



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Hamlet: A Study of the Ghost, King Hamlet and Its Contribution in the Tragedy

Author: Prithvi Raj, Lecturer in English Govt. Sr. Sec School, Gurera Distt. Bhiwani (Haryana)

Hamlet: A Study of the Ghost, King Hamlet and Its Contribution in the Tragedy: William Shakespeare is well known for his presentation of supernatural agency. His play Hamlet has been well presented with supernatural theme. It is related to mystery, magic and supernatural elements like ghost. It has a revengeful theme. The ghost of King exposes the reality to Prince and takes its revenge. It informs Prince Hamlet about the brutality of his uncle, Claudius. It exposes the plot of Claudius by which he kill him (the King). It was his younger brother, Claudius who killed him by poisoning in the ear. In real Hamlet is the story of the ghost. It creates the atmosphere of fear and doubt among the people. The appearance of the ghost is the real interest of play. Shakespeare has realistically given depiction of the ghost. It gives three told theatrical importance. It gives a tragic atmosphere to audience. Finally, it also fulfills a moral duty. It is the ghost of the king Hamlet who fulfills its three main actions. Firstly, it appears in strange and creepy situation. It appears during the midnight. It is taken time of the arrival regarding the ghosts and souls. Shakespeare also introduces ghosts and witches who produce fears and mystery in our hearts. This supernatural elements an important part to the action for tragedy. Rightly a critic says: —So that to describe human character.....to suspicion in Hamlet.¶[1]

In both cases, in Hamlet's view, the unworthy has displaced the worthy. There is a more apparent thematic purpose. The players highlight the theme of actors, acting and action. 'Acting' a mean 'playing a part' or 'pretending to be what you are not'. Claudius is a rightful king. To Quote: —Hamlet reflects that the Ghost may be a devil playing the part of King Hamlet.his own recessive inner nature seems to elude fully focused perception by himself or anyone else.¶[2]

It appears with clothes worn in moral life. Its appearances create an atmosphere of terror in the castle at Elsinore. It can not speak unless special person does not speak to him. Horatio is in the doubt regarding the appearance of the ghost and so at first he does not believe on his friend's words. Horatio wants to see the ghost himself and comes with Marcellus to witness the appearance. In the cold night they wait for ghost. It is a period full of tension and fear. Horatio shows his disbeliefs. —Tush, tush it will not appear¶. He is very thrilled and in his excitement, he says: —What art thou that usurp'st this time of night Together with that, Fair and warlike form in which the mystery of Denmark is buried, Did sometimes March.¶[3]

The Ghost creates fear and wonder in the heart of Horatio. He is surprised that it has same look of the late king. He is horrified to see the ghost. The Ghost has a purpose. But, it will not talk except Prince Hamlet. Hence, it disappears when Horatio wants to talk with it. Again it comes and wants to speak, but just then the cock crows and due to it the ghost disappears. Here, we find the complete picture of the ghost and its strange behavior. There is a peculiar group of problems around the Ghost. Really, the Ghost is both amazing and absurd. It certainly inspires awe and fear in the sentries and even in Horatio. But, equally, in the peculiarly extended scene of swear words to mystery, the Ghost seems to become a ridiculous strike of Hamlet's humour: he becomes for a while the 'old secret agent', the 'worthy pioner' (or sapper) and even 'this fellow in the cellarage' – so that briefly the awe-inspiring apparition dwindles into the embarrassed actor scuttling about in the dustily gloom under the planks of the Elizabethan stage. That word cellarage'suggests the dark under stage area, rather than the loftily ramparts of Elsinore Castle. A subtler problem is that of the Ghost's provenance. Is he indeed a spirit from Purgatory, as he claims, or is he a devil in disguise? [4]

Now Horatio, the sceptic believes in the existence of the ghost, after looking the apparition. He tells his exciting experience as —In what particular thought to work I know not, but in the gross and scope of my opinion, this bodies some strange eruption to our state.¶[5]

