



# SHAKESPEARE THE DRAMATIST OF ALL TIME

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## Abstract

William Shakespeare English dramatist and author, probably is the most widely read writer in the English language. Scholars don't know that much about Shakespeare's childhood either because there are very few records to know for certain about this time in his life. Shakespeare was born in Stratford, England. The third of eight kids, Shakespeare was very talented. He went to school for grammar, however he dropped out at age 16. 1585 to 1593 Shakespeare wasn't really known of to the people. Shakespeare didn't start getting big until 1593. Although Shakespeare struggled to be successful, he is one of the greatest play writers in history because he was known all around London in his mere 20's never gave up when things looked bleak, and to this day keeps people entertained and wanting more. To start off William Shakespeare became famous in the 17th century. I think that when he wrote drama he used his heart for drama. He was not for one age but for all ages. Shakespeare was universal poet and dramatist. He creates best characters in his plays. All kind of characters we find in his drama. I think almost his plays are best work of Shakespeare, that's why he was genius dramatist of all the time.

Key Words: dramatist, author, poet

## Introduction

**Shakespeare is a great dramatist of the world.** His works are still considered remarkable and significant. He is recognized because of his immense variety of his works. Genius and art worked together in union, and we get objects of wonder which his plays continue to be. He wrote thirty seven plays, but all are created different impressions of beauty, art and wisdom. Shakespeare's dramas were performed in theatres and people were always very anxious to see the performances of his dramas. He had provided his audience all pleasurable emotions and enlarged our knowledge and understanding of human psyche. Moreover Shakespeare had a marvellous understanding of human life and human psychology. There are close pieces of psycho analysis, soul dissection and elemental human passions which are common to mankind in every age and country. A dramatist always true to nature, when we read and watch his dramas we find that man has to act under the given circumstances and he acts exactly his fate allowed him to do. Human passions and emotions were closely observed by him and constantly suggest the operation of fatal forces hovering all around us and sending us, poor mortals to our doom. The human conflict under his hands becomes symbolic of the universal conflict of the good and evil. His characters thus become larger than life figures, who are struggling against some malignant forces. Furthermore his understanding of human life and human nature and complexities is amazing. We find gems of practical wisdom and philosophical truth which are as true and valuable today as when they were written by Shakespeare. We find generalised reflections on human life and tragedy. Dowden states that "shakespeare lived and moved in two worlds, one limited practical, positive the other a world opening in to two infinites, and infinite of thought and an infinitive of passion." The infinitive of thought and infinitive of passion were both possible for him. He would have become Romeo, and brooding thought and speculation would have turned him into a hamlet. Therefore in the realm of characterisation Shakespeare reigns supreme. Shakespeare's characters are types as well as individuals. They have their own individual peculiarities and personal idiosyncrasies, and they also present certain class, profession and passion. For example Othello, Hamlet and King Lear have highly individualised peculiarities. Othello stands for jealousy, Hamlet stands for the philosophical temperament, and King Lear stands for pattern of intemperance. Edmund, Edgar, Iago, and Desdemona are all portrayed with the even handedness, completeness and originality. The first well-known play by Shakespeare is the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet written in 1594-95. A midsummer night's dream, The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida are the greatest tragedies of Shakespeare. The tragic-comedy dramas are King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Antony and Cleopatra, The Winter's Tale, and Tempest. Although his dramas contain virtue, happiness and chastity but these contain evil, ugliness, and misery too. His stories are of the evil caused, hatred, jealousy and treachery and the conquest of this evil in the course of time by integrity, constancy and courageous love aided by good fortune. Thus many of his contemporaries showed great discrimination and insight in appreciating his real superiority.

John Dryden states that "SHAKESPEARE was the man who of the moderns and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul. "The father of our dramatic poets"

Throughout the world, Shakespeare is a very well-known man, and has been for many years now. It should be noted that he is more popular in our time than he was in his own, however. He is known world-wide for all his plays, poems, and sonnets that he produced in just a few short years during his writing career. According to my research, he has been said to be one of the greatest dramatist of all time ("William Shakespeare Biography")

## Objective

**To analyse the Shakespeare the dramatist of all time.**

## Research Methodology

For the purpose of fulfilling the objective of the research, doctrinal method will be applied in which exploratory research design which includes review of literature, study of research papers, study related to Shakespeare's whole life. So first a little of what we know about Shakespeare's life and career, then we'll get into what his work was all about

## Review and Discussion

Shakespeare was born and raised at Stratford-upon-Avon, the eldest son of a Glover and a member of the local gentry. Contrary to those who claim such an ignorant country bumpkin could not write the plays attributed to him, he likely had a good education for his time, attending a local grammar school giving him a grounding in the Latin classics and in British literature and history, from which many of his dramatic plots are taken.

At eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna (born 1583) and the twins Hamnet and Judith (born 1585). He may have worked as a schoolmaster until moving to London in the late 1580s on his own under unknown circumstances, possibly to flee poaching charges, according to one legend—or possibly running off with a travelling theatrical troupe to escape the confines of smalltown, domestic life.

Nothing is known about how he became involved in the theatre and became a writer, but he apparently was becoming known as an actor and playwright by 1592, judging by a comment from a rival then about an "upstart crow". From the early 1590s until 1611, Shakespeare wrote at least 36 plays—more if you count collaborations and plays that may have been lost—plus at least two long poems and one collection of poetry.

The plays are traditionally divided into three categories: histories, comedies and tragedies. These groupings are rough approximations however. Several of the so-called comedies are dark enough to be considered tragicomedies. The "tragedies" taking place in the ancient world are thematically similar to "histories", but the latter term is reserved for British subject matter. And some of the "histories" are quite comical.

His earliest plays to be produced in London to some acclaim are thought to be the last two or all three parts of Henry VI around 1590–1592. It is not certain whether he wrote all or just parts of these inferior histories. The lighter Comedy of Errors and Two Gentlemen of Verona were also very early plays. These first efforts may have been followed by the first part of Henry VI, written as a prequel to the other two parts, and several more early plays, including the Roman tragedy Titus Andronicus, the still-controversial comedy The Taming of the Shrew, and the durable history Richard III.

His first published works, however, were the long poems Venus and Adonis (1593) and The Rape of Lucrece (1594). His famous Sonnets were also likely begun in the early 1590s, though they were not collected and published together until 1609.

From 1594, Shakespeare was associated with a theatrical company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, writing the great romantic tragedy Romeo and Juliet; comedies including A Midsummer Night's Dream and As You Like It, and The Merry Wives of Windsor; histories including the two parts of Henry IV; and the hard-to-classify The Merchant of Venice.

In 1596, his son Hamnet died at age eleven. It is unknown how closely Shakespeare had been in contact with his family or how deeply he was affected by the death of his only son, though the heaviness of his plays to come may not be coincidental.

In 1599 the troupe moved to a new venue, the Globe Theatre, south of the Thames River in London, likely opening with Henry V. Over the next nine years were performed the renowned tragedies Julius Caesar, Hamlet (the similarity of the name to that of Shakespeare's has been noted), Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, and Coriolanus, as well as the ever-popular light comedy Twelfth Night; and several of his ambiguously dark comedies like Measure for Measure.

In 1603 when James I succeeded Elizabeth I on the British throne, Shakespeare's company gained royal patronage and became known as the King's Men. In 1608 they took over the indoor Blackfriars Theatre, for which Shakespeare wrote his last romantic comedies, probably with some collaboration from other playwrights: Pericles, Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale.

The final play written entirely by Shakespeare before retirement at the ripe old age of 47 is The Tempest in 1611.

It is thought he then returned to Stratford-on-Avon, presumably to live the life of a provincial gentleman with his surviving family in the town's second-biggest house purchased with his theatrical earnings. He does seem to have continued to spend some time in London drama circles though, helping to write Henry VIII and possibly two other plays in 1613. He died in 1616.

Centuries after the Stratfordian's death, movements have grown to claim he wasn't the author of all those plays and poems. But that's another story. And has little to do with the more important issue of what those works by him—or by someone using that name—told us.

What Shakespeare is really all about

Seven years after his death, Shakespeare's friends and colleagues published the first collected edition of his works, known as the First Folio. A dedicatory poem by playwright Ben Jonson in that book declares Shakespeare "not of an age, but for all time".

This comment has set the standard for all discussion of Shakespeare ever since. We are continually told Shakespeare is "universal". He appeals to emotions and thoughts that are part of eternal human nature. He points out universal truths. His words transcend race and culture, as shown by their translation into every language on earth and by their worldwide popularity for four centuries.

But, Shakespeare fan as I am, I must disagree. There's "universal" and there's universal.

While Shakespeare's plays appear to reveal the hearts and minds of human beings "for all time", I believe this is because they have done so for as long as our current historical epoch has lasted. That is to say, for as long as our culture can remember. Each period thinks its insights and ideals are universal to all periods. Shakespeare's have applied much longer than most, ever since the first flowering of the capitalist era out of the decay of feudalism. They have held significance for us through the ups and downs of capitalism over hundreds of years.

