An Analysis of Shakesprean Expositions*:* Based on Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*

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Abstract: This paper comments on Shakespearean expositions based on Bradley *Shakespearean Tragedy* lecture II. This paper also sheds light on Shakespearean conflict to investigate that how expositions and conflict are interlinked. Analysis reveals that Shakespeare's dramatic structure from exposition to end affects the hero and heroine while engages the audience in predicting process. Analysis also indicates that Shakespearean expositions are deep rooted in the actions and speeches of the protagonists or villains, disturb the inner state of mind and give a high rise to the conflict finally result in downfall and death of the self and others.
Keywords: Shakespearean expositions, conflict, protagonist, villain, downfall.

INTRODUCTION

Immense work on Shakespeare's plays has been done. Likewise, many books have been written on his plays. Majority of the books focus on Shakespearean tragedies and show that his tragedies begin from the outside world and affect the inner self of a protagonist. This paper comments on his expositions with relation to conflict to show that his plays portray many lives of human beings. His tragedies are also about one (or two persons) person that is a hero or a heroine. Further, Shakespearean tragedies are also about the death of the hero/heroine with the depiction of their lives while suffering and calamity are the essence of his tragedies. Generally, Shakespeare highlights the evil of his villains that further affects heroes, heroines and the villains too.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nicoll [1] says that all drama arises out of conflict while Devi [2] elaborates that conflict occurs due to personal interests, ideas and wills. Further, Robert and Henry [3] say that conflict is actually a kind of opposition between two characters or groups. It can be inner or outer. Specifically, Tennyson [4] says that conflict has three types. One is ''individual conflict with other individual''. Second is ''individual conflict with himself'' and third is ''individual conflict with an outside forces'' similarly Miller [5] says that in Shakesprean plays conflict is between vice and virtue and becomes internal hence characters develop on conflict.

Equally, conflict is a major driving force in Shakespearean tragedies that terminates in catastrophe. These types of tragedies can be divided into three parts. First is 'the situation' where affairs arise and cause conflict. In other words, it is exposition that gives rise to conflict. Second is the 'beginning' that is the growth of the conflict and the third is the 'issues of the conflict'. According to Bradley, conflict collides into exposition and the exposition collides into the issue of the conflict [6].

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Expositions introduce us something about the characters. Expositions also show us about the status of characters and about their lives. Shakespearean expositions report the audience about the circumstances of characters and also throw light on the past, present and future situation of the characters. The dramatic expositions leave the audience in curiosity to know further that what will happen next. The situation shown in the expositions is not about the conflict in fact it gives rise to the upcoming conflict [6].

For example, Bradley gives the example of *Romeo and Juliet* where audience sees the hatred of Montagues and Capulet later we see a progress and see that Romeo badly falls in love. Further, the audience hears the marriage news of Juliet and Paris. One notable point is that till here the exposition is not completed yet and conflict is not nurtured till the last scene of Act I when Romeo the Montagues sees Juilet the Capulet and becomes her slave [6].

In the above exposition, the difficulty is obvious and it is unique in Shakespearean expositions that he not only introduces his characters and their situations through speeches but with actions and events.

It is his dramatic construction and direction that the conflict is not aroused but he shows things and situations being done to some extent and arrest the audience. However, audience beforehand comes to know about the state affairs and playwright's dramatic design [6].

Bradley further elaborates that this is not hard and fast rule that Shakespeare starts his plays with exposition. Sometimes he starts his plays with direct speeches like in *Comedy of Errors* and *Richard III* where the audience sees that the speakers direct address the audience in the opening scenes however in the second scene of the *Tempest* the aim of Prospero's long explanation to Miranda is noticeable. Generally, majority of his expositions are his masterpieces [6].

On the other hand, Shakespeare usually starts with short scenes that are full of life. For instance, *Romeo and Juliet* starts with a street fight while *Julius Caesar* starts with a crowd. Gradually, these scenes develop with speeches thus situation is disclosed. It is the art of Shakespeare's direction that in order to introduce his characters he uses different techniques in different plays. For example, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* open with splendid boldness. In *Hamlet,* the situation is described with the appearance of Ghost in the fortieth line. Here, Shakespeare introduces state of affairs at Elsinore. Similarly, the opening of *Macbeth* is unusual where the audience sees and hears the conversation of Witches in thunder and storm and audience also comes to know about Macbeth's battles and state of affairs [6].

