

# **SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY**

## **(BA PART 1 PAPER 1 2019 -20 )**

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By the time Shakespeare appeared on the literary horizon he experienced two major upheavals in society. The renaissance enhanced human potentiality and ensured the triumph of man. A cursory glance over the major characters in the dramas of Shakespeare makes it amply clear that they have displayed extraordinary qualities of head and heart using their enriched mental faculty. The tragedy caused to them is out of the weaknesses latent in their own personality. In this way Shakespearean tragedy is entirely different from that of the Greek tragedians like Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschelus .Oedipus, the hero of Sophocles' drama Oedipus Terence falls victim to the conspiracy hatched by fate. Thus the tragedy of the heroes of classical drama is caused by fate and chance whereas that of Shakespearean heroes is caused by the lacunae latent n their own personality. Tragedy of Macbeth is the outcome of his over ambition whereas that of King Lear is caused by indecision. Othello on the other hand is made victim to suspicion .Macbeth was aware of the fact that so long as King Duncan enjoyed at the helm of affair he could not be elevated to the position of the king of Denmark . Thus he conspired with his wife Lady Macbeth to eliminate Duncan

to usurp the throne. The over ambition of Macbeth finally led him to his grave. King Lear made a wrong decision of dividing his kingdom between his wrongful daughters depriving the youngest one Cordilia of her due share .

When Shakespeare made his debut as a dramatist two parallel trends of drama were rampant in society .On the one hand there were dramatists expressing solidarity with classical drama and modelled their drama on the pattern of the rules and regulations supplied by Aristotle. They practised the principles of three unities .Besides this they treated a dramatic composition either a tragedy or a comedy. Tragic elements seldom got intermingled within the frame work of a comedy a drama should be out – and – out a comedy or a tragedy .

Besides classical drama a parallel form of drama called romantic drama emerged at the forefront showing stern opposition with the rules and regulations practised by the practitioners of romantic drama. They were fed up with excessive rules and regulations required for a dramatic composition and were looking for an alternative mode of drama where there was plenty of opportunity for amusement to the spectators. Classical rules and regulations too were forced to the background. . Shakespeare expressed his earnest desire in favour of popular drama or romantic drama .

Shakespeare made several innovations in the structural and thematic pattern of drama. Blank verse which was earlier practised by Marlowe was brought to the high watermark and was accepted as a popular mode of composition of drama by his successors .Blessed by the changes introduced by renaissance he made significant changes in the art of characterization.