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Aristotle's Poetics And Shakespeare's Tragedy: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Tragedy (Greek word) is a former of drama based on human suffering that invokes an accompanying catharsis or pleasure in audiences. Shakespeare's plays are full of conflicting thoughts, and expression is so convincing that it is not possible to plan a system of philosophy out of them. Many cultures have developed forms that provoke this paradoxical response. The term tragedy often refers to a specific tradition of drama that has played a unique and important role historically in the self-definition of Western civilisation. That tradition has been multiple and discontinuous, yet the term has often been used to invoke a powerful effect of cultural identity and historical continuity. Each character, from the king to the clown, from the most highly intellectual to the simpleton, judges life from his own point of view and says something that is so deep and appropriate at the playwright's versatility of genius. In this article, the analysis of Shakespearean tragedies is presented.

Keywords: Tragedy, comparative study, plays, action, pity and fear

Aristotle's Tragedy:-

According to Aristotle : "A tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; In appropriate and pleasurable language;in a dramatic rather than narrative form ;with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish a Catharsis of these emotions." Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of action and life , of happiness and misery. And life consists of action, and its end is a mode of activity, not a quality.

The plot, then is the first principle, and as it were the soul of a tragedy character holds the second place.

According to Aristotle, tragedy has six main elements:

- Plot
- Character
- Diction
- Thought
- Spectacle and
- Music,

The first two are primary. Most of the poetics is devoted to analysis of the scope and proper use of these elements, with illustrative examples selected from many tragic dramas. Aristotle's Poetics is the earliest - surviving work of dramatic theory, and this work is a good source to examine Aristotle, a tragedy is characterized by seriousness. It represents or imitates the reality. Thus, it's an imitation of action and life, of happiness and misery.

Aristotle argues that some kinds of anagnorisis are better than others. "The least artistic kind," albeit "the most common," arises from "poverty [of imagination]" and works through "signs [and tokens]" such as Odysseus's scar invented signs and amulets". The best kind comes about instead "from the events themselves, when the shock of surprise arises from likely circumstances." In the case of Euripides' Iphigenia, for example, "naturally she wanted to send the message" As Kathy Eden points out, this contrast between different types of anagnorisis in the Poetics corresponds to the distinction between "signs" and "probability" as tools of forensic persuasion that Aristotle sets out in his Rhetoric

According to Aristotle, "Plot is the soul of Tragedy. "Plot is the 'First principal 'and He defines Plot as "The Harmonious arrangement of the incidents. "Simple plot have only a "Change of fortune. "The plot is "the end at which tragedy aims." Character comes in as subsidiary to the action. First the characters must be life like. They must be true representatives of actual human nature. Secondly, they must be like the traditional or historical personages on whom they are modeled and whose name they bear. Aristotle has given four types of hero and the characteristics:

- 1.A good man-coming to bad end.
- 2.A bad man-coming to good end.
- 3.A bad man-coming to bad end.
- 4.A rather good man-coming to good end.

Aristotle says that the chorus should have importance like the actor. Diction is medium of language and expression. In modern sense it means "choice of words." Aristotle was particularly interested in metaphors. Aristotle says, "Thought on the other hand, is shown in all they say when proving or disproving some particular point or enunciating some universal position. "Where something is proved to be or not to be or a general maxim is enunciated. "The Spectacle is the pleasure of tragedy. "The prediction of spectacular effects depends more on the art of the stage machinist than on that of the poet."

Shakespearean Tragedy

The Greek term tragedian, which means "the song of the goat," is the source of the English word tragedy. The reason it is known as "the song of the goat" is because satyr costumes made of goatskin were once worn by theatre players in ancient Greece. A tragedy in today's theatre and literature is a piece that has a negative conclusion. The main character's failure must be revealed in the conclusion.

Shakespeare's plays portray evil in a way that implies its presence is a necessary and eternal reality. For instance, the reader of Hamlet is left with the idea that Denmark will undoubtedly experience something negative (foreshadowing) Although the viewer knows a hint, most of the play's characters are unaware of the forthcoming evil.

The Greek word hamartia, which means "sin" or "error," comes from the verb hamatanein, which means "to err" or "to miss the point." Hamartia, then, is the tragic fault of the hero. It is yet another crucial component of a tragedy by Shakespeare. Every hero eventually fails because of a fault in their character. A. C. Bradley, who claims that "The calamities and catastrophe flow unavoidably from the actions of men and the primary source of these actions is character," will be cited once more in this passage. The fatal fault frequently causes the hero to fall from a height, which inevitably results in death.

One of the most important aspects of a Shakespearean tragedy is the tragic hero. Tragedies of this kind are essentially one-man performances. It tells the story of one, or occasionally two, characters. The protagonist, who might be either male or female, must endure suffering due to a defect in their character, an unavoidable twist of fate, or both. The tragedies "are fundamentally a tale of suffering and calamity tragic character in the drama must be the hero. Shakespearean leading to death," according to Andrew Cecil Bradley, a renowned Shakespeare scholar of the 20th century. (Typically, the hero must ultimately face death.)

Being a dominant figure in their state, kingdom, or nation is a crucial characteristic of the tragic hero. This person comes from the upper class and occupies a prominent position, frequently a regal one. Kings, princes, or army commanders are tragic heroes because they are revered by their subjects. Consider Hamlet, the prince of Denmark, who is smart, well-educated, charming, gregarious, and inclined toward philosophy. The hero is such a significant figure that when they die, there is widespread unrest, disturbance, and anarchy all across the place. When Hamlet exacts revenge on his uncle for the death of his father, he also invites his own death at the hands

of Laertes. As a direct consequence of his passing, the Fortinbras army invades Denmark to seize power. Another essential component of a Shakespearean tragedy is the supernatural elements. They contribute significantly to the sense of awe, wonder, and occasionally fear. Usually, the story and plot are advanced by using supernatural elements. The ghost that Hamlet sees is crucial in igniting internal turmoil. The ghost informs Hamlet that his father was murdered by his uncle Claudius and charges him with exacting retribution. Similar to how the witches in Macbeth are crucial to the storyline. These witches were the ones that persuaded Macbeth to commit murder in order to take the Scottish crown.

Conclusion

In comparison with some of his contemporaries, most notably Shakespeare has often been seen as a writer who was largely unconcerned – at least on an explicit level – with dramatic theory. It is widely assumed that he can have had no knowledge of Aristotle's Poetics, since he knew little, if any, Greek. However, the Poetics would have been accessible to Shakespeare through one of the many Latin and Italian translations and commentaries which were circulating in the period. He could also have ascertained its basic premises from a variety of mediating sources such as Sidney's Defence, or through personal contact with fellow dramatists, such as Jonson and Fletcher, who were acquainted with the Poetics. Shakespeare's plays present clear evidence of at least some familiarity with Aristotelian theory, through references to catharsis and the Unities.

Tragedies, and plays written in Shakespeare's style by other authors are also referred to be Shakespearean tragedies, Nonetheless, Shakespearean tragedy stands out from other tragedies due to its unique characteristics. It should be remembered that Shakespeare largely based his works on Aristotle's idea of tragedy.

Shakespeare's tragedies depict the conflict between right and wrong. The majority of them discuss the dominance of evil and the suppression of good. Shakespeare's concept of tragedy, in the words of renowned poet and literary critic Edward Dowden, "concerns the ruin or regeneration of the spirit and of the life of man. In other words, the conflict between Good and Evil in the world is its focus.

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