

Modern Reflection In Shakespeare's Plays

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Abstract- William Shakespeare, the pioneer of English literary world, is a universally famous dramatist whose creations and literary contributions became more in the Elizabethan period than in Jacobean age. This is why; he is identified as an Elizabethan dramatist in English literature although he is a Renaissance and modern thinker. Modernism is reflected in his plays to a great extent. Shakespeare has written thirty-seven plays in his life time. Out of them, only twenty-five plays were written in the Elizabethan Age (1558-1603). He wrote his twelve important plays in the Jacobean Age (1603-1625). Yet he is an Elizabethan and not the Jacobean. However, whether he is Elizabethan or Jacobean, he is above all modern writers. Besides, Dr. Johnson says about the features of Shakespeare's plays in his Preface to Shakespeare, "Just representation in general nature" which indicates evergreen prestige of his dramas in all literary ages including modern age like today. So, from his life time up to the present the atmosphere- language and theme, characters and construction of every age is depicted in his plays and especially the modern elements are merged with his plays. A touch of feminism, realistic aspects, newness in plot-construction, horror elements, treatment of depression and indecision, mental turbulence, use of foil and vulgarism, display of domination all are drawn like almost a modern piece of literature. In fact, the use of above features has made Shakespeare universal and appealable for all ages.

Index Terms- Modern, Reflection, Shakespeare, plays.

I. INTRODUCTION

“To be or not to be?” That is the question that has passed over the lips of countless actors playing Hamlet in the last four centuries on stage and screen. It's also a question that people in almost every country and in any language know quite well. We can thank playwright William Shakespeare whose reach is ever extensive. So, Shakespeare's works continue to resonate with each generation. Bruce Smith in his *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare* explained, "Shakespeare reveals a different face to different cultures and different people at different times." When the First Folio of Shakespeare's work was published in 1623, seven years after his death, Ben Johnson, who was a fellow writer, noted that "Shakespeare was 'not of an age, but for all time.' That statement can be taken two ways: that the meaning of Shakespeare's work is always the same or that it is always different. The second interpretation is the one that has been borne out." A prominent Russian critic says, "Shakespeare has created more after God." As a playwright, he is versatile and

contemporary and his plays have immortalized him. Shakespeare's dramas can be divided into three sections.

First Section: The dramas of this section were written in 1590-1600. They are 22 in number. They are *Henry-VI* (1st part), *Henry-VI* (2nd part), *Henry-VI* (3rd part), *Richard-III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Gentlemen Of Verona*, *King John*, *Richard-II*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry-IV* (1st Part), *Henry-IV* (2nd Part), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Henry-V*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*.

Second Section: The dramas of this section were written in 1601-1608. They are 11 in number. They are *Hamlet* (1601), *Troilus and Cressida* (1602), *All's Well that Ends Well* (1602), *Measure for Measure* (1604), *Othello* (1604), *Macbeth* (1605), *King Lear* (1605), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), *Coriolanus* (1606), *Timon of Athens* (unfinished-1608), *Pericles* (in part-1608).

Third Section: The dramas of this section were written in 1608-1613. They are *Cymbeline* (1609), *The Winter's Tale* (1610), *The Tempest* (1611) and *Henry VIII* (in part- 1613).

Among the above sections some plays have the issue of recurrent elements. A deep study of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *As You Like*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* etc. possesses such aspects which ensure modernity.

II. WHO WAS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE?

William Shakespeare is widely regarded as one of the greatest writers in the English language. He was born on or around 23 April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a prosperous glover and local dignitary, and Mary Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer. There are no records of [William's education](#), but he probably went to King's New School – a reputable Stratford grammar school where he would have learned Latin, Greek, theology and [rhetoric](#)– and may have had a [Catholic upbringing](#). He may also have seen plays by the [travelling theatre groups](#) touring Stratford in the 1560s and 70s. At 18, William married Anne Hathaway, and the couple had three children over the next few years.

What is Modernism: Modernism is a comprehensive but vague term for a movement. It reveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at man's position and function in the universe and many experiments in form and style. The term, "Modern" is not absolute. There is no suggestion in this word with which we

evaluate a piece of literature. Even we cannot call writing modern easily unless we point out its date of composition. So by the term “modern”, we mean the contemporary writing of a writer or a reader. For this reason, the meaning of the term is changeable. While discussing the poetry and drama of ancient Athens, Aristotle regards that literature as modern. Similarly, Ben Jonson who is an English poet and dramatist wants to consider his age as modern. In this way, contemporary literature has been regarded as modern.