However, we read his words and we take his meanings differently now from how his original audiences did in the first flush of the new era. And eventually, as social systems evolve and the people within them change, his words will come to mean less to us. His works may remain classics in the same way that the epic poetry of Homer and the plays of Sophocles are still considered classics for some interest. But they will not always strike us to the heart as they do now. They will not always haunt our culture's thinking—just as The Iliad and Oedipus Rex are only sporadically interesting to us today.

But it's still wonderful stuff.

Shakespeare wrote at a time when the feudal, aristocratic world was being replaced by a new one based on commercial expansionism and individualism. Although he often wrote about kings and queens, these were not the God-appointed, mystically guided monarchs of ethereal thoughts and lofty morals found in medieval literature. Rather they were flesh-and-blood individuals with very human greeds and ambitions. The best of them are portrayed as ruling on behalf of the nation (the unified nation state being a recent development, replacing the fiefdoms of the Middle Ages and the city states of the ancients), rather than by divine pleasure or inherited right as previously.

Many of the questions raised in Shakespeare's works deal with the changes of mores that resulted from the historical transformation taking place.

For example, the old notion of honour—associated with chivalry and blood relations in the Middle Ages—has to be given a new meaning. Is it mere "air", as Falstaff proclaims, or something tied to taking up one's social responsibilities, as Prince Hal comes to accept?

Is there a place for compassion and forgiveness in a voracious profit-before-all-else system represented by Shylock? Do individuals have the right to choose their own happiness over traditions, as Romeo and Juliet attempt? Does a wife belong to a husband? Is wealth a guarantor of happiness? Should financial relations control familial relations, or vice versa? Do we choose our own destinies or are they fixed in the stars?

I could go on, listing the issues raised by Shakespeare that would have seemed ludicrous in older times. An 11th-century lord or peasant would not have found these to be questions even worth considering, any more than we are interested today in pondering how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.

I'm not saying Shakespeare always sided with the rising bourgeoisie on these issues or always opposed feudal values. He was dealing with conflicts that arose in a mind shaped, as the minds of most people of his time, by the stories and glories of the past, as well as excited by the forward-looking society that was forming around new economic relations and new ideas. In the exhilarating tumult, he was trying to sort out how people should act. He was seeking the constants that go beyond the immediate, changing fashions. Not always successfully, though always engagingly.

I doubt Shakespeare ever said, "In this play, I'll settle the issue of a child's obligations to a parent in the context of a society increasingly dominated by mercantilism." More likely he chose stories that he or his audience liked, and wrote them from his heart. But it is inevitable he and his audience would focus on the moral quandaries of the time, given life by the changing social conditions.

Shakespeare isn't great because he dealt with these issues when no one else did. Others certainly did. I imagine most artists of the time did to some degree. Shakespeare is great because he just wrote better than anyone else on these matters—delving more deeply, exploring more nuance, writing more eloquently and movingly than any other playwright then or since.

To put it in a single sentence, Shakespeare was writing "Arise, the new human." Or as he put it in The Tempest, "O brave new world that has such people in't."

Today the young, new humanity he heralded is mature, if not outright old. But there resides in memory enough of youth to excite. There remains enough of our early character that we can still gain insight and comfort from Shakespeare, the sage of the old new human's youth. It is especially comforting now to think that those words and ideas from our adolescence, which once were challenging, are relevant still—appear still as universals for all time. At a time when we are casting about for new "universals" for all time.

— Eric CO

William Shakespeare belongs to 16th century English literature. He was born in 23rd April, 1564 and he dominated the Elizabethan literature. He was considered a genius playwright as well as poet in English literature. He cannot get proper education. He has written round about 36 play and 154 sonnets. He has deal with motifs of life like birth, death, marriage, religion, love in his plays and poems. His plays are written in verse and so they are identified as poetic plays. This plays are classified under four categories according to dramatic type. They are Tragedy, Comedy, Tragicomedy and History plays.

Shakespeare has used metaphorical language while writing plays. He has exhaustively used all the poetic devices in his plays. He has immortalized his characters by giving them universal touch. Shakespeare soon turned to the stage, and became first an actor, and then playwright. In 1592 he was well known as a successful author. His play can broadly be put under seven groups.

(1) The early Comedies: The early comedies of Shakespeare are the comedy of manner, love's labor's lost and other comedies are immature plays of Shakespeare, which put him height of success in his dramatic career. The character of these plays are less finished and marked with artistic lapses in character portrayal.

(2) The English histories: The history plays like Richard-2, Henry -4, part-1 and Henry-5, King John and many others. In these historical plays Shakespeare presents British history of three hundred years and create a nice picture of English Kings. This historical plays gives a guide of kings of England, and their life style. In these plays we witness a rapid maturing of Shakespeare's skill in plot construction and characterization.

