



Shakespeare demonstrates how Knowledge produces Power, and Power produces Tragic Flaw

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Abstract

Shakespeare's comedies, historical dramas, tragedies, and tragic-comedies are only a few of the many plays that feature the interconnected and interdependent topic of power and knowledge. In Shakespeare's writings, knowledge and power are closely correlated. Shakespeare builds his storyline and characters in a realistic manner. He very minutely borrows everything from society and from human behaviour. We are all aware that power and politics are always at play in our society, and that this is true even in our own households. Shakespeare therefore appropriates this power struggle from society and elaborates on it in many of his plays, including his comedies, where we see this power struggle between men and women. Shakespeare does, however, associate power with knowledge, not the physical or military might. Through his plays, he expresses his concept that whomever has knowledge will also have power, and that whoever has authority will unavoidably have some fatal defect. The other characters are able to gain power because they are aware of this terrible weakness. For instance, Lear's tragic defect in King Lear is his overwhelming egotism and uncontrollable rage.

We see the same power-knowledge dynamic in both his tragedies and comedies as well as in his historical or chronicle plays. The historical dramas may be divided into two different categories: those that examine kingly frailty and those that examine kingly might. Because knowledge leads to power and power leads to tragic flaw, the power-knowledge relationship in Shakespeare's plays is exceedingly sensitive and fluid. But in his plays, God or some other supernatural force is always the mastermind.

Keywords:- Power, knowledge, republic, dictatorship, tragic flaw and tragedy

Introduction:-

Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist of all time, and his brilliance lies in his flawless description of reality with an amalgamation of his imagination that is very difficult to distinguish from one another. He creates from his own beliefs, using vivid colours and imaginative characters. He has always supported a republican government, but the reality of the current social order has crushed his hopes. He aims to portray the true nature of his society through his plays while also outlining his ideal republican state. He expresses his conception of a republican state in some of his plays in an overt manner and in others more covertly. Shakespeare uses the issue of power politics from society to illustrate his ideal of a republican government. Most of his plays, particularly the tragedies and historical tragedies, have this topic of power politics running through them. In this essay, we will talk about the subtheme of authority and knowledge in relation to the Republic concept from Shakespeare. Although Shakespeare's comedies, histories, tragedies, and tragi-comedies all contain this subject of power and knowledge, in this paper we will focus on two of his most well-known plays: a

historical tragedy and a tragedy. We'll talk about King Lear as examples of tragedy and Julius Caesar as examples of historical tragedy. Let's start by thinking about his historical tragedy, Julius Caesar.

The conflict between the power of fate in life and the possibility of free will is a major theme in Julius Caesar. Cassius rejects Caesar's ascent to power and sees faith in fate as nothing more than passivity or cowardice. Shakespeare's classic play Julius Caesar vividly and clearly depicts his image of the Republic state. The drama focuses mostly on the necessity for a Republic state in ancient Rome. The drama is on the assassination of Julius Caesar, a legendary Roman commander, and the subsequent retaliation. Caesar's close buddy Brutus believes that Caesar will pose a significant danger to Rome. He believes Caesar would become a tyrannical dictator due to his ambition and haughtiness. As a loyal patriot who has been coerced by Cassius for power, Brutus kills the Caesar along with other conspirators. In this instance, Brutus believes that what he is doing is for the sake of Rome, but in reality, he just has his personal interests in mind because he can see himself succeeding Caesar as king in the future. He never takes offence when Cassius tries to persuade him by complimenting him and disparaging Caesar.

Brutus relies on Cassius and the letter that he believes was sent by Roman people but is actually a trap set by Cassius. He eventually succumbs to the argument and helps kill Caesar. After that, he fully confides in Antony. He thinks that Antony won't point the finger at those involved in the plot during his eulogy at Caesar's burial. Too much trust, a sad weakness, is what ultimately brings Brutus to his demise.

In actuality, Brutus' use of the power that he presumes to obtain earlier is what leads to this fatal mistake and sad conclusion. He began employing his forthcoming power even before killing Caesar. Cassius suggests that they both be killed, but he rejects the proposal since he believes Antony would be a major obstacle in their journey.

