

From The Theban Plays to the Writers and Poets Association of Gorgan: A Comparative Study of *Antigone* by Sophocles, and Shamlu's Narration of it

Behrooz Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari¹, Fazel Norouzi²

Sophocles' *Antigone* is one of the most important classics in dramatic literature in history, and it has been adapted numerous times over the years. Great playwrights such as Brecht and Anouilh have written the most important adaptations of this work, and various performances of different Antigones have been staged around the world in different eras. In Iran, Ahmad Shamlu published a play adapted from *Antigone* in the *Gorgan Writers and Poets Association Quarterly* in early 1980s, which seems to be very neglected in his artistic career. In this adaptation, Shamlu narrated the most key part of the story, namely Antigone's choice, and presented it in the form of a play. In his adaptation, Shamlu focuses on the dialogue between Iseman and Antigone, showing us two people with two relatively opposing perspectives. In the current study, while examining the dramatic aspects of the two works and comparing and contrasting them, relying on Praver's theories, we seek to answer the question of what in Antigone inspired Shamlu to write this play, and what is the relationship between the thematic and structural features of this play and Sophocles' *Antigone*. We will come to the conclusion that Shamlou considered *Antigone*, beyond its technical features, to be related to its society, and this time he wrote his thoughts and criticisms in the medium of the play. According to the data in the article, Shamlu's motivation for writing this narrative is probably the commitment he felt towards his community. The most important reason for choosing *Antigone* for Shamlu is probably its theme and content, which clearly shows the importance of the female figure. Shamlu, who

1. Associate Professor of Performing Arts, Department of Performing Arts, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. mbakhtiari@ut.ac.ir

2. MA Student of Performing Arts, Department of Performing Arts, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. fazel.norouzi@ut.c.ir

How to cite this article:

Behrooz Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari, Fazel Norouzi. "From The Theban Plays to the Writers and Poets Association of Gorgan: A Comparative Study of Antigone by Sophocles, and Shamlu's Narration of it". *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature, Arts and Humanities*, 5, 2, 2025, 51-54. doi: 10.22077/islah.2025.8623.1574



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors. Licensee Journal of *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature, Arts & Humanities*. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

has praised women in many of his works and has a special view of women, in his introduction to this play, points out the importance of femininity and the narrative that follows the confrontation between man and woman. But what links Sophocles and Shamlu together here is the relationship between their works and their intellectual status in relation to society. Shamlu has always pursued the concern of society in his works and seems to have found commonalities in Sophocles' tragedy, resulting in the surviving adaptation of the tragedy of *Antigone*. The character of Antigone is considered as a symbol of freedom, and one of the reasons for her attention among artists and writers is the preservation of the freshness of the work's theme over the years; As years have passed since Shamlu's *Antigone* was written, the issue of women, freedom, and the pursuit of rights continues to be considered major concerns in the world, and in a country like Iran, not only has its importance not diminished, but it seems that Antigones are on the rise in today's society and have even become more important than before.

In summary, it should be said that Antigone is known in the history of dramatic literature as a figure of a freedom-loving woman, and Ahmad Shamlu wrote his work by adapting Sophocles in the same genre and relying on the female characters in this play (Antigone and Ismene). Attention to women and writing a play with women's concerns may have been what inspired Shamlu to write this drama. As mentioned earlier, Shamlu's attention to society and its intellectual aspects was the reason for his desire to adapt Antigone, which has maintained its freshness and adaptability to the times over time and in different eras, and it is always considered one of the most important and discussed works in dramatic literature in the world. Based on the data in the article, Shamlu's adaptation of Antigone is a semi-faithful adaptation, in which a part of it was selected and developed for writing, while remaining faithful to the main narrative line. Just as Shamlu is known for his unique language in his poetic figures, in Antigone, by choosing vernacular language and using rhythmic dialogues in parts of this work, he has brought a different feeling and mood to the reader than the original work and has given the work a new color and flavor. Perhaps this play cannot be considered one of the outstanding Iranian dramas from a technical perspective; but due to the importance of the author and the work it is adapted from, as well as the fact that this play is neglected in Ahmad Shamlu's works, Antigone

is an important work to study and analyze. In this article, an attempt was made to examine, compare, and analyze the texts in question from a comparative perspective and take a step towards making this work more familiar to the audience of dramatic literature. The information collection for this research was done through a library method and the research method is descriptive-analytical.

Keywords: *Antigone*, Shamlu, Sophocles, Prayer, Comparative Literature, Drama

