

SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY'S: A CRITICAL STUDY

Rameshsingh M. Chauhan

Assistant Professor,

Sardar Vallabhbhai Vanijya Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedabad

ISSN 2277-7733

Volume 6 Issue 4,

March 2018

Abstract

Shakespearean say that tragedy is nothing but a sad play is not accurate the plays often involve the fall of noble stature. The character always has a fatal that leads to their downfall. Their downfall is usually set into motion by external forces that the characters have little or no control over. The tragedies are also characterized by a great deal of death. The tone is usually very somber from the onset of the play. The plays are meant to examine human nature. The elements below can be found in Shakespeare tragedies, how well do they match the play know? They end with the death of the tragic heroes. The deaths of the heroes have a big impact on the people around them. And the larger community other person dies as part of the tragic chain of events. The heroes reach a peak in the day of happiness or achievement. Macbeth becomes King Romeo and Juliet get married. This usually happens about through. After this peak, there is a peripeteia where events take a terrible turn for the worse. The heroes are in some part responsible for this change of fortunes. The paper critically analyses the Shakespearean tragedy.

Key words: *criticism, critical study, shakespeare, tragedy*

William Shakespeare is the greatest English writer. He was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford upon even Shakespeare was the most documented Elizabethan play write. Who was recognized in his own life line, after retiring and maKing his will out on March 25,1616 Shakespeare died on April 23,1616 nothing is recorded on the cause of his death. He had three brothers and four sisters and was the oldest child of the family. He was 15 and she was 26. They had 3 kids by the time he was 21. He wrote his first play around 1591, fifteen years after the opening of the first theatre in London (The Red Lion). Shakespeare owned two theaters and wrote at least 38 plays. He was an actor before he was a writer. This carried through a drama, is the right way to read the dramatist Shakespeare: and the prime requisite here is therefore a vivid and intent imagination. But this alone will hardly suffice. It is necessary also especially to a true conception of the whole to compare to analyzed to dissect. They misunderstand; I believe they would not shrink if they remembered two things. In the first place in this process of comparison and analysis, it is not requisite it is on the contrary ruinous to set imagination aside and to substitute some supposed cold reason and it is only want of practice that makes the concurrent use of analysis and of poetic perception difficult or irksome. And in the second place these dissecting processes, thought they are also imagination aside and to the substitute some supposed 'could reason ; and it is only want of practice that makes concurrent use of analysis and of poetic perception difficult of irksome.

There is also an element of fate something that combined with hero's actions-seems to make the tragedy inevitable. However, the finally denouement of the tragedies can still seem like terrible accident. In every drama, whether it is a comedy or a tragedy, we

see, arising from the co-operation of their character certain actions. These deeds are thus a predominant factor. They are actions in the full sense of the world expressive of the true springs of their various actions. His plays tell a story in the tragedy Shakespeare's main interest lay here, in presenting the motives of his brain children—the true springs of their various actions. His plays tell a story, but not for the sake of telling it. If it is the story of the great man's sorrows, he relates it so as to show quite clearly to readers or audience that those suffering proceed directly from his own action, chiefly if not wholly. The phrase, that with Shakespeare character is destiny is not an exaggeration but the statement of a great truth. We feel, if we carefully read any tragedy by Shakespeare that as the story of the hero's sufferings moves forward, his calamities and his tragic end follow inevitably from his personal character. The hero is then finally responsible for his sufferings and his tragic end, and not any outside agency such as fate or the gods. Shakespeare, however, was too great a dramatist and thinker not to allow the element of chance to have a place in his tragedies. He never forgets that there is what is called accident in life, some actions or happenings that are outside the control of individual, things that other characters say and do. These do influence a particular individual's life but to a very small extent but whereas the average man or woman call it fate or destiny, meanings thereby an outside supernatural agency, which he cannot or run away from. Shakespeare gave its proper place in his stories.

