

The Role of Life and Death in The Life of Anti-Heroes Shylock and Dr. Faustus with Reference to William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*

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Abstract

Man is called the bundle of feelings. He reveals his ideas, feelings, emotions and thoughts through language to others in various literary forms. Literature is nothing but the real mirror of life which reflects the society. William Shakespeare who is called The Father of English Drama and Christopher Marlowe the Fore Father of English Drama have given so many poems and plays for the upliftment of human race. The article writer has selected William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* for the case study. The research runs through the comparative study of Shakespeare's Shylock with Christopher's Dr. Faustus to find out how the theory of utilization of opportunity for life and death in the anti-heroes life. There are two eternal forces in the world namely; the good force God and the evil force Satan. The human being may live in the God's way or the satanic way. In Shakespeare's play, Shylock the antihero of *The Merchant of Venice*, a Jew, a cruel moneylender follows all the dangerous barbarous [uncivilized] in human things and troubled the society. He indirectly tries to kill an innocent hero by his fatal bond. The wiseful judgement and the merciful conditions are given to Shylock as a good opportunity to save his life. Shylock accepted the conditions and save his life but, Dr. Faustus willingly choose the black magic satanic theory and become greatest sinner. He missed the chance that given by the good angels and refuse to become a good person. So, he faced his pathetic end.

Introduction

Literature is nothing but a feelings and knowledge. It is a bundle of art works made up of words. The content and text are revealed to others through literary forms namely poetry, drama, prose, non-fiction and media. This article is followed by drama. The purpose of drama is telling a story by a performance to

the audience on the stage. In ancient days people could not understand the language of the Holy Scripture. So, they started to perform. These religious elements that resulted in the development of drama. First it began to perform at the church campus with miracle and morality events. The miracles are plays dealing with miraculous incidents in the lives of saints and martyrs. The mysterious are stories taken from the scripture narratives. The church services at Easter and Christmas in which the clergy and choristers took part to reveal the truths of religion. William Shakespeare – the greatest dramatist in the world whose fame is spread by his great understanding of human nature and life. Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) was the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessor. He was climbing up the ladder of literary fame involved in political and religious controversies and quarrels. For his strong revolutionary writings he was arrested and stabbed to death at his age of twenty nine. The article chooses two antiheroes Shylock and Dr. Faustus of Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice* (1600) and Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus* (1588). The article goes under the title "The Role of Life and Death in the Life of Antiheroes Shylock and Dr. Faustus."

The Character of Shylock

Shylock is the antihero of the drama called *The Merchant of Venice* written by William Shakespeare. He is an orthodox Jew, embodiment of intellect, sense of morality, Jewish communal feelings, hatred towards Christian, revengeful spirit, hypocrisy, slyness, monstrous inhumanity, suspicious nature, miserly, cruelty, prosaic figure and strong personality. He was defeated of his bond, robbed of his ducats and deserted by his daughter Jessica. He is compelled to give up his birthright, his Jewish religion and become one of the Christians whom he so much hates. He hates Antonio because he has been treated by Antonio insulted, spat upon and kicked out of the way like a strange cur (dog). Shylock's servant Launcelot gobbo curse him as a devil incarnation. Shylock's daughter Jessica sighs shylock's house is hell. She is ashamed to be shylock's child. In the court scene shylock's inhuman wretch reveals through by the action of sharpening the knife on the sole of his shoes. He does not show mercy upon Antonio when the public people, traders of Venice, the Duke of Venice, Bassanio, Portia request him to show mercy upon Antonio. Shylock loves money more than his daughter Jessica. The loss ducats pain him more than the elopement of his daughter. In the trial scene, he behaves as merciless people who can go to any extend to take revenge on the Christians.