We know that Geoffrey Chaucer is a famous poet of the Middle Age in the history of English literature. Matthew Arnold in his *The Study of Poetry* says, “Chaucer is the father of modern English poetry.” He considers his own age, the Victorian Period, as a modern age. William Shakespeare is the Elizabethan poet and dramatist. Dr. Samuel Johnson in his *Preface to Shakespeare* says, “Shakespeare is, above all writers at least above all modern writers....” So we can vigorously say what is modern today will be old tomorrow.

However, Modernist literature is characterized chiefly by a rejection of 19th-century traditions and of their consensus between author and reader. Specifically, Modernists deliberately tried to break away from the conventions of the Victorian era. This separation from 19th century literary and artistic principles is a major part of a broader goal. Modernists wished to distinguish themselves from virtually the entire history of art and literature. Ezra Pound captured the essence of Modernism with his famous dictum, “Make it new!” It is believed that modernism in English poetry has been started with the publication *Profrock and Other Observations* by T.S. Eliot in 1917. Eliot was the disciple of Ezra Pound who led many other imagists. W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf led modern literature. Features of modernism are not yet set and fixed but frustration, inner conflict, boredom, treatment of sex and recent technology are generally common in a recent writing.

Use of Language: Shakespeare’s language runs deeply extensive and modern. Although English language mostly came from the Greek and the Roman, it was subsequently changed from the anonymous up to the old, the middle and the modern literary persons. But in his literary works, Shakespeare invented 1700 words and many phrases which are still in modern literature. For instance, if we search the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and the definitive record of the English language, “Shakespeare is often identified as the sole user or first user of a word or phrase,” according to Charlotte Brewer who authored the guide’s chapter on “*Shakespeare and the OED*.” Shakespeare is the most famous of all Englishmen. One of the things he is famous for is the effect he had on the development of the early modern English language. For example, without even realizing it, our everyday speech is full of words and phrases invented by Shakespeare. He was able to do that because English was changing as people modernized it in their normal work a day speech.

In Modern English we use the word “you” as both the singular and the plural form. In Old English, thou was used for addressing one person; ye for more than one. You was around then, and while thou and ye were used as a subject of a clause, you was used as the object. By the time of Early Modern English, the distinction between subject and object uses of ye and you had virtually disappeared, and you became the norm in all grammatical functions and social situations. Ye had become old-fashioned and

so, when we see it in the Authorised Bible (‘Oh ye of little faith’) we are seeing that, in spite of the fact that you may think you understand the language in the Bible better than you do Shakespeare, Shakespeare is more modern! Brewer also said, “The more of Shakespeare’s words we look up, the more we discover that, time after time, he turns out to have used language in wholly individual ways or [more often] to have originated usages that subsequently became established in the language.” Thus, William Shakespeare is undoubtedly modern in using language in the sixteenth century. He is modern in both theme and language in his plays – tragedy, comedy and tragi-comedy.

Feminism: Feminism is a burning issue in the present world. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, “Feminism is the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state.” From this definition, we can say that feminism is a modern term. It tells about the belief that women should have the same rights and chances as men. The feminist awareness emerged in the 19th century. But it took the shape of a movement in the 20th century. Virginia Woolf was one of the prominent writers who tried to say in favour of women.

Shakespeare, an Elizabethan dramatist, picks out the most powerful female characters across all of his plays. Social and political power was entirely in the hands of the men in Elizabethan England and particularly, well-born men. Both women and men in the lower classes were powerless but women in the upper classes were in a particularly unenviable position as their value was generally reckoned to be a rich or powerful man’s path to more riches or more power.

Cordelia in the play *King Lear* is the central character who is banished by the king, her vain and foolish father for her original love for father and truthfulness. Later, when the two older daughters, Goneril and Regan have cruelly rejected Lear and he lies defeated and imprisoned in a dungeon, Cordelia comforts him and raises him up. She has helped him to learn what the bond between a father and daughter is. She has shown great strength throughout, and when her sisters have her hanged.

Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, having no brother, had to perform the role of a man and manage the very wealthy estate after her father’s death. To save the life of Antonio, Portia comes disguised as a famous young judge and shows extraordinary qualities in delivering her judgment. Her power lies in her wisdom, recognised by all those who do not know that she is a woman. In a real sense she exercises power over everyone present.

Lady Macbeth in the play *Macbeth* is thought of as a very strong woman. She certainly exercises power over her husband, Macbeth, in the first half of the play, as she encourages him to murder Duncan. She uses her sexuality; she taunts him and mocks his lack of courage. She appeals to his sense of obligation towards her.

Rosalind is the central character in the play, *As You Like It*. She is disguised as a man throughout, until the end, and is able to manage everyone to fit with her needs and desires. Her aim is to turn the man she wants to marry into someone who can match her qualities and be as strong as she is.

A touch of feminism in male dominance is peeked in his *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In this play, we find Egeus obstinately insisting on her daughter to marry Demetrius. He also

comes to Theseus to complain against Hermia. The duke also talks in favour of Egeus. Thus Hermia has to face an adverse situation to settle her own decision. Her love for Lysander does not go on smoothly. As a woman, she feels helpless. She feels that she has no power to decide as her own. But, like other strong female characters in Shakespeare, Hermia stands up to her father. She does this with logical argument and remains calm while doing it. She then courageously runs away with her lover. Her strength lies in her calm assertiveness and her determination to control her own destiny rather than hand it to the men around her. In this sense, we can say that feminism becomes one of the most important themes in this play.

Besides, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Desdemona in *Othello*, Margaret of Anjou in four [history plays](#), all expect to practice woman rights in their own world. They also surpass their male counterparts with works and deeds

Realism: The plays of Shakespeare show the course of the real world. Here in this world, the loss of a man is the gain of another. The reveller is hurrying to his wine and the mourner to a funeral. The malice of one is sometimes exceeded by the gaiety of another. In this world, many good and bad actions are done and prevented without design. The ancient poets had made a selection among the serious and light human activities. Some of them chose the crimes and absurdities of men. Some of them chose the lighter incidents for composing dramas.

Parallelism and contrast is the very basis of *As You Like It*. In order to compare and contrast, the playwright has dealt with realistic elements in this play. At the outset of the play, we get a taste of the atmosphere of the court and the city. The atmosphere here is visited by jealousies, rivalries and antagonisms. Early in the play, we see that Duke Frederick has usurped the dominions of his elder brother, Duke Senior. He banishes him to the Forest of Arden. Orlando has to come to the Forest of Arden along with old Adam. Duke Frederick passes an order of banishment against Rosalind, his niece. Though his daughter, Celia is deeply attached to her, he does not hesitate to do so. Later on, he takes a stern step against Oliver. As a result, Oliver has to flee from the city to save him to the same forest. Such is the sordid and depressing atmosphere of the court and the city. All those are found here are artificial, pompous and eye-catching. No touch of nature and its impact on man is found in the court life. We may find conspiracy, corruption, jealousy, artificiality, villainy and pomposity in the court life.

The Tempest is full of supernatural elements. But it is realistic at the core. Prospero's island is an enchanted island. And yet the play is essentially realistic. The realistic quality of the play finds expression in the manner in which the various characters have been portrayed. In other words, Shakespeare's portrayal of the various persons in this play shows his realistic approach to his art of drama-writing. Most of the events in the play are manipulated by Prospero by the use of his supernatural powers. But human nature in the play has been depicted in a perfectly realistic manner. The mutual attraction of Ferdinand and Miranda, and their falling in love with each other, are perfectly true to life. In real life also we have the common situation of the young people falling in love with each other at first sight. Then the villainy of Antonio and Sebastian is also true to life.

Construction: Dr. Samuel Johnson says that Shakespeare has borrowed the plots of his dramas from his contemporary popular stories. His plots are also loose. In this respect, Johnson says: "The plots are often so loosely formed that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued that he seems not fully to comprehend his own design."

Shakespeare violates chronology. He shows no regard to distinction of time or place. He does not set the historical incidents chronologically. He puts one character in the place of another. He attributes a certain nation or a period of history to another. We find that Hector quotes Aristotle in *Troilus and Cressida*. We also find the love of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothic mythology of fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This type of chronological violation not only destroys likelihood but also affects possibility. Loose plot-construction is found in *As You Like It*. The play has a main plot, three major sub-plots and two minor sub-plots. Sub-plots are the plots by which the main plot is nourished. They are introduced to brighten the main plot of a play. Violation of the unities of time and place is noticeable here. Many critics opine that Shakespeare has no plot. Actually, Shakespeare is the greatest borrower. He has borrowed his plots from different sources. The main plot of *As You Like It* has been derived from Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*.