Characteristics of Shakespearean Tragedy

Tragedy originates from ancient Greece and ages. Tragedy should cause pity and fear. Unfolding tragedy leads to catharsis. Hero faces downfall with courage. Unlike Greek tragedy, Shakespeare uses comic relief. Outside forces may contribute to hero's downfall. Events lead to catastrophic conclusion. This conclusion usually involves death. Tragic heroes usually recognize his /her flaw. Shakespearean wrote tragedies from the beginning of his career. One of his earliest plays was the Roman tragedy *Titus andronicus*, which he followed a few years later with *Romeo and Juliet*. However, his most admired tragedies were written in a seven-year period between 1601 and 1608. These include his four major tragedies *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, along with *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, the lesser-known *Timon of Athens* and *Troilus and Cressida*.

Many have linked these plays to Aristotle's precept about tragedy: that the protagonist must be an admirable but flawed character, with the audience able to understand and sympathize with the character. Certainly, all of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists are capable of both good and evil. As one of the most influential Shakespearean critics of the 19th century, Bradley argues, the playwright always insists on the operation of the doctrine of free will; the (anti) hero is always able to back out, to redeem himself. But, the author dictates, they must move unheeding to their doom. Some including drama historian Bradley in his "heavy Seneca: his influence on Shakespeare's tragedies," have also pointed out their Seneca nature, as different from Aristotle's principles and Greek tragedy. In one of a few exceptions to the rule that Roman literature was essentially superficial imitation of Greek works, the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca wrote several closet drama tragedies in exile, never meant for live performance rather, they were didactic, meant to teach the reader the virtues of stoicism. Shakespearean was either unaware of or indifferent to this, and adopted

then adapted some of their features, including the five act structure and the aforementioned train of bad decisions, culminating in an eventual 'stoic clam' of the protagonist, in which the character virtuously accepts the consequences of their error(s) "lay on, msaduff," in Macbeth.

A Shakespearean tragedy is a five act play ending in the death of most of the major characters" plays, but if we are looking for the essence of Shakespearean tragedy we must look in an entirely different realm, we cannot merely list the literary devices used, find the ones common to all of Shakespeare's tragedies, and call this collection their essence. We recognize tragedy in literature because we find that it corresponds to a sense of the tragic within us. The essence viewpoint we must look at the literary techniques in the plays not definite elements of tragedy but as expressions of it. thus, hypothetically, someone could discover a long lost Shakespearean play that could truly be considered a tragedy yet lack any or all of the tragic devices for exiting tragedies. The fact is, though, that certain literary devices recur regularly. Hence we may infer that these are particularly useful devices for expressing tragedy or at least that they were particularly useful to Shakespeare. We care idea to identify ourselves with the protagonist as in hamlet's soliloquies we share the thoughts that only hamlet known's similarly in Macbeth we find ourselves let in on the plot to murder Duncan and we hear the prophecies that motivate Macbeth.

Definition of Tragedy

A tragedy, according to Aristotle is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain kind of artistic ornaments with several being separated at the end of each part of the play which is in the form of action not of narrative, involving, incidents arousing pity and fear where with to accomplish the catharsis of such emotions. Tragic hero is generally person of importance tragic hero shows extraordinary capabilities and a tragic flaw tragic flaw fatal error in judgment or weakness in character that leads to downfall. A tragedy is a narrative about serious and important actions that end unhappily. Usually a tragedy ends with the deaths of the main characters. Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories, genres. He raised to the peak of sophistication and the artistry by the end of the 16th century. recounts a series of event in the life of a person of significant, the tragic hero. The purpose of tragedy is to arouse the emotions of pity and fear in audience a tragedy shows missed potential. Tragic hero is usually at the peak of his carrier with everything going well for him when tragedy strikes. The tragic hero usually dies at the end of the play. The tragic hero is essentially a good man with a character weakness tragic flaw. The tragic hero is faced with external forces of pressures that require him to make the wrong decision and because of his tragic flaw both plays and poems were included in it. The important element in it was the story and not character. It was made to fall by chance or fate or gods, Shakespeare changed all this expect in one detail, after examining his four tragedy thus" tragedy with Shakespeare is conceded always with persons of high degree: often Kings or princes or leaders in the state, like Coriolanus, Brutus, Antonio as in Romeo Juliet with members of great houses. Whose quarrels are of leading to the death of a man in high estate, but no amount of calamity leading to the death of a man in high state. But no amount of calamity which merely befell a man, descending from the clouds' like lighting, could alone provide the substance of its story. The

calamities of a tragedy do not simply happen nor are they sent from heaven or are the results of god's wrath.

