



PARADIGM OF HAMLET'S TRAGEDY- A FASCINATING HERO

¹**SHIVANI KAUL**

¹Research Scholar, Singhania University, Rajasthan

ABSTRACT

Hamlet's tragedy is a paradigm of a universal predicament: action is necessary, but action in a fallen world, drowns us in evil. In Hamlet, Shakespeare attains to a freedom and fullness of a previously unknown dramatic expression. Hamlet himself, it may be said, is the most life-like and 'original' of his creations. Hamlet is the centre of action in the play. The other characters serve as foils to him. This article focuses on tragedy of Hamlet a fascinating hero.

Keywords:- Hamlet, Tragedy, Fascination

INTRODUCTION

Generally agreed to be Shakespeare's most fascinating hero, Hamlet has "been buried under volumes of interpretation - much of it conflicting". The character is a mysterious combination of a series of literary sources and the phenomenal genius of Shakespeare. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, son of the former and nephew of present king, the "melancholy Dane", a "Sweet prince", the glass of fashion and the mould of form, a scholar, gentleman and idealistic, thrust by fate and by social demands into the role of bloody avenger which his soul detests. The cause of tragedy in *Hamlet* is over thoughtfulness of Hamlet himself. This is a play so dominated by one character that Hamlet without the 'prince' is impossible to imagine.

WEAKNESSES & CRITICISM

Hamlet is larger than life. Critics maintain that the weakness of Hamlet is not to be wholly set down to his own account. The world is against him. Torn by grief for his dead father and disappointed in the conduct of his mother whom he deeply loved, Hamlet desires deep revenge against his villainous uncle. His attempt to appropriate God's prerogative of judgment, leads to the deaths in the play. Prior his death, he reaches a state of resignation and acceptance of God's will; and though he gains his revenge he loses his life." Hamlet was a man of exquisite sensibility and virtue 'placed in a situation in which even the amiable qualities of his mind serve but to aggravate his distress and to perplex his conduct'. Shakespeare, who felt so truly the significance of external nature, as the enviroing medium of human passion, understood also, that no man is independent of the social and moral condition under which he lives and acts.

Hamlet too, like all other Shakespearean heroes, is endowed with exceptional qualities like royal birth, a graceful and charming personality and popularity among his own countrymen. He is essentially a scholar and thinker, and his noble brain conceives the finest thoughts. He is religious-minded and is very sensitive. Despite possessing such noble qualities which rank him above the other characters, the 'tragic flaw' in his character, leads to his downfall. . The tragic flaw in the character is that he thinks too

much and feels too much. He is often disturbed by his own nature of 'self analysis'. He is forever looking in himself, delving in his own nature to seek an explanation for every action and giving vent to his own thought in soliloquies. Hamlet was not perfect, but from our compassion and anxiety concerning him arises that 'indescribable charm ... which attracts every reader and every spectator. The speeches and sayings of Hamlet are "as real as our own thoughts.... It is we who are Hamlet".

*"To be or not to be, that is the question whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. or to take
Arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them. To, die, to sleep
No more; and by sleep to say we end."*

BELIEVER IN LIFE'S MISFORTUNES

Hamlet is right in believing that no one, oppressed by the misfortunes of life, would continue to bear them were it not for a hope about a possible fortune, in one's next life. And then he says that such reflection makes men hesitate and shrink like cowards, from action. "Longing for oblivion of death, his personal plight is transcended in the plight of man, suffering all the 'natural shocks that flesh is heir to' and he debates what will reveal itself as the basic issue of the play: whether it is better escaped from - or endured"! In this soliloquy, Hamlet is not thinking of the duty laid upon him at all. He is debating the question of suicide, one that is not uncommon to man, at some point in life, where he is so overwhelmed by suffering, that putting an end to life, seems the only recourse he may easily resort to. Bradley says "Hamlet's procrastination was the normal response of an over-speculative nature confronted with difficult practical problem." Hamlet is a man living in meditation called upon to act by every motive, human and divine by the great object of this life is defeated by continually resolving to do yet doing nothing but resolve. Hamlet's assumed madness is a misfortune; instead of assisting him to achieve anything, it is one of the causes which tend to retard his action; "now instead of forcing himself upon the world, and compelling it to accept a mandate of his will, he can enjoy the delight of mere observer and critic; he can understand and mock; whereas he ought to act. He does not aim at producing any effect with his speech, and his words are mere words, not deeds. They are uttered self-indulgently, to please the intellectual or artistic part of him, or to gratify his passing mood of melancholy, or irritation or of scorn".

