

**SHAKESPEARE AND TRAGEDY: A STUDY****Dr. Padmavati S. Undale**

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**Abstract:** The present paper deals with the study of the characteristics of the Shakespeare's tragedies. It is interesting to study how his tragedies reflect social scenario of his time, how they were developed and diversified, staged and critically analyzed. The critics like Aristotle, Hegel, Nietzsche, Puttenham and Sidney have discussed the concept of tragedy. Their views are referred in this article. The power of Shakespeare's language, his insight into characters, and his dramaturgical inventiveness distinguish his tragedies from other tragedies. Shakespeare's tragedies Romeo and Juliet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet, Antony and Cleopatra, Timon of Athens, Julius Caesar, Coriolanus are referred in this paper. The paper also deals with the influence on Shakespeare's tragedies. The features of Seneca Tragedy and its influence on Shakespeare are discussed in the paper.

**Key Words:** Tragic hero, tragic flaw, destruction, distortion, victimization

**Shakespeare and Tragedy: a Study**

It is interesting to study how Shakespeare's tragedies were originated, developed and diversified, staged and critically analyzed. Shakespeare's plays are often classified into groups or categories as Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, The Late Romances and Roman Plays. Many of his History plays have the tragic features but they are based on real figures throughout the history of England, they are categorized under History play. The Roman tragedies Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus are also based on historical figures but the source of the story is foreign and ancient they are classified as tragedies. Shakespeare's classic tragedies are King Lear and Hamlet - tragedies of high class, Othello and Macbeth - tragedies of military rank. His tragedies are known for the skillful handling of the theme, characterization, tragic flaw, and poetic language. Romeo and Juliet is a love tragedy which explores the conflict between two families and how this conflict causes the destruction of the lovers. Antony and Cleopatra dramatizes great figures of classical past like queen of Egypt. Caesar set in the ancient classical world of Rome. Hamlet is a revenge tragedy. Hamlet is obsessed by revenge and becomes dehumanized and unsympathetic. Othello describes the tragic end of passionate love between an exotic Moor and a beautiful Venetian noble woman. Macbeth is the story of ambition and pride which lead to destruction. Timon of Athens and Coriolanus are the tragedies of disillusionment. It is about Timon and Coriolanus's disappointment in human behavior, their mistrust of ordinary people. King Lear dramatizes the suffering of old man and his struggle with fundamental questions about nature, justice, authority and love. The power of Shakespeare's language, his insight into characters, and his dramaturgical inventiveness distinguish his tragedies from other tragedies.

The common feature of Classical Greece and Roman Tragedy is an intense exploration of suffering and evil focused on the experience of an exceptional individual distinguished by rank or character or both. It presents a great fall from prosperity to misery and untimely death, a great change caused by conflict between the tragic character and some superior power. Violence, conflict and change extreme together constitute the essence of tragedy. According to Aristotle, the success of a tragedy depends on its capacity to excite pity and fear, effecting a catharsis of these emotions. Pity draws sympathy for the protagonist, regretting his or her unjust suffering. Fear denotes an attitude to the protagonist of dissociation and judgment. It acknowledges the rightness of what has happened. According to G. W. Hegel, tragedy is not conflict between ethically right or wrong but the personal embodiments of a universal ethical power which encounter the other's right and becomes wrongful. The resolution of this conflict restores a condition of natural justice and confirms the existence of a just and divine world order. F. Nietzsche describes