Horror Elements: Horror elements are annexed in the revenge plays of Shakespeare. Revenge tragedy is a kind of tragedy in which revenge, horror, murder, and other supernatural horrors, quests for revenge urged on by ghosts, suicides, and feigned or real insanity etc. are take place. The Elizabethan Age saw the introduction of a kind of tragedy called revenge tragedies. The features of the revenge tragedy are horror, revenge, blood-shedding, supernatural elements and murders. *Hamlet* is a revenge tragedy of William Shakespeare. It was Shakespeare who introduced the elements of horror in the tragedy. In his tragedies we find the piling up of crude, physical horror upon horror, which assume sensational and melodramatic quality. In the tragedy entitled *Hamlet*, horror is an integral part of the drama. Sensationalism is another characteristic of a revenge tragedy, which we find in *Hamlet*. In revenge tragedy, supernaturalism plays an important role. The appearance of ghost is a common phenomenon in the revenge tragedies of Shakespeare. Murder is generally at the centre of a revenge tragedy. In a Shakespeare's revenge play it is the murder of somebody that puts the main action of the play in motion. The language in the conventional Revenge tragedy is highly rhetorical. But in *Hamlet*, the language is refined and not so sensational as we find in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Matthew Arnold calls the style of Shakespeare's soliloquies as grand-style but it is not melodramatic like Kyd. Melodramatic elements like sensationalism violence, murder, horror and horrific details, gruesome scenes, intrigue etc. abound in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Julius Caesar*. In these plays, one can easily notice the abundant use of imagery of violence and horror.

Suffering from Indecision: Lady Macbeth is able to influence her husband to a great extent. Her instigation leads him to kill the innocent King Duncan. She knows that Macbeth is not devoid of ambition too. But she is conscious of the want of his spirit. She takes the vital decision to murder Duncan without waiting to consult her husband. This establishes her dominance over her husband. Her domination helps the main action of the

play in a decisive way. Macbeth is almost determined not to assassinate the King. But he is defeated by Lady Macbeth's strength of will and singleness of purpose. His determination is no match for her dominating influence. Lady Macbeth scolds and reproves him. So she brings him easily back to his original decision. Thus her influence upon her husband plays a crucial role in developing the main action of the play, *Macbeth*. It is true that the thought of murdering Duncan initially comes to Macbeth's mind from his meeting with the Witches. But without Lady Macbeth's instigations, the thought might probably never have been transformed into action.

Macbeth has primarily overcome intention to assassinate the King. But the initial victory of conscience in his mind is only too short-lived. Lady Macbeth accuses him of cowardice and infirmity. She asks him to screw his courage to the sticking-place. She then proceeds to underline the apparently fool-proof plan of murder. Her forceful arguments revive his ambition to a great extent. So Macbeth is now forced to ignore conscience and agree to his wife's plan. With the decision to assassinate Duncan, his tragedy has begun to take shape. But his conscience has not yet given up. It continues to fight against ambition. The situation thus helps in making his self-damnation more intense. Even moments before the murder, his conscience appears in full force. But his imagination tries to dampen his ambition. He finds a visionary dagger dripping with blood symbolizing the horror of the proposed crime.

Macbeth feels heart-sickness and agony of restlessness. Yet he continues to proceed steadily along the path to self-damnation. Love of power and the will to live are so powerful in him. He now possesses sickness of heart, weariness and ennui. On the one hand, he is a mood of all-defying fury and ruthlessness. Both of these contrary feelings are frustrated ambition and tortured conscience. He has undiminished resolution. His impulse inspires him to go for a second meeting with the Witches. It forces him to stride from crime to crime. He diagnoses his chronic unrest as a thing caused by fear of retaliation and considers Banquo to be the potential source of this fear. But he takes the steps to dispose of this fear. This proves futile and leads to his further undoing. He sees Banquo's ghost at the banquet. Fleance escapes and Macbeth's crime is exposed. Macbeth cannot rest and his agony is not abated. He starts shedding blood through the assassination of Duncan. Now his retreat from the path is impossible. So he plans the purposeless slaughter of Macduff and his family. He degenerates into a butcher. He has lost conscience and his capacity for feeling. The tragedy of Macbeth lies precisely in this degeneration.