The Substance of Shakespearean Tragedy

We ought to be able to some extent to describe this aspect and way in terms addressed to the understanding, such a description so far as it is true and adequate may, after these explanations be called indifferently an account of the substance of Shakespeare tragedy are an account of Shakespeare conception of tragedy or tragedy or view of the tragic fact. Two further warnings may be required in the first place. We must remember that the tragic aspect of life is only one aspect. We cannot arrive at Shakespeare's whole dramatic way of looking at the world from his tragedies alone as we can arrive at Milton's way of regarding things. In approaching our subject it will be best without attempting to shorten the path by reforming to famous, theories of the drama. The story next leads up to and includes, the death of the hero on the one hand no play at the end of which the hero remains alive is, in the full Shakespearean sense a tragedy: and we no longer class *Troilus and Cressida* or *Cymbeline* as such, as did the editions of the folio. On the other hand, the story depicts also the troubled part of the hero's life.

When we are immersed in a tragedy we feel towards dispositions actions and persons such emotions as attraction and repulsion pity wonder fear horror perhaps hatred but we do not judge. This is a point of view which emerges only when in reading a play we slip by our own fault or the dramatists' from the tragic position or when, in thinking about the play afterwards, we fall back on our everyday legal and moral notions. But tragedy does not belong any more than religion belongs to the sphere of these notions nether dose the imaginative attitude in presence of it while we are in its world we watch is seeing that so it happened and must have happened feeling that it is piteous dreadful awful mysterious but neither passing sentence on the argents nor asking whether the behavior of the ultimate power towards them is just and therefore the use of such language in attempts to render our imaginative experience it terms of the understanding is to say the use of such language in attempts to render our imaginative experience.

Construction in Shakespeare Tragedies

Having discussed the substances of a Shakespearean tragedy, we should naturally go on to examine the form; under this head many things might be included; for example, Shakespeare's methods of characterization, his language, his versification, the construction of his plots. I intend, however, to speak only for the last of these subjects, which has been somewhat neglected; as construction is a more or less technical. The famous critics of the romantic revival seem to have paid very little attention to this subjects has writing an interesting book on Shakespeare as dramatic artist Imparts of my analysis I am much in debated to gustavfreytag'stechnik des dramas a book which deserves to be much better known than it appears to be to English man interested in the drama. I may add, foe the benefit to classical scholars, that Freytag has a chapter on Sophocles. The reader of his book will easily distinguish, if he cares to, the places where I write in independence of him. I may add that in speaking of construction I have thought if best to assume in my hearers no previous knowledge of the subject; that I have not attempted to discuss how much of what is said of Shakespeare.

As Shakespearean tragedy represents a conflict which reminds in a catastrophe, any such tragedy may roughly be divided into three parts the first of these sets further expounds the situation, or state of affairs, out of which the conflict. it forms accordingly the bulk of the play, comprising the second, third and fourth acts, and usually a part of the first and a part of the fifth. The final section of the tragedy shows the issues of the conflict in a catastrophe. The application of this scheme of division is naturally more or less arbitrary. The first part glides into the second, and the second into the third, and there may often be difficulty in drawing the lines between them but it is still harder to divide spring from summer, and summer from autumn; and yet springs is spring, and summer is summer. The dramatist's chief difficulty in the exposition is obvious and it is illustrated clearly enough in the plays of unpracticed writers; for example, in remorse and even in the Cenci. He has to impart to the audience a quantity or information about matters of which they generally know all that is necessary for his purpose but the process of merely acquiring information is unpleasant, and the direct imparting of it is unromantic. Unless he uses a prologue, therefore, he must cancel from his auditors the fact that they are being informed, and must tell them what he wants them to know by means which are interesting on their own account. These means, with Shakespeare, are not only speeches but actions and events. From the very beginning of the play, though are conflict has not arisen, things are happening and being done which in some degree arrest, startle and excite; and in a few scenes we have mastered the situation of affairs without perceiving the dramatists' designs upon us not that this is always so with Shakespeare. in the opening speech of Richard III, we feel that the speakers are addressing us; and in the second scene of the tempest the purpose of Prospero's long explanation to Miranda is palpable but in general Shakespeare's expositions are masterpieces.

