud, but they are not addressed to audience or to other character.

**Tragedy:** Shakespeare thought of tragedy as a tale of suffering ending in the death of the protagonist. He gave

*character precedence over plot* and required a magnificence of spirit in his protagonists.

- i) the balance of things is upset/out of order
- ii) there is a return to balance; those with alienating concepts die, initiating another cycle
- iii) the ending contains reconciliation and death
- iv) justice tends to be punitive
- v) resolution is brought about through the hero
- vi) protagonist attempts to find an identity: how does he fit into the world
- vii) tragic hero is isolated, pitted against all forces
- viii) tragedy assumes that the real world is tragic; man engages in an heroic attempt to restore order.