Procrastination is a striking feature in the character of Hamlet. It makes him almost a coward. Hamlet always suffers from indecision. He fails to decide whether he will take revenge upon the killer of his father or not. He discloses it in his famous soliloquy:

"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."

Hamlet raises the question whether it is good to submit to all kinds of misfortunes of life and bear them cheerful, or to oppose them and fight with them and finally to conquer them. If he could conquer all his misfortunes, he would have never complained

against fate or against his own luck which is mostly bad and very rarely good. Here Hamlet raises this question because he has been fed up with his own life after having seen so much of wickedness, immortality and treachery in this world, and particularly because he has come to know that his own uncle has murdered his father and afterwards married his mother. If this be the human character or if this be human life, what is the good of living at all? This is the significance of Hamlet's question.

Indeed, among a large number of soliloquies, this is a famous one. It is very significant too. Confusion and indecision of Hamlet is clearly expressed through this famous soliloquy.

Mental Unrest: This conflict between his imagination and his ambition results in heart-rending spiritual anguish. His soul gradually falls to pieces. It is the real tragedy. Whenever his imagination is stirring, we feel suspense and pity. But as soon these feelings vanish, he becomes a brutal and pitiless murderer. This is so because the will to live is mighty in him. He is not prepared to lose the glittering prize and the worldly power and self. He fails to understand his own true nature. He interprets his sleepless torture as resulting from a sense of insecurity and the fear of retaliations. Hence his ruthless career of crime and gradual descent into hell is insured. It is an engrossing spectacle. Psychologically, it is perhaps the most remarkable exhibition of the development of a character to be found in Shakespeare's tragedies. We admire and pity the man while we condemn and abhor the murderer. Macbeth is never completely dehumanized despite his manifold crimes. Conscience unnerves a man turning him into a moral coward unfit for action. Hamlet appears as a typical melancholic personality. He wants to cover his cowardice in the name of conscience. He says in *Hamlet*:
*Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.*

Hamlet is shocked between the thoughts of 'miserable life' and 'evil death' and concludes his soliloquy by saying that his conscience is responsible for his cowardice and inaction. He says that the fear of the would be life after death makes us cowards and so the original colour of strong determination is made pale by the sickness of unhealthy reflection. Thus the enormous task of great importance which he has undertaken to accomplish has lost its hold on him on account of this fear of conscience and thus he is rendered incapable of prompt action.

Hamlet pretends to be mad. His insanity is a major turning point in the field of taking revenge upon the killers of his father. Ophelia regrets the madness of Hamlet in the following way:

*O, what a noble mind is o'erthrown;
The courtier's soldier's scholar's eye, tongue, sword,
The expectancy and rose of the fair state.*

Placed in a hostile world, Hamlet intentionally takes a pose of madness. He behaves and talks like a mad person. In his meeting with Ophelia, Hamlet throws insult at her. He suggests that Ophelia is a loose woman and should go to a convent to rectify her. Ophelia interprets Hamlet's speech the words of a madman. Then she laments the loss of Hamlet's reason. Hamlet's character embodies an ideal Renaissance prince. He is a polished and well-mannered prince. Besides, he has the courage of a soldier. He is also a scholar with an extraordinary gift of speech. Thus any citizen would like to love him and expect him as the king. According to Ophelia, all these virtues of Hamlet's character have

been destroyed because of the attack of madness. On the one hand, Ophelia's speech is ironic in the sense that she does not know the actual condition of Hamlet, that he is not mad. However, it is true that Hamlet is really disturbed at the current state of affairs.

Characterization: Shakespeare is able to hold up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters have got universal appeal. In Samuel Johnson's preface to *The Plays of Shakespeare* (1765), he wrote, "His characters ... are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find." For example, Shylock of *The Merchant of Venice* is still present in the modern society. Johnson appreciates Shakespeare's dramas as a forest. But he compares the dramas of other dramatists to a garden. Some critics compare Addison's Cato to Othello. But Johnson disagrees with their view in this respect. He argues that Othello is the progeny of Shakespeare's vigorous genius accompanied with subtle observation of human nature. Cato fails to familiarize us with human sentiments.

