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DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GREEK AND SHAKESPEREAN TRAGEDIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Mr. Malatesh G. Bandiwaddar

Assistant Prof. Dept. of English

Mahantaswamy Arts, Science and Commerce College,

Haunsbhavi- 581109 Dist: Haveri

State: Karnataka

INTRODUCTION

Since many more years we are studying Greek and Shakespearean tragedies but there is one dilemma among us is that which is ultimate either fate or the character itself. But still today it is very difficult to say that either destiny or character is dominated. Let us through 'Antigone' Greek tragedy and 'Hamlet' Shakespearean tragedy.

Objectives:

- To study the Greek and Shakespearean tragedy.
- To know about Shakespeare's great tragedy.
- To study about the domination of character, the character is dominated in Shakespeare tragedies

Scope of study:

One Greek and one Shakespeare's tragedy is referred to make understand the reader about the difference between Greek and Shakespearean tragedies. We referred 'Antigone' form Greek tragedy and Hamlet from Shakespearean tragedy.

The dominance of fate in Greek tragedy where as the dominance of character in Shakespeare's tragedy.

Methodology: In this paper analytical and comparative methods are used.

Antigone:

Antigone is the daughter of Oedipus, Greek drama's most infamous figure. Oedipus was a king who married his own mother after killing his own father – not knowing that either were his parents. The story of Oedipus the King, Sophocles' most renowned work, is useful for giving us insight into Antigone's doomed lineage and should be understood prior to reading Antigone.

In the days preceding the start of the action of *Antigone*, Thebes has been torn apart by war. When Oedipus fell from grace, his sons Polyneices and Eteocles were too young to ascend to rule, and so the kingdom was entrusted to Creon, the brother of Jocasta. The brothers soon reach the suitable age to take over, but they continue to entrust rule to Creon, knowing that a curse seems to follow their family. But soon enough, they begin fighting over who will rule Thebes – Polyneices, as the older brother, believes he has the birthright, but Eteocles ousts him, which sends Polyneices looking for refuge in Argos. There he raises a powerful army, which he uses to invade Thebes – leading to his own death and that of Eteocles. Creon ascends to the throne once more. It is at this point that the play begins.

Antigone asks Ismene to help her bury Polyneices, even though to do so would ensure both their deaths. Creon has “no right to keep me from my own”. Ismene refuses because she says that they are women and must not fight with men – men are stronger and therefore must be obeyed. It is not her responsibility as a woman to “aim too high, too far”. Antigone is furious with her sister and says she would no longer welcome her help even if Ismene granted it. She also says that she will die willingly for her brother and ensure he is given a proper burial.

Antigone is different from other Greek dramas in that it is more a play of competing philosophies than a drama of ‘action’ or plot. Indeed, Antigone isn’t allowed to just plunge headlong into her decision to bury Polyneices instead, she must repeatedly explain herself in the face of philosophical objection. First in line is her sister Ismene, who argues that their family has suffered enough- their father died in hatred and disgrace after gouging out his eyes, their mother hanged herself, and their brothers killed each other- but now they’re alone -and women must not fight with men, because men are stronger and control the law. Because Antigone refuses to kowtow to Ismene’s reasoning, she has often been held up as literature’s first feminist.

The watchman arrives, clearly nervous about being the bearer of bad news to Creon. Indeed, he says that he almost didn’t come for fear that Creon would project his anger about the news onto him – but then realized that if Creon heard the news from another man, he might be even angrier. Creon tells the watchman to spit it out, and the watchman says that Polyneices body has been properly buried. The guards discovered the body buried completely, with attention to ceremony, leaving no marks behind. There was no sign of wild animals, he says, and no dogs sniffing or tugging at the corpse. The guards began to blame each other before realizing that the only way to find the culprit would be to inform Creon. They held a lottery as to who would be the messenger of bad news, and the watchman lost.

Antigone and Creon’s debate has a number of fascinating implications. Antigone’s argument is a rebuttal of the Chorus’ “Ode to Man”. She implies that man has no power over the rights to life and death that these are functions of the gods, and that since Zeus made no announcement about the burial of Polyneices, she is free to bury him as she likes. The gods’ laws live for all time, and no man can suddenly change them or manipulate the penalties surrounding them. Creon, meanwhile, sees such an attitude not as relating to the debate over the powers between man vs. god, but rather in terms of the mundane, mortal struggle between man and woman. For as long as Antigone claims to serve a higher

power than Creon, then she “would be the man”. Creon believes that Antigone must be killed to right the balance and ensure that no woman will ever best a man. Indeed, he believes that as long as he stamps out this woman who serves a higher power than himself, he will ensure that man’s established laws always reign supreme. Ultimately, then, the battle between Creon and Antigone can be distilled to Creon’s tragic flaw: his belief in the absolute supremacy of man’s law. Ultimately, he will pay the price by seeing how little control he wields over both the will of the people and the will of the gods.