(3) The mature comedies of Shakespeare are 'much ado about nothing', 'as you like it' and many others. In these comedies we found the flower of Shakespeare's comic genius. These plays are full of vitality and vivacity marked with relief from the strain of tragedy writing. Shakespeare comedies have been classified under four parts 1) Romantic comedies 2) comedies free from romanticism 3) lighter comedies 4) dark comedies. Another classification of Shakespearean comedies is 1) Early comedies 2) Middle comedies 3) Late comedies.

In early comedies comic quality arises from the language in the dialogue, and speeches. The comic situations and comic characters are the essence of the comedy. His humor is many-sided, referring to his multifaceted humor. Dowden says: "Shakespeare abounds in kindly mirth: he receives an exquisite pleasure from the alert wit and bright good sense of a Rosalind, he can handle a fool as tenderly as any nurse qualified to take a baby from birth can deal with her charge."

(4) The Somber plays: In this group are all well that ends well, Measure for Measure and Troilus and Cressida. The reflected cynical disillusioned attitude to life, and a fondness for objectionable desire to expose the falsity of romance and to show the sordid reality of life.

(5) The Great Tragedies: The great tragedies of Shakespeare are Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet. A tragedy is a tale of death or suffering, Shakespeare's tragedies are also powerful tales of death and suffering, but Shakespearean tragedy is something more than the story of death and suffering. The suffering is of such a powerful nature that it shakes the man and the hero writhes in the coils of insufferable agony. Hamlet in the state of his vacillation is literally on the rack. In the tragedy fate plays an important part in bringing about the tragedy. But in Shakespeare's tragedy man is responsible for his tragic fall. In other words he believes in "character is destiny." In each of his tragedies the hero catches in some fatal fall, and bad luck, which in spite of external circumstances lead him to his tragic doom.

In Hamlet there is painful consciousness that duty is being neglected. Each hero has virtues above the average man, but it is not necessary that the hero may have virtues alone.

(6) The Roman plays: "are based on North's tradition of Plutarch's lives and though written at fairly wide intervals. Usually considered as a group. Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus follow the great period and while the former in soaring imagination and tragic power is truly great, both of them show some relation of tragic intensity" (Albert)

(7) The last play—romances: the last play of Shakespeare Cymbeline. The Winter's Tale and The Tempest. The mellowed maturity is the chief feature of forgiveness and reconciliation. The name 'Dramatic romances' applies very aptly to these plays.

for neither they are not tragedies pure and simple nor are they comedies scintillating with humor and fun. In other words in the play contain incidents are tragic but their end is happy. This play is combination of tragedy and comedy.

(8) Pleasant humor. Shakespeare creates good humor. The sparkling and vivacious heroes and Orlando in 'As you like it'. His comedies primary aim is neither satire nor a correction of the evils prevalent.

The theme of Shakespeare's work is always fresh, in other words their freshness and their appeal is permanent in literature. We may read his dramas for the hundred times yet it can give same pleasure, when we read it first time.

Dryden says that "was the man who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul." Shakespeare has, too the gift of universality, which alone gives permanence to literature. His characters recur in every generation; they remain individuals, but yet they are types nor are his comedies all laughter, being true of life,

The characters of Shakespeare have a permanent hold on the human mind. We have read novels and dramas and have read hundreds of character both male and female, but no one holds of gripes our attention as the character create image in our mind. Shakespeare's characters do not lose their individuality. Another feature of his characterization is his objectivity.

We admire humanity in his drama. He loves human being and has an infinite feeling of sympathy for his creation. We like Shakespeare because he likes us. Shakespeare has praised human being and human life. The beautiful lines on man presented in Hamlet, man in this work:

"What a piece of work is man? How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties in form and moving, how expressive and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god, the beauty of the world. The paragon of animals. He touches the human heart and moves us to pity and sympathy.

We appreciate Shakespeare for his admirable treatment of subject of love. Shakespeare presents variety of love in his plays. The element of romance makes his dramas highly interesting. In other words love keeps the interest of his plays. His fertile imagination is present everywhere in his plays. His language is grand and majestic. Shakespeare uses extra ordinary language

## Conclusion

Shakespeare was versatile genius. He creates great tragedies and many other plays. He also wrote sonnets. I think that when he writes drama he uses his heart for drama. He was not for one age but for all ages. Shakespeare was universal poet and dramatist. He creates best characters in his plays. All kind of characters we find in his drama. I think almost his plays are best work of Shakespeare, that's why he was genius dramatist of all the time.

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