His art of characterization is unsurpassable. It will also remain incomparable even in future. His characters are life-like and vivified. They have a universal appeal. The dialogue in the plays of Shakespeare is the dialogue of common man. It is level with life. His language is refined and praiseworthy. But we cannot deny that Shakespeare has some faults and defects in his art of characterization and use of language. He is different from other dramatists in characterization. His characters express human sentiments in human language derived from real life. He does not disguise the natural passions and the natural incidents. His dialogue is thoroughly realistic. It is pursued with much ease and simplicity. It seems to have been taken from the common conversation of human beings. Even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue accords with real life. Johnson says— "Even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life."

In fact, there is no blurring of characters. No character shades off into another. The dialogue in his plays is based on the actual conversation of people. Shakespeare's characterization is modern and realistic. He violates three unities, absent in modern plays, in his plays except his last play, *The Tempest*.

Use of Foil: In modern literature, we find the use of foil. In *Julius Caesar*, Brutus is recognized by everybody in Rome as a noble-minded man. Casca says that Brutus stands high in all the people's hearts. Brutus's participation in the conspiracy against Caesar would make the assassination of Caesar appear to be a noble deed. In a soliloquy, Cassius himself says that Brutus is a man of a noble character though he can be misled and lured into a wrong path. At the end of the play, Antony pays a high tribute to Brutus by saying that Brutus was the noblest of all the Romans who joined the conspiracy against Caesar. No such praise is given by any person in the play to Cassius.

In fact, it is only Caesar who makes an elaborate comment upon Cassius's character and this comment is most adverse. Caesar speaks of him as a dangerous man whom he would like to avoid. Now we will bring out the contrast between the characters of Brutus and Cassius. The main difference between Brutus and Cassius is that Cassius is a selfish man while Brutus is an unselfish man. Brutus joins the conspiracy against Caesar because of his profound and real love of freedom and republicanism. On the other hand, Cassius initiates the conspiracy because of his personal

motives. Cassius conceives a plan to assassinate Caesar because he has been feeling jealous of Caesar's growing power.

Brutus is a very close to Caesar. He feels a deep affection for Caesar. On the other hand, Cassius is not very close to Caesar. He does not feel any affection for Caesar. He conspires to murder Caesar. Caesar seems to Brutus to be well on the way to become a dictator and a tyrant. Brutus's motives in joining the conspiracy are therefore totally unselfish. Cassius himself bears testimony to this contrast between Brutus and himself. In a soliloquy early in the play, Cassius says that, if he had been Brutus and if Brutus had been Cassius, he (Cassius) would not have joined the conspiracy. There is another point of contrast between Brutus and Cassius too and this is a major contrast. Brutus is a philosopher and an idealistic philosopher. On the contrary, Cassius is a man of action and he is a man who possesses an exceptional practical sense. Brutus lives in the world of ideas and ideals, while Cassius lives in the world of realities and the world of hard facts. Brutus proves a failure both as a conspirator and as a military leader, while Cassius shows himself to be most competent to start the conspiracy.

Modern Hero, Hamlet: Hamlet suffers from conflicts, both external and internal. His conflict is obvious in the following soliloquy—"To be or not to be". The tragic hero is influenced by a supernatural agent. Supernatural element plays a very vital role in his life. He is influenced profusely by it. With the information of the Ghost, Hamlet wants to kill his father's murderer. The Ghost of motivates the action of the play. Every tragic hero has some tragic flaw. Similarly, Hamlet has some tragic flaws. People have spoken about his inability to seek revenge, his irresolute nature, his moral idealism, his mental suffering, and the conflict in his mind. His most serious flaw is perhaps the genuinely loving and exquisitely beautiful Ophelia. The tragic hero must arouse pity and fear in the mind of the audience. He is able to arouse pity and fear in our minds. Thus almost all the characteristics of a tragic hero are present in Hamlet. He is a tragic hero. But he is not traditional as Aristotle terms. He is a modern tragic hero.