Plot Construction of the Shakespearean Tragedy

Shakespearean tragic period "Hamlet". We come to-day to *Hamlet*, the first of our four tragedies, a few remarks must be made on their probable place in Shakespeare's literary career. But I shall say no more than seems necessary for our restricted purpose, and therefore for the most part shall merely be starting widely accepted results of investigation, without going into the evidence on which they rest.

We consider the tragedies first on the side of their substance we find at once an obvious difference between the first two and the remainder both *Brutus* and *Hamlet* are highly intellectual by nature and reflective by habit, both may even be called, in a popular sense philosophic; *Brutus* may be called so in a stricter sense. each being also a 'good' man shows accordingly, when placed in critical circumstances, sensitive and almost painful anxiety to do right, and though they fail of course in quite different ways to deal successively with these circumstances, the failure in each case is connected rather with their intellectual nature and reflective habit than with any yielding to passion, hence the name 'tragedy' of thought which Schlegel gave to *Hamlet*, may be given also, as in effect it has been professor downed to Julius Caesar. the later heroes, on the other hand, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Timon*, *Macbeth*, *Antony*, *Coriolanus*, have one and all passionate natures, and speaking roughly, we may attribute the tragic failure in each of these cases to passion. But in regard to this second point of difference a reservation must be made, on which I will speak a little more fully, because unlike the matter hitherto touched on, its necessity seems hardly

to have been recognized, all of the later tragedies may called tragedies of passion but not all of them display these extreme forms of evil. Neither but the last two does so. Consider, finally, the impression left on us at the close of each its is remarkable that this impression, though very strong can scarcely be called purely tragic; or it we call it so at least the feeling of reconciliation, which mingles with the obviously tragic emotions is here exceptionally well marked, the death of antonym, it will be remembered, comes before the opening of the fifth act. The death of Cleopatra which closes the play is greeted by the reader with sympathy and admiration, even with exultation at the thou that she has foiled octavos; and these feelings are heightened by the deaths of chairman and iris, heroically faithful to their mistress, as Emilia was to here in coriololanus the feeling of reconciliation is even stronger. The whole interest towards the close has been concentrated on the questions...

Othello

There is practically no doubt that Othello was the tragedy written next after hamlet. Such external evidence as we possess points to this conclusion, and it is confirmed by similarities of style, diction and versification, and also by the fact that ideas and phrases of the earlier play are echoed in the later there is further a certain resemblance in the subjects, the heroes of the two plays are doubtless extremely unlike so unlike that each could have dealt without much difficulty with the situation which proved fatal to the other ; but still each is a man exceptionally noble and trustful, and each endures the shock a terrible disillusionment, this theme is treated by Shakespeare for the first time in hamlet, for the second in Othello, it recurs with modifications in King Lear, and it probably formed the attraction which drew Shakespeare to refashion in part another writer's tragedy of timon, these four dramas may so far be grouped together in distinction from the remaining tragedies. It would become more than this and would amount to a criticism of the play only if those who feel it maintained that the fullness and frankness which are disagreeable to them are also neediness from a dramatic point of view or betray a design of appealing to un poetic feelings in the audience but I do not think this is maintained, or that such a view would be plausible. To some readers against parts of Othello appear shocking or even horrible they think if I may formulate their objection- that in these parts Shakespeare has sinned against the canons of art by representing on the stage a violence's or brutality the effects of which is unnecessarily painful and rather sensational than tragic, the passages which thus give offence are probably those already referred to, - that where Othello strikes Desdemona, that where he affects to treat her as an inmate of a house off ill- fame, and finally the scene of her death.

King Lear

King Lear has again and again been described as Shakespeare's greatest work the best of his plays the tragedy in which he exhibits most fully his multitudinous powers and if we were doomed to loss all his dramas accept one probably the majority of those who know and appreciate him best would pronounce for keeping King Lear. What is the meaning of these opposite sets of facts are the lovers of Shakespeare wholly in the right and is the general reader and playgoer. Were even taste and Johnson, altogether in the wrong. I venture to doubt it when I read King Lear two impressions are left on my mind, which seem to answer roughly to the two sets of facts. King Lear seems to me Shakespeare's greatest achievement but it seems to me not his best play, and I find

I am not regarding it simply as a drama, but am grouping it in my mind with works like the Prometheus vincetus and the divine comedy, and even with the greatest symphonies of Beethoven and the statues in the Medici chapel. Imagine this incident transferred to Othello and you realize how completely the two tragedies differ in dramatic atmosphere. In Othello it would be a shock^{ing} or a ludicrous dissonance but it is in harmony with the spirit of King Lear. And not only is this so but contrary to expectation, it is not if properly acted, in the least absurd on the stage, the imagination and the feelings have been worked upon with such effect by the description of the Clift, and by the portrayal of the old man's despair and his son's courageous and loving wisdom, that we are unconscious of the grotesqueness of the incidents for common sense.

