

The Sense of Crime and Punishment In the Shakespearean Drama

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The Origin of Crime and Punishment

The Norman Conquest made French the language of the official class in England. Hence, it is not surprising that many words having to do with government and administration are of French origin. The words 'crime' and 'punishment' are not an exception to this rule. The word 'crime' was derived from the French word 'crime', meaning accusation, judgment or offence,⁽¹⁾ and it was used instead of the English word 'sin'⁽²⁾. In order to avoid confusion, a distinction should be made between these two words. 'Sin' is the taint that exists within the individual's mind and soul. It involves the notion of gloating over evil schemes without translating them into practice. 'Crime', on the other hand, is the tainted action and its grave consequences to others, an evil act which is born of sin.⁽³⁾

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The history of crime is as old as human history. Murder was truly the first crime committed on the face of the earth. The sacred books tell us the story of this crime. Cain, Adam's eldest son, killed his own brother Abel, out of utter dissatisfaction. Each of the two' brothers brought an offering to Almighty God. God accepted the offering made by Abel and refused that of Cain. As a result, Cain became angry, because he thought that he had been done an injustice, and consequently he killed his brother in a premeditative manner. In committing this horrible deed, Cain was preordained to be the one who committed the first crime in the course of the human race. Such an incident has at its core the obvious fact that human beings are born criminals in the sense that they are extensively endowed with evil impulses which, if uncontrolled, lead to anti-social conduct. This is "undoubtedly the element of the truth in the story of the first crime in the course of the human history.

Actually, the idea of punishment had its origin before the existence of man on the earth. It is unanimously agreed that nothing comes out of nothing. Hence, the fall of man is a corollary to the sin of disobedience, which is often referred to as "original sin". This original sin expresses man's fallible nature, his helplessness to redeem himself from the feebleness of his intellect, and the justification of certain punishment. Before the fall happened, Adam and Eve had led a totally comfortable and stable life. Nevertheless, this ideal life did not

last, because Adam and Eve did not abide by Almighty God's order. God ordered them not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But with the temptation of the Satan, they ate it, thus ignoring the divine command. In so doing, they committed the sin of disobedience which was the first action showing the human peccability. As a punishment meted out against their transgression of the divine command, Adam and Eve were deprived of the countless graces they had been enjoying in Paradise, and subsequently the fall happened.

Some Approaches to Crime and Punishment Before Shakespeare

Of all the literary genres, tragedy seems at first sight the most social and the most common. This prominent position is due to the obvious fact that tragedy is a vivid presentation of man's life in all its totality. It creates and explores, not merely man's suffering, but the causes and inevitable process of that suffering. It makes one feel not just the tragic hero's agony and its relation to oneself, but the very nature of human agony, the essence of suffering as it exists through mankind.

The presentation of evil that surrounds man is the essence of tragedy. The assault of evil on man makes him sinful and when it blazes up in action, it shocks the world as crime. In his "A Defense of Poetry" (1821), P.B. Shelley (1792-1822) accounts for the place of crime in tragedy:

... Even crime is disarmed of half its horror all its contagion by being represented as the fatal consequence of the nnfaihomahle agencies of nature; error is thus divested of its

willfulness; men can no longer cherish it as the creation of their choice. In a drama of the highest order, there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect⁽⁴⁾.

One shares David Daiches ⁽⁵⁾ with his bewilderment at the rush of Shelley's ideas. Crime is tolerable in tragedy, because it is represented as coming from 'a mysterious fatalism'; but what, he goes onto ask, is the advantage of that? Shelley makes an important point; drama teaches self-knowledge and self-respect. This is in fact the edifying purpose of tragedy. One critic asserts that moral edification is regarded as the main end of tragedy⁽⁶⁾.

Thus, one can get an invaluable benefit in tragedy from experiencing the extremes of evil and its accompanying pain. Tragedy, in fact, creates the impression that good does exist in the midst of evil and torment, even -if it is no more than the assertion of man's endurance in the face of difficulties. Indeed, the fact that tragedy can make one feel the strength of evil, proves that people recognize its opposite, and cherish it in spite of all- otherwise there would be no agony - evil exists only in the knowledge of good.

Greek Tragedy

Generally speaking, Greek tragedies present a view of the universe, of man's destiny and his relation with his fellows and himself, in which evil is real, ever threatening, and unavoidable. These tragedies explore the area of chaos in the human heart and its

possibility in heavens. According to “the content of these plays, a crime may be viewed as an act of disobedience to a divine command which is punishable by divine retribution. The best way to understand how the concept of crime and punishment was reflected in Greek tragedy is to explain the notions of pollution and purification, which are of prime importance for the understanding of Greek tragedy.

In his book Psyche, Erwin Rohde was the first to discuss the importance of the concepts of pollution and purification. He mentions that the idea of pollution was conceived as “a contagious impurity, a localized stain, created by, for example, accidental contact with a pregnant, or through having committed bloodshed accidentally or deliberately”.⁽⁷⁾ Rohde also confirms the external nature of both pollution and purification, “in its origin and essence (atharsis had nothing whatever to do with morality or with what we should call the voice of conscience”.⁽⁸⁾ Dodds agrees that, since pollution was contagious; once it incurred it continued to operate “with the same ruthless indifference to motive as a typhoid germ”.⁽⁹⁾ But, rightly, he goes on to argue that since pollution was also viewed as an outcome of certain violent acts then it must be held to have some implications of responsibility; the desire for purification must, have been an acknowledgement of guilt and a truthful desire to be free from the consequences of the guilt.⁽¹⁰⁾