Bradley further investigates that when Shakespeare begins with his well settled expositions that time he means to talk about his heroes while keeping them out of the sight for some time. By presenting so, he sometimes increases audience's curiosity and sometimes adds fuel to the fury. On the contrary, sometimes he introduces his heroes with quiet speeches again like in *Macbeth* and *King Lear* where the conversation is (between Kent, Gloster and Edmud) written in prose but surprisingly at the thirty-fourth line the conversation is broken with Lear's entry. Here, he does not increase audience's curiosity [6].

Shakespeare also introduces secondary plots in his plays as *King Lear* has secondary plot related to Gloster and his two sons. For secondary plot, he has second and separate exposition. The division of kingdom and the rejection scene of Cordelia and Kent with his two sons is another aspect of secondary plot. Opposite to this, in *Hamlet*, the plot is single yet it has some characters that have their own interests like Polonius with his son and daughter thus the third scene is fully devoted to them. Furthermore, in *Othello*, Roderigo occupies his place throughout in the action yet his position is explained before the other characters [6].

On the other hand, Iago opens the play. The question arises in the audience's mind that why he opens the play. Bradley says that it is all about Shakespeare's form. It is a direct attack on a hero's ruin and happiness. By doing so, he means to tell his audience that his hero's fate is overshadowed by the treachery of the villain. Likewise, the actions and appearance of villains are also seen in the form of Ghost in *Hamlet* and Witches in *Macbeth* and crowd in *Julius Caesar*. These also tell the audience about the expected ruin and misfortune of the heroes and the ''wreck ambition of the villains'' [6].

Bradley says, we hear from Macbeth, ''so foul and fair a day I have not seen echo, though he knows it not, the last words we heard from the Witches, ''fair is foul, and foul is fair''. Romeo, on his way with his friends to the banquet, where he is to see Juliet for the first time, tells Mercutio, ''he has had a dream''. Likewise in *Othello*, Brabantio warns Othello about his marriage to his daughter, ''Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see; She has deceived her father, and may thee, my life upon her faith,' make our hearts sink'' (I. ii. 120). These speeches are heard in the Act I and according to Bradley can be categorized as expositions [6].

Bradley asserts that when the situation and conflict are complex then the exposition is simple and short as in *Julius Caesar* and in *Macbeth*. However, when the exposition is complicated it needs more space as it is seen in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*. According to him, the completion of exposition is in the audience's mind to assume that it will bring further problems to the hero's life. In such types of expositions, the heroes and heroines meet but their families are at the peak of enmity. Now the conflict arises but here time has significant importance in the development of conflict as in *King Lear* it is around fortnight and in *Hamlet* is after two months ago [6].

Johnson [cited in Dillon 7] says, ''Shakespeare engaged in dramatic poetry with the world open before him''. His expositions show that his tragedies are open to the audience. Through his exposition, audience beforehand comes to know that how he is going to present his characters and how he is going to show the downfall of his heroes and heroines.

Although, conflict is meant for a hero's struggle based on exposition, it influences a hero's fortune and catches the audience first. As Shakespeare has different expositions in his plays, likewise he presents different conflicts in his plays. Bradley says that his plays vary to each other and it is not necessary that they answer what actually conflict is. Firstly, audience sees the opposing forces appear with opposing persons as in *Romeo and Juliet* and in *Macbeth*. However, these opposing forces are not necessary in all plays. For example, the love of Othello is contended

with other force yet Othello cannot be contended with Iago as compared to Romeo as he is contented with the hatred of houses on the contrary as Macbeth was contended with Macduff and Malcolm. On the contrary, Hamlet's conflict starts with his insanity when he falls in love with Ophelia and disappointed [6].

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Generally, Shakespeare shows advancing forces in secret or in opposite oppositions. He is a universal writer who gives life to various human subjects. His characters are like watches. We can see the time on the surface but we can also see the working of their minds with their introduction in expositions. On the other hand, according to Smith [8], Shakespeare uses the technique of telling than showing. By doing so, he engages his audience in active engagement between his plays and others. Smith further says that his structure is ''dynamic rather than inert'' which is produced moment by moment. Shakespeare's dramatic structure from exposition to end affects the hero and heroine while engages the audience in predicting process. His expositions are a key to the downfall of a protagonist due to his/her actions and speeches that result in conflict and cause downfall and death. The analysis so far reveals that Shakespeare's expositions are the success of his plays. His expositions and conflict stimulate the audience and readers and play a significant role in the development of the plots. In summary, without a good exposition, conflict reduces to banality and without conflict an exposition lacks novelty.

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