The second passage is more important, for it deals with the origin of the whole conflict the oft- repeated judgments that the first scene of King Lear is absurdly Improbable, and that no same man would think of dividing his Kingdom among his daughters in proportion to the strength of their several protestations of love, is much too harsh and is based upon a strange misunderstanding this scene acts effectively, and to imagination the story is not at all incredible, it is merely strange, like so many of the stories on which our romantic dramas are based Shakespeare, besides has done a good deal to soften the improbability of the legend, and he has done much more than the casual reader perceives the very first words of the drama, as Coleridge pointed out, tell us that the division of the Kingdom is already settled in all its details, so that only the public announcement of it remains. Later we find that the lines of division have already been drawn on the map of Britain, and again that cordelia's share, which is her dowry, is perfectly well known no burgundy.

The presence in King Lear of so large a number of characters, in whom love or self-see King is so extreme, has another effect, they do not stir the intellect to wonder and speculation, and how can there be such men and women. We ask ourselves. how comes it that humanity can take such absolutely opposite forms and in particular, to what omission of element which should be present in human nature, or if there is no omission to what distortion of these elements is it due that such beings as some of these come to exist. This is a question which forces us to ask but in King Lear it is provoked again and again.

Macbeth

Macbeth it is probable was the last written of four great tragedies and immediately preceded Antony and Cleopatra. In the play Shakespeare's final style appears for the first time completely formed, and the transition to his style is much more decidedly visible in Macbeth recalls hamlet rather than Othello or King Lear in the heroes of both plays the passage from thought to a critical resolution and action difficult, and excites the keenest interest, in neither play, as in Othello and King Lear is painful pathos one of the main effects, evil, again, though it shows in Macbeth a prodigious energy is not the icy or stony inhumanity of lago or gone rill; and as in hamlet, it is pursued by remorse, finally Shakespeare's no longer restricts the action to purely human agencies as in the two preceding tragedies portents once more fill the heavens, ghosts rise from their graves an unearthly light flickers about the head of the doomed man. the special popularity of hamlet and Macbeth is due in part to some of these common characteristics, notably to the fascination of the super natural.

Conclusion

These lectures are based on a selection from materials used in teaching at liver pool, Glasgow and oxford; and I have for the most part preserved the lecture from. The point of view taken in them is explained in the introduction, I should, of course, wish them to be read in their remainder; but readers who may prefer to enter at once on the discussion of the several plays can do so by beginning at page 70. Anyone who write on Shakespeare must owe much to his predecessors, where I was conscious of a particular obligation, I have acknowledged it ; but most of my reading of Shakespearean criticism was done many years ago, and I can only hope that I have not often reproduced as my own what belongs to another. Many of the notes will be of interested only to scholars, who may find, I hope, something new in them. I have quoted as a rule, from the globe edition, and have referred always to its numeration of acts, scenes, and lines.

References

- A Hamlet Bibliography: 1877-1935 (orig. pub. date 1936). Anton Adolph Raven. New York:Russell & Russell, 1966.
- Hamlet in the 1940s: An Annotated Bibliography. Janet Herzbach, ed. New York:Garland, 1985. New York:Garland Readings on the Character of Hamlet: 1661-1947. Claude C. H. Williamson. (1950). London:Routledge, 2007. ISBN 978-0-415-35309-0
- Aspects of Hamlet: Articles Reprinted from Shakespeare Survey. Kenneth Muir and Stanley Wells, eds. New York; Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1979. ISBN 0-521-22228
- An Annotated Bibliography of Shakespeare Studies, 1604-1998. Mooney, Michael E. Asheville, NC:Pegasus Press, 1999. ISBN 1-889818-21-6.