In fact, there are four major causes of pollution according to the Greeks. These causes are: childbirth; a contact with a dead body; murder; unnatural sexual acts, notably, rape, incest, and adultery.⁽¹¹⁾ It is to be observed that the last two causes of pollution can be categorized under the realm of criminality. As far as the means of purification are concerned, Vickers mentions water and sacrifice which involves cleansing with the blood of the sacrificial victims as well as there are other ways of purification such as burning, expulsion and burial.⁽¹²⁾

If an attempt is made to consider the concepts of pollution and purification as reflected in the Greek tragedy, one can see that attention is focused on the entailing ramifications of acts of bloodshed, especially within the family, or of unnatural crimes. Certainly, the frequent use of the concept of pollution in the Greek tragedy emphasizes the fact that it is seen as an indivisible part of human nature. We shall confine ourselves to the discussion of Aeschylus's (525-456 B.C.) *Agamemnon* and Sophocles's (496B.C.-406B.C) *Oedipus*.

Aeschylus's trilogy, the *Oresteia*, is in substance a study of crime and punishment. A crime is an evil act born of sin; and punishment takes the shape of infliction of proportionate suffering on the evil-doer, such infliction being itself an evil act. But two branches of evil action does not cancel out each other; they only help to build up a fearful pile of cumulative evil deed. Pelop's two sons-Atrius and

Thyestes- work out in their own and in their children's lives the full malignancy of an ancestral curse. Thyestes the younger brother seduces Atreus's wife, Aethra and seals the Golden Lamb which Pan had given only to elder brother, the true king. Atreus retaliates by killing Thyestes children and serving their cooked bodies for the unknowing father to feast upon. The thread of crime and punishment is now taken by the next generation. Both Atreus and Thyestes are dead. Agamemnon, Atreus's son, is campaigned near Troy to recover Helen and restore Greek prestige. During his 12 year's absence from Argos, Aegisthus, Thyestes surviving son, seduces Clyaemnestra, Agamemnon's wife; and on the very day of his return to his city of Argos after the successful conclusion of the Trojan war, he "murders Agamemnon in his own palace."⁽¹³⁾ This is the theme of the Agamemnon, the first play in the Oresteian trilogy.

Simply the story of Oedipus is of a man who plunged unexpectedly from prosperity and power to destruction and ignominy. Before Oedipus was born, his father, Laius, King of Thebes, knew from an'oracle that his son was predestined to slay him. He spared no effort to avoid this matter by exposing his newly born son on the side of Mount Cithaeron with a stake driven through his feet so that he would die. Fortunately, Oedipus was saved by a shepherd of king Polybus of Corinth, who in turn raised him as his own son. Going to the oracle of Delphi to find out the truth, he sadly knew that he was fated to kill his

father and marry his own mother and herein lies the core of this tragedy. Shocked by this bitter truth, Oedipus did all his best to avoid committing the crimes of which he had been informed. In an attempt to avoid the unavoidable, he decided to leave Corinth. While he was in his journey, he met his father. They combated, and Laius was slain. So, the first pan of the prophecy was fulfilled. Afterwards, Oedipus went on his journey, and was able to save the Thebans from the curse of the sphinx. Trying -to reward and gratify Oedipus for rescuing them, the Thebans made him king - a instead of Laius, who had suddenly disappeared in mysterious circumstances. With the investiture of Oedipus as a king, the last part of his destiny was achieved.

As a result of the crimes which Oedipus had ignorantly committed, the land was cursed with a terrible plague. As a king, he attempted his best to discover root cause of the plague.- When the oracle said that it was the murderer of Laius who was causing the anger of gods, he called down curses upon the head of the plague-causer. Knowing of his involvement in causing this plague, Oedipus was completely blind to the fact that he was himself included in the curse.

Thus, Oedipus had committed two crimes: parricide and incest. But, in fact. he had violated no grave law about killing; the victim happened to be his father and a king, and for these facts alone does Oedipus admit his pollution. In fact, Oedipus was a victim of fate

whose power man could not contain and control. He was also guiltless, to some extent, of the crimes he had unknowingly committed, since he had no hand in them, but fate did have.

Seneca

L.A. Seneca (4 B.C.- 65 A.D.) is held to be one of the greatest Classical dramatists whose influence on the theatre was most profound in the Renaissance, when secular drama was just being revived and studies of ancient Greece had not progressed far enough to make the great Greek dramatists generally available. The bloody drama of revenge, so popular with the Elizabethans, is Seneca's contribution to English literature, Seneca is much concerned with the exploration of the human conscience, of man's need to know and justify his own motives. This attitude of introspection lies at the core of Seneca's tragedies.

In Seneca's moral writings there is an element that is given a broader scope in the tragedies. This is his violent preoccupation with irrationality and terror. Such a preoccupation is shown by his portrayals of great crimes and examples of evil consequences. The Senecan tragedies show us that there is no limited or moderate evil. The smallest error is inevitably transformed into a crime. The resonance of ethical relations refuses the quarantine of a merely venial fault. The criminal divines in him and in his convulsive innards that his misdeeds can destroy all the social bonds, and consequently destroys his own life.⁽¹⁴⁾

With the exception of the ramifications of fatal error, Seneca's criminals are held reliable for their acts, for the will to crime was present. Thyestes was guilty because of his rape and incest; both Medea and Clytemuestra were fully aware of the possible consequences of their deeds. Aegisthus and Phaedra claim heredity as an vindication, but Seneca considers them criminals, because they used their criminal heredity merely as excuse for submitting to their worst innate impulses.⁽¹⁵⁾ Seneca is well aware that