The Ghost was indignant about Gertrude's incest with Claudius. The laws of the Church (following Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21) expressly forbade a man to marry a widowed sister-in-law. Hamlet, too, seems appalled by the act of incest; indeed, he seems more disgusted by the incestuous sexuality than by the poisoning of his father. The difficulty here is that although the murder was secret, the marriage of Claudius to Gertrude was public and ceremonial; yet, apart from Hamlet and the Ghost, nobody seems to have noticed anything incestuous about it. Nor can this be taken as evidence that the court is sexually decadent, for the early conversations between Ophelia, Laertes and Polonius suggest that in sexual matters, this court is conventionally respectable in its morality. Perhaps an ecclesiastical dispensation was provided for Claudius (as it was provided for Henry VIII when he married Catherine of Aragon, widow of his brother Arthur), but the play doesn't say so. [6]

The ghost gives hints regarding dangers in the state of Denmark. He exposes warlike planning for Denmark. Soon, Horatio and his friend inform Hamlet regarding the ghost. Firstly, Hamlet does not believe in the ghost, but later, his doubts go away. He wonders: —My father's spirit in arms! All is not well, I doubt some foul play. Then, the ghost appears before Hamlet himself, and it exposes its real cause of arrival. —The reason is to take revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. A ghost isn't realistic. Yet, once again, Shakespeare has taken a traditional device and given it some realistic convulsion. Hamlet's reference to 'this fellow in the cellarage' may show not a scorn of the meeting, but rather a playwright's confidence that the Ghost has been so convincingly dramatized that an analogy with a theatrical situation can be confidently deployed without breaking the adjournment of distrust. To Quote: —Again; the Ghosttask of revenge. [7]

Then the ghost desires Hamlet to take the duty of revenge regarding his father's murder. Some commentators, remarkably the significant A.C. Bradley and the Freudian Ernst Jones, produced interpretations which emphasized the intelligent association of the work. According to Bradley: —The key to the central characterfor luxury and damned incest. [8]

Really, the entire action of the play revolves round the ghost. Since, the ghost highlights on unexpected murder. Rightly, Verity says, —Without the ghost's initial revelation of truth to Hamlet for revenge in other words no tragedy of Hamlet. The ghost has two other important actions in the play. Hamlet's mind is in doubt regarding ghost's reality. Therefore, he wants to confirm the truth of its words. He puts on an antic disposition, and then he is enacted the 'mouse-trap' play to catch the conscience of the king. Hamlet is succeeding in his mission and he comes to know all the reality of his father's murder. Actually, Shakespeare wants to create a mood of mystery and fear in the very opening scene. In the first Act Horatio repeatedly asks the ghost: —What art thou, that usurp'st this time. Together with that fair warlike form, in which the majesty of buried Denmark Did some times March? By heaven, I charge speak! [9]

Hamlet doubts on his father's death, it is natural that he also knows the murderer; it is evident in the book itself. He has doubt that Claudius is the murderer. It makes him more bitter and sarcastic to the king. According to Grigori Kozintsev: —Hamlet alreadyOh my prophetic soul! My uncle! [10]

The ghost of Hamlet's father exchanges some words with Hamlet as is shown vividly in the play itself. But the words which the ghost speaks us in doubt about his reality. The ghost says: —I am thy father's spirit;and purg'd away. [11]

We are surprised about what the foul crimes of the ghost were. —Foul, in fact, seems to have been a favorite word of the ghost's, as it was of Hamlet's: —List, List, O, And List: If thou didst ever thy dear father love. [12]

The ghost again views: —But this most foul strange, and unnatural. [13]