The Character Of Dr. Faustus

Dr. Faustus, whose nature makes him an antihero in the drama of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. He is the main character of the story. He is professor of divinity at Wittenberg as well as a famous physician and scholar. He is not satisfied with the limitation of human knowledge and power. He wants to become a superman, so he begins to practice black magic. At some point in the future he makes deal with lucifer the devil. The deal is about the exchange of his soul for the twenty- four years of the devil's service. Faustus perfectly knows that if he is above to achieve his goal he has to relinquish God and the Trinity. After gaining his power from lucifer he obtains all kind of knowledge, strength, and power from the servant of devil, Mephistopheles. They travel to the world together and playing practical jokes on peasants and even the pope, showing some kind of magical powers to the emperor and nobility. The character of Faustus arises from well known legend of German physician who gave his soul to the devil in exchange for magical powers. From the presentation of Marlowe, Faustus represents as a tragic hero but unfortunately his unbridled ambitions lead him to an miserable end. He also feels bad about his decision of selling his soul to the devil in the beginning. He nearly touches the part of repenting at some crucial point but he never achieved it. It is unclear that why Faustus failed to repent. It seems to be a matter of pride and hungry of ambition, sometimes that God is not listening his plea. Other times, it seems like Mephistopheles block him away from repenting. Even in the end, Faustus refused to fully repent and the result is his soul is taken by the devil. Initially, his ambition is admirable and awesome. Yet he lacks of inner strength. He decided that having a deal with Mephistopheles is the only way to fulfil his ambitions. Sometimes Faustus tells himself that hell is not so bad and that one needs only courage. But in the other times, while he talking with Mephistopheles he mentioned that hell is not even exists. This shows the clear growth of his character from a ambitious scholar, confident into a self satisfied, low lever practical jokes.

Utilization of Opportunity of Life and Death

Shylock, the red haired and the monstrous nosed villain has loved money more than his daughter. Because, it gave him the only source of protections among the violently hostile Christians. Shylock comes to murder Antonio not by his religious different but his professional jealousy. He has lost his daughter, his wealth, his religious freedom and the engagement ring given to him by his wife Leah. In the court scene, he was helpless. The judgement of Portia gives an opportunity to save shylocks life. The affected man

Antonio gives mercy to Shylock the opportunity. Shylock embodiment of all evil characters beastly natured behaviour changes his mind to save his life. So he accepted to become a Christian,

half of his property to his eloped daughter Jessica and half of his property ready to give the Venician government. In the case of Faustus, he experiences the trick of conscience. The two angels appear again and again between his soul and virtue, between his will and conscience. After he accomplishes the object of surrendering his soul to the devil. The delineation of psychological conflict in the mind of Faustus is chief thing. To gain limitless power and power Faustus may discard Godly order. He denounces the doctrines of Christianity and takes necromancy. The guilty conscience dogs him from the beginning to the end of the play. The heart of Faustus turns out to be the field where the forces of good and evil are try to overwhelm each other. The tragic conflict and the troubled carry of Faustus give terrible end. The good angel gives opportunity to Faustus to repent and save his life but by the gifts of the devil, Faustus exercises the lust of flesh, the lust of eyes and the pride of life.

Conclusion

“ The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

The Shakespeare's antihero Shylock is more sinned against than sinning. Moneymaking is the very breath of his life so he charges very high interest for loans. Shylock is greedy and selfish nature that is why his love for money is more than his love towards his daughter Jessica. He is the cruel villain who demand one pound of flesh from the Christian Antonio's heart. In the court scene, he is sentenced to hanging. Antonio forgives him and gives mercy to save his life. Shylock accepts conditions and utilizes the opportunity and save his life. But, Christopher Marlowe's antihero Faustus craves power after his compact with devil. Faustus's first question puts to Mephistopheles is prompted not so much by love of power as by a spirit of enquiry. After having knowledge that makes him proceed from one subject of study to another until he abjures God and religion in search of super human knowledge. He studied logic, law, physics and divinity which have yielded up their treasures to him but not being able to quench his intellectual thirst. They afforded him no opportunity surrounding himself with beaming manifestations of the transcendent might of his own will. Dissatisfied with mere knowledge and philosophy Faustus is in the mood of a man. The good angel and the bad angel appear before him for encouraging his resolve and discouraging him. The good

angel gives opportunity to repent and save his soul. But Faustus did not obey. He spent twenty- four years with Satan's weapons the lust of eye, the lush of flesh and the pride of life. He does not utilize the good opportunity, so he faces the tragic end finally.

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