Shakespeare was fascinated by the mysteries of life and Hamlet could be considered a prototype of his own views of life. Shakespeare wished his audience to experience the mystery of life, which is not easy to unravel. A.C. Bradley further remarks "Of course, Hamlet appeals powerfully to our sense of the mystery of life, but so does every good tragedy and it does so, not because having a fair understanding of him, we feel how strange it is that strength and weakness should be so mingled in one soul, and that this soul should be deemed to such misery and apparent failure." It is with Hamlet, as with Greek tragedy, 'the myth never finds an adequate objective correlative in the spoken words'. He is haunted by all the ills and wrongs of this life from which only death can bring release. Hamlet speaks more superficially than he acts, 'there is something deeper going on within the play that finds appropriate expression in the speech. "Sir...sleep". No character surely, is less composed to a formula than Hamlet. Yet as, with seeming naturalness, he passes "from lofty contemplation to rage or scorn or enigmatic thrusts of wit, we are fairly consistently aware of a man at odds with his environment and with its reflection in himself". He laments the state of things in Denmark where his father has been succeeded by his uncle, to whom the fickle public have transferred allegiance and the Queen, her wifely embraces. But it is not only what she is that contaminates him. He has a sense of belonging to a deceased stock. And his disgust with what he is, extends beyond his personal inheritance to 'all the uses' of the world in which only rank and gross things flourish. Hamlet's chief perplexity is one of translations, of finding a way to convert the Ghost's promptings into action, without being stained by the corruption of Denmark, or becoming like the murderer whom he is to punish. The act required of him, through retributive justice, is one that necessarily involves the doer in the general guilt.

The play's the thing Where in I'll catch the conscience of the king.

However the certain proof supplied by the inner play does not solve the problem of Hamlet. The question for Hamlet is, how one deal does with such a man, without becoming like him.

It is because the sense of providence in the play that "the apparent failure of Hamlet's life is not the ultimate truth concerning him." The figure of the Ghost is a reminder or a symbol of the connection of the limited world of the ordinary experience. He effects imagination not only as the apparition of a dead king who desires the accomplishment of his purposes but as the messenger of divine justice. Hamlet "is a figure of nihilism and death. He has been poisoned by his grief, and he has communed with dead. He has been instructed never to let the past be forgotten. He is a sick soul..... commanded to heal' and in fact the poison in the veins of the community, an element of evil in the state of Denmark". Philip Edward regarding this, comment's "A balanced judgment is forced to pronounce, ultimately in favour of life as contrasted with death, for optimism and healthily second rate, rather than the nihilism of superman; for he is not safe, primarily because he is right".

CONCLUSION

Hamlet essentially is a story of the inadequacy and importance of sensitivity in the face of a stern demand of action. "An Oak tree has been planted in a precious vase fitted to receive beautiful flowers; as the tree's roots spread out, the vase is shattered in pieces. 'A beautiful, pure, noble and most moral nature without the strength of nerve which makes the hero, sinks beneath a burden which is it can neither bear nor throw off; every duty is holy to him - this too hard. *Hamlet*, is more of an exploration and less of a preachment. It devotes itself to the very poignant issue of the legitimacy of violence and the responsibility of the individual in pursuing justice, finding in the revenge convention, an extraordinary rich source of conflict to exhibit and illuminate the many faces of violence and redress. Hamlet was thinking too precisely on the event, he was considering, among other things, the question how he could avenge his father without sacrificing his own life or freedom.

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