Vulgarism: *Measure for Measure* is regarded as a dark comedy which believes that morality and ethics, as well as intellectual values are meaningless, and that life is a tragic farce. A dark comedy is gloomy. It does not have a happy ending. It also has amusing scenes as well as wit and humour. It is an undercurrent of gloom and despair which never leaves us. The comic elements in such play are pushed into the background by the tone and atmosphere of seriousness and gravity. The play is also called 'problem play' because it with a particular social or moral problem. It displays the most detested of human emotions or of sexual promiscuity. The gloom in the play is attributed to three different and distinct reasons. There is no doubt that the world of the play is a world of brothels and pimps, senseless copulation, mindless pregnancies and a total reversal of Christian value of marital sex. It has a weak Duke. It has a deputy Duke, Angelo. His learning makes him harsh and cruel. It is a world where a brother asks a sister to compromise her virginity to save his life. Vulgarism is also responsible for making it a dark play.

Vulgar languages are used openly in *Othello*. Desdemona is generally regarded as a simple foolish young girl. She falls in love with a man older than herself. She is thought of as a weak-willed creature deceived by the dazzling brilliance of Othello's romantic stories, almost as if she were like Bathsheba. She is extremely

modest. According to her father Brabantio, she is a maiden of spirit so still and quiet that her motion and blushed at herself. Though she not only modest, quiet and still, but also she is bold, courageous, and firm. Her boldness is shown in her eloping with the Moor and in openly refuting her father's charges against her husband before the senator.

Desdemona hardly guesses that some cunning and deceiving rogue has poisoned Othello's mind against her. There is no doubt that Desdemona is perfectly chaste and faithful to her husband. She really loves her husband. She is pure as an angel. She is pure not only physically but also mentally. The idea of playing false to her husband never crosses her mind. She cannot even utter the word, "whore". On the contrary, Iago and his accomplices tried to prove her a prostitute. They complain against her to Brabantio by using unutterable obscene languages and coinage. Innocent love-affairs and marriage are described with vulgar words and phrases.

Display of Muscle Power: Caliban is the symbol of the colonized and Prospero the colonizer. He hates heartily muscle power of his master. He treats him as a usurper. He has expressed his hatred for Prospero who teaches him the language of human being. He hates him utterly as he considers him as a usurper and the killer of his mother. He expresses in hatred in *The Tempest*: "You taught me language; and my profit on't Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you For learning me your language!"

Prospero is not altogether a likewise person. He is somewhat crusty personage and self-opinionated sow. He dominates others. He is a tyrant in his relation with Caliban and Ariel. He occupies the land of Sycorax and kills her. He makes Caliban his servant. By his magical power, he compels him to carry out his orders. Caliban is the son of a witch named Sycorax. He is full of sensitive response to all appeals to the sense. He shares such of his characteristic with all primitive people living in the heart of nature. Prospero always tries to rescue him from the savage condition. He has given him shelter. He has taught him good manners. He also teaches him human language. But Caliban is unable to talk with the human language correctly. He is a rebel and seems to be ungrateful to Prospero. That is why, he shows his disgust towards Prospero. He does not take slavery of Prospero easy. Prospero is vexed at his attitude. So he threatens him with more torture to make him dutiful. Miranda threatens Caliban too. She calls him a hateful slave. Caliban becomes angry. He says that Prospero has taught him language and given him speaking power. So he uses this power only to curse the usurper. He has learnt how to abuse him. He curses that incurable plague should attack him and end his life. According to him, this must happen as Prospero teaches him how to express feelings.

Caliban preserves burning flame in his mind. His hatred for the tyranny of Prospero remains silent in his heart like a volcano. But he could not give it out without language. After learning it, he starts abusing Prospero first. He curses and abuses him being benefited by him. In a word, he who gives eyes is dishonoured.

This is the utmost reality in the world. Thus the theme of usurpation and colonization is another significant theme of the play.

Interest seeking: It is one of the most important phenomenon in our modern world

III. CONCLUSION

Modern literature enjoys frustration, inner conflict, boredom, feminism, display of muscle power, war, treatment of sex and recent technology. Almost all these traits are found in the plays of William Shakespeare. Moreover, we see some exceptional features in them. Therefore, William Shakespeare can be regarded as a modern dramatist, not historically but as a displayer of recurrent elements in his dramas. In fact, he has occupied a remarkable place in the world literature. He was incomparable and matchless. He is still so and will remain in future. The empire he has built will never meet its downfall. The sun never goes down in the kingdom of Shakespeare. He is an institution. His merits and contribution are never to be ended and cannot reach the last point to express.

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