Ultimately, however, we're left with the question of whether Antigone is a true martyr an innocent victim or whether she also bears responsibility for her own death. Critics of the time made a number of charges against Antigone all seemingly tied to her transgressions as a woman. She leaves her home in the dark before dawn to conspire with her sister and such activity in the dark is forbidden to women. She takes on burial, which is men's work. She does not accept male authority, and she threatens the order of the city by violating an order of the king. Perhaps most damning of all, she seems to make a conscious choice to give up the life of a woman (marriage, children, etc.) to stand by her principles something that must have truly infuriated the men of the time. But Antigone's argument for the power of unwritten, divine law is particularly cogent and seems to deny any attempts to impose a tragic flaw upon her. Her reasoning, simply put, is that it doesn't matter what man conceives of as right and wrong for himself, and it certainly doesn't matter if these things are written in stone. Rather, it is more important to follow divine truth the rights and wrongs of the heart to ensure that man will live in accordance with the will of the gods. As a result, there is no precise law only a guide what should be done in a given circumstance and though she will be punished for her supposed transgression by losing her life, and regrets such a cruel fate, Antigone cannot take back what she has done because it is the only thing she could have done as a child of the gods.

Hamlet:

Prince Hamlet of Denmark is urged by his father’s Ghost to avenge his murder at the hands of the dead Kings brother, now king Claudius; to make matters worse, Cladius has married the widow Hamlet’s mother, Queen Gertrude. Denmark is under threat of invasion from young Fortinbras who seeks to regain lands lost of Hamlet’s father by Fortinbras’s father. Cladius sense word to the king of Norway to crab Fortinbras’s aggression. In the mean time Hamlets pains madness with his family and friend, including his beloved Ophelia, sister to Laertes and daughter to Polonius. Both Polonius and Laertes worn Ophelia against Hamlet’s madness to beloved sickness. Laertes is given permission to return to his studies in Paris.

Hamlet seizes the opportunity presented by a traveling troupe of players to expose the king's guilt with a “play within a play”. Soon after, Hamlet delays killing Claudius because the king is at prayer and Hamlet does not wish to send him to heaven instead of hell. When Gertrude meets with Hamlet as Claudius has directed, Polonius hides behind the arras in Gertrude’s room to eavesdrop in the conversation. Hamlet suspecting the interlopes is Claudius, states and Polonius. When Polonius’s body

is discovered summons Hamlet and tells him must sail to England for his own safety; Rosencrantz and Guildenstern accompany Hamlet, carrying letters to the English, threatening was unless to Denmark; and is met by Horatio.

Ophelia has gone Insane after Hamlet's departure and her Father's death. Laertes retuning and vows to avenge Polonius's death. Claudius contrives a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes. During which Hamlet is to be injured with a poisoned sword tip and poisoned with a drink, they assuring his death. When news arrives that Ophelia has drowned herself, Laertes is grief stricken. Hamlet and Horatio happen upon the burial site and funeral cortege; Hamlet tries to fight Laertes but is restrained.

Hamlet tells Horatio that he rewrote the papers carried by Rosencrantz and Guidlenstern and that the letters now call for their own deaths. Orica invites Hamlet to the dues with Laertes; Claudius has supposedly but on Hamlet to win Gertrude mistakenly drinks from the cup poisoned by Claudius for Hamlet and dies; Laertes wound Hamlet with poisoned sword, and then Hamlet wounds Laertes when they accidents exchange swords. When Laertes reveals the conspiracy, Hamlet wounds the king and forces the poisoned drink upon him. Laertes and Hamlet reconcile and Laertes dies; Hamlet prevents Horatio from drinking the poison. So that he can live to tell the truth. Hamlet homes as his successor young Fortinbras, who arrives and orders Hamlet buried with all dignity.

At the center of the tragedy, however is the defect in Hamlet own character true that fate has placed the prince in a difficult situation, but another man in his place would have executed the revenge promptly, after a confirmation of the Ghost's allegation at any rate and have done with it. But Hamlet hesitates and wavers. This variation is the tragic flaw in his character. The course that a man of action would adopt in such a situation is clear instant pursuit of revenge. But Hamlet is not a man of action. The only action that he is capable of impulsive action. He is not capable of premeditated or planned action. He is the tragedy of thought.

Findings:

- The belief on fate or destiny among the Greek people.
- Their interest to watch Greek tragedies.
- Character is dominated in Shakespeare tragedies.

Suggestions:

We learn both Greek and Shakespearean tragedies

What is to follow either the influence of Fate or Character

Is it possible to follow one exactly between these two , this decision is left to us.

In 'Hamlet' the tragedy occurs due his disability or **"To be or not To be."** In 'Antigone' tragedy occurs due to the curse of the family. A sincere effort is made of through the Greek and Shakespearean Tragedy to know the influence of fate and character. In the modern world it is very difficult to accept either the influence of fate is dominated or the influence of character is dominated it is purely depended upon his/ her depended upon his / her own will and ability.

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