Really, it shows that the play is the story of ghost, but Hamlet is real attraction. His own will leads him to his downfall. He has deep faith in the Christianity and superstitions. Actually, the supernatural powers more affect the people who have faith in them. It is man himself who performs his actions, but when he does not succeed in his intention he blames on the supernatural agencies. We can see all these things in the play. Hamlet knowingly spares Claudius, when he is in prayer. It was his will that he spares Claudius alive. Rightly, Harold C. Goddard says: —Bradley says of the prayer scene: the reason Hamlet gives himself for sparing the king isconsciousness must explain the delay and hence the realization. [14]

Actually, Shakespeare has portrayed Hamlet's mind and will through his soliloquies. According to H.E. Stowell says: —had Hamlet forgotten the ghost's and Ghost's commands.....superhuman a creature of another world. [15]

But at this Gertrude exclaims with sorrow that he is mad. The Queen surprisingly asks Hamlet: —Alas, how isn't with you.....do you look!!? [16]

Actually, there is no ghost, but it is the result of Hamlet's mind. The queen also accepts that she cannot see any ghost. She answers —nothing at all yet all that is seen. Again Hamlet questions the Queen —not did you nothing hear? The Queen answers —no nothing but us. Hamlet again says to the Queen:—Why, look you there.....out at the portal!![17]

At this the Queen advises the Prince to be real and true regarding the ghost and its appearance. So she says to her son: —This iscunning in. [18]

Again, it shows if the Queen can not see the ghost, she must hear him. But she neither sees nor hears ghost. Thus, we can say that the Ghost is only the result of Hamlet's mind. Grigori Kozintsev also says: —The relations of the protagonist to the ghost are also different..... In my mind's eye, Horatio.' answers the Prince. [19]

We can say that, it is clear that Shakespeare uses the ghost only for dramatic purpose, and to make us see the inner working of Hamlet's mind and the minds of the characters of the play. It is man's will, which leads him to his success or failure. His own speculative nature, doubts, inaction, introspectiveness, procrastination, etc. shape his end but not the ghost.

The Ghost As Creation Of Mind: Hamlet is also the finest presentation of the supernatural agency as it is the story of the ghost. It creates fear and doubt in the hearts of the people. The dark and chilly night along with the talk about the ghost creates an atmosphere of tension and fear. Horatio reveals his disbeliefs. —Tush, tush it will not appear. When Bernardo begins to describe his experience, the ghost makes its appearance.

It is the ghost of the late king of Denmark. It comes clad in armor and has the same. —.....fair and warlike form in which the mystery of buried Denmark, Did sometimes March. The appearance of the ghost signifies some dangers in the state of Denmark. The ghost explains the warlike preparation that is going on in Denmark because of the threat of war to Denmark. Thus the ghost motivates the entire action of the play. It is solely through the ghost that an unsuspected murder is brought to light and subsequent course of action was its motive power to foul frosted this revealed. Verity points out, —Without the ghost's initial revelation of truth to Hamlet for revenge in other words no tragedy of Hamlet.

In the ghost's first appearance Hamlet is given the duty of avenging his father's murder. Due to his irresolution and suspense he delays in his action. Hence the ghost makes its second appearance in the closet scene, when Hamlet is talking with his mother and she does believe in the ghost and points.—This is very coinage of your brain This bodiless creation ecstasy is the very cunning in. Verity says: —The ghost's appearance speedily crises? Shakespeare produces an atmosphere of mystery and fear in the very opening scene when Marcellus asks —What has this thing appeared again tonight?!

There is no doubt that the preliminary talk about the Ghost creates tension and fear, and that the actual appearance of the Ghost on the stage would 'harrow' the audience with —fear and wonder. In the first Act Horatio repeatedly asks the ghost? —What art thou.... I charge the speak! Now the fact is that they are not certain whether the ghost is real or illusion. If it were the ghost of Hamlet's father, Horatio must have said —most like!

Moreover he must have recognized him. Grigori Kozintsev also has the same opinion, when he says: —The ghost thrustthis kind of belief naively. As he doubts his father's death, it is natural that he also knows the murderer; it is evident in the book itself. When the ghost discloses to him, which is nothing but own state of mind, he exclaims: —Oh my prophetic soul! My uncle!