As a result, his conspiracy develops a weakness, which ultimately results in the failure of his scheme. Not only that, but by allowing Antony to speak at Caesar's burial, he has once more erred under the pressure of his terrible defect and assumed authority. Cassius again requests Brutus to deny Antony permission to speak at the burial because he is aware of both Antony's loyalties to Caesar and his prowess as an orator.

However, Brutus rejects Cassius' request once more. In this instance, Cassius' understanding seems superior to Brutus'. In his book Shakespeare, Edward Dowden makes the accurate observation that Cassius "possesses all the practical gifts, insight, and tact that Brutus lacks." (Dowden, p. It is evident that Brutus' fatal fault intensifies as a consequence of his assumed authority, which is really the effect of flattery from the conspirators that they exploit as a weapon to further their scheme. The tragedies of Brutus and King John are similar in that both include the moral transgression of killing an innocent man. When discussing the tragedy of Julius Caesar, Irving Ribner adds, "Brutus commits a private crime: he kills his buddy, in order to achieve a purpose of the public good. His tragic decision was made as a result of this (Ribner, 60–61). Cassius's death also produces a sad impact, but only to a very little extent because he was a villain with a more serious tragic flaw—jealousy—and as such, doesn't elicit much pity from the audience. Even though he has played the power game, he hasn't asserted any direct power.

Although Cordelia is aware of her father's weaknesses, being holy and giving prevents her from taking use of that information. She is also aware of her sisters' nasty tendencies, but she keeps quiet since she doesn't want to embarrass them in front of everyone. She sincerely hopes that her sisters will grow up to be devout, kind, and loving women who will show adequate devotion to her father.

The mediaeval tradition of morality plays, whose themes and structure Shakespeare borrowed for King Lear, is the most significant literary source Shakespeare used when composing King Lear. The protagonist of morality plays, like Lear, must plan for his own demise. The protagonist of the most well-known morality play, Everyman, an anonymous work from the sixteenth century, learns that he will die at the start of the play and sets out in quest of a companion to go with him to his final judgement. Each of the acquaintances he meets is an allegorical character who symbolises a feature of Everyman's existence. Due to their terrible natures and understanding of Lear's tragic fault, Goneril and Regan are given the ability to treat their elderly father with callousness and indifference. At this point, Lear resolves to abandon both of his daughters even though he has already left all of his possessions to his daughters and has no idea where to go. The two sisters are aware that a storm is due to blow, yet they have no qualms about Lear leaving. In a sense, what Lear has done is reversed in this scene. Lear's path towards his inner self begins here. He starts recognizing his inner faults now.

Goneril and Regan develop amorality, a more significant tragic defect that proves to be their undoing, in addition to being envious, deceitful, and tyrannical. Both sisters are immoral since, in addition to being married, they have begun an illicit love affair with Edmund. While Goneril begins the relationship while her husband is still living,

Regan begins it while her spouse has passed away. Goneril and Regan suffer horrible deaths as a result of this tragic fault in them. Regan receives poison from Goneril, who then kills herself out of humiliation.

In Edmund's instance, he rises to the highest level in a remarkably short amount of time. He is an opportunist, thus this happens. Despite this, he has a deadly ending, which may be attributed in part to his inability to defeat Edgar and in part to his excessively opportunistic personality. He finds it impossible to decide between Goneril and Regan because of his excessive opportunism. Because Lear, Gloucester, and Cordelia are fair and generous people who win the audience's compassion, their deaths have a less sad effect than his at the hands of Edgar. Again the death of Goneril, Regan and duke of Cornwall arise the same effect as that of Edmund. Same is the case with Brutus, Cassius and other conspirators in Julius Caesar. So, one encounters two types of tragic characters in Shakespearean plays- one serious and other less serious tragic character. In that case their tragic flaws can also be categorized as serious and less serious tragic flaws.

Shakespeare intends to demonstrate the negative effects of a tyranny and the necessity of a republican state by using a tragic consequence. According to him, a dictatorship fosters and expands a power-game that is extremely perilous for both the general public and the players individually. One player in this power game seeks to outweigh the other player, and he achieves this by learning about the other player's weakness or fatal defect. Thus, one may argue that Shakespeare's plays are filled with references to knowledge and authority as well as a subliminal message about the necessity to create a republican state in society.

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