

Dr. Nuzhat Shirin
Associate Professor
Dept of English (Sogua College)
Baramulla

Shakespearean Tragedy

B.A. Part II (Hons)

Tragedy is undoubtedly an integral part of a human life.

It is complementary to comedy.

No comedy can provide pleasure without tragedy. It is just like when you are laughing and suddenly your eyes are filled with tears. Henceforth, Tragedy covers a prolonged journey in drama, which is the remarkable work of fiction.

Although the idea and the concept is purely original but the depiction covers the circumference of the human life. It is the revelation of the human soul. I take the extreme delight to share my view on Shakespearean Tragedy. Let me take you to this adventurous and thrilling journey of Shakespearean Tragedies.

The 16th century playwright, William Shakespeare amalgamated the Plethora of human sentiments on the Colours palate of his art. He made his characters larger than life. The theme and the subjects were accumulated with the emotions and thought provoking ideal. I studied Shakespeare first when I was in school. My first introduction to him with his collections of drama in "Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare." I thoroughly enjoyed all his plays in that book. Later on, when I was more exposed to his plays in my advance stage of learning. I was awestruck to know all about him. I realised that knowledge doesn't owe to Universities and Institutions but can be inculcated through

③ Constant exposure to learning. His dramas were definitely the reflection of the society and do involve you with the story. Although if we try to understand the mindset of the era he belonged to. It was certainly the time when people were craving for entertainment. He penned for masses not for classes. His concept were capable to touch the heart of the millions. The name and fame which his plays have achieved is surely unblemishable. He recreated not only the people of his age but many more generations to follow. Shakespeare was very influenced by classical literature. But he never introduced any of his story-line as a conceptual borrowing rather

④
included variety and added the spice of supernatural machinery to the platter of drama. He gave the world's four famous tragedies - Macbeth, King Lear, Othello and Hamlet. He made people think through his drama that no matter how perfect your character is but there's one tragic flaw or loophole in your character that can be the cause of the devaluation in your life.

Let's take his first character 'Macbeth'. A great general, obviously people's favourite. He held a very strong position in King Duncan's army. But could not resist his greatness the moment he became overambitious. He tarnished his image and enslaved his mind to the prophecy of the three witches and Lady Macbeth who acted as the fourth witch. She

was the instigating feature in his life. He lost the trust and love of his dear friend Banquo. The play is filled with supernatural elements which reminds the character constantly about the heinous crime committed by him. He realised but it was very late and time cannot revert back and bring back whatever he lost in this process. He was left empty-handed and a lost soul towards the end. If he he would have been strong enough so that no one could compel him, his life would have been somewhat different. But he made a bad choice and paid a very heavy price.

King Lear another character of this tragedy was a great King and a ruler of unmatched potential. Apart from a wonderful King, he was a loving father.

But he was bitten by the snake of anger. This poison spoilt his life and relation with his daughter. He couldn't judge and differentiate between right and wrong. As a result, he trusted the two of his wicked daughters who later turned a fiasco to his expectation. He suspected the affection of his youngest daughter, Celia, in the fit of anger, banished her from the Kingdom and disowned her from his family legacy. The King foolishly added more complications in his life by handing over his property and Kingdom to his two wicked daughters. They made his life hard with their malicious attitude. He met his youngest daughter in unfavourable circumstances where Celia, in course of saving her father's life

had a deadly injury and sacrificed her life to her dear father. The King was left lamenting and thus his life ended. His royalty and greatness was overpowered by the icy hands of death. Shakespeare has beautifully constructed the feeling of the father who's helpless in the hands of destiny.

Next we move on to Othello, a young, promising and extremely talented man. He was everybody's favourite. He had everything in his life whatever he desired he achieved. He was blessed with a beautiful life. But one turmoil of emotion and everything was shattered. He suspected the intention of his wife and dear friend, with no solid evidence he decided to kill his wife. He never

tried to fend off the fact. He never realised that the people took undue advantage of his weak-mindedness and very tactfully they were able to dismantle his prosperous life. He believed them and spent everything he possessed. Although, he realised his mistake but he knew it was too late. He cannot regain his loss. The suspicious nature had overpowered his sense of understanding. He lacked the essence of continued his idiocracy and ended with emptiness in his life.

Last but not the least, is Hamlet, it is the world's longest play. The character who's over gentle, calm and composed. But his flaw was the lack of decision-making. The ghost of his departed father exposed the murderer. He delayed his revenge for the appropriate time. He could have reacted

is the right time, right place, (9)
and right person. Instead he
waited for the appointed time
and ended his own life in
tragedy. The apparition of his
father gave him constant remi-
nder to take the decision. He
gave himself a lot of time
and planned everything but
never put his thought to any
plan of action. He took the
revenge but at the cost of
his own life.

I tried to sum-up all the
four characters of the great
tragedies who became immortal.
There are movies, books and
several plays which are cen-
trally based on his plays.
Well, one thing is obvious
that even after 400 years of
these plays, they are still

fresh and fragrant in this garden of amusement. Even though, we know the story but when we watch it, we do watch it with new zeal and curiosity.

He propagated the idea that Man is the architect of his own destiny. It is not destiny that supercedes the life rather the tragic flaw. The disaster is self-fabricated and follows with Catharsis. We realize that excess of everything is bad as more the desire is less contented you are.

I conclude my synopsis that I tried to express whatever I have read, understood and conceived through his plays. Although we cannot sum-up great Shakespeare in few words but still I have tried to do so.

His plays are learning lesson to
Our society where people could
identify themselves with these
characters who are not fiction
but very natural. Thus, I end
with the hope that I am
able to do a little justice
to his masterpiece work.