Abstract – In Shakespeare's plays, the so-called comique du discours is found in an astonishing variety of nuances. His tragedies, in particular, are rich in scenes where black humour plays an important role in shaping the characters’ mind, actions and style. While showing that the genealogy of black humour traces back to the ancient Greek dramatists and to Euripides in particular, this essay analyses a number of passages in Macbeth, Titus Andronicus, Henry IV, Henry VI, Richard III and Hamlet in which this feature has a force and a vividness that give both the reader and the spectator a clear vision of Shakespeare’s art as a dramatist.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, drama, ironia, black humour, teoria del comico