In comparison with other specters of Elizabethan dramaturgy, Shakespeare's ghost is an achievement in realism. Thus, we can say that Shakespeare uses the supernatural in order to show the unconscious minds of his characters. The ghost of Hamlet's father exchange a few words with Hamlet as is show the dramatically in the plays itself, But the words which the ghost speaks us in doubt about his existence. The ghost says: —I am thy father's spirit; Doom'd for certain term to walk the night, And, for the day, confined to waste in fires Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature Are burnt and purg'd away.

We wonder what these foul crimes of this ghost were. —Foul, in fact, seems to have been a favorite word of the ghost's, as it was of Hamlet's: —List, List, O, List: - If thou didst ever thy dear father love. The ghost again says: —But this most foul,

Strange and unnatural. Whether the ghost of Hamlet's father is real or unreal depends on what the ghost says. It appears to Hamlet, Bernardo, Marcellus, and Horatio. If the ghost really wants to avenge his murder, why doesn't appear to the public of Denmark.

In our opinion, he must have appeared to the public but not to Hamlet. It is not the public trouble that trouble Hamlet, though, in another sense, he stands under same shadows concern. But at this Gertrude exclaims with sorrow that he is mad. The Queen surprisingly asks Hamlet: —Alas, how isn't with you, That you do bend your eye on vacancy, And which the incorporeal air do hold discourse? Forth at your eye your spirits wildly peep; And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm, your bedded hair. Like life in excrements, Starts up and stands on end. O gentle son, Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper, Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look? If the Queen is unable to see the ghost, then it is certain that there is not ghost. Again, if the Queen cannot see the ghost, she must hear him. However, she neither sees nor hears ghost.

Thus, we can conclude that the Ghost is merely the projection of Hamlet's mind. Grigori Kozintsev also agrees with us who says: —The relations of the protagonist his facial features. Thus, it is clear that Shakespeare uses the ghost only for dramatic purpose, and to make us see the inner working of Hamlet's mind and the minds of the characters of the play. Hamlet's tragedy would have been the same, had there not been the ghost.

References:-

1. Bradely A.C., Shakespearean Tragedy (Delhi, AITBS Publisher & Distributors (ed. 2006) P. 8
2. Shakespeare William, Hamlet, (Britain, Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 2002) (P21)
3. Shakespeare William, Hamlet (Delhi, UBS Publishers'Distributors Ltd. 1997) (Act 1 Scene- 1 (L40-50)
4. Shakespeare William, Hamlet, (Britain, Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 2002) (P14)
5. Brooke Tucker and Jack Crawford Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (Ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947), 11.
6. Shakespeare William, Hamlet, (Britain, Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 2002) (P14)
7. Shakespeare William, Hamlet, (Britain, Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 2002) (P17)
8. D.D. Charles Symmons, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (ed.) (Atlantis. London N.I.England,1980). Act.I, Sc.I, P. 789
9. Brooke Tucker and Jack Crawford Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947), 11
10. Brooke Tucker and Jack Crawford Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (Ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947), 11.
11. Brooke Tucker and Crawford, Jack Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947) 39.
12. Brooke Tucker and Crawford Jack Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (Ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947) 39.
13. Brooke Tucker and Crawford Jack Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (Ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947) 40.
14. Brooke Tucker and Crawford Jack Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (Ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947) 40.
15. C. Goddard Harold, The Meaning of Shakespeare, (Chicago and London: The University Press, 1951) Vol.I, 349
16. Stowell, An Introduction to English Litature, (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1966), 42-43.

17. Kind Alfred Philip Edwards, (Ed), Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1997), 38

18. Brooke Tucker and Crawford Jack Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (Ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947) 112.

19. Brooke Tucker and Crawford Jack Randall, The Tragedy of Hamlet, (ed), (London: New Haven Yale University Press, 1947) 11 25. Aristotle 1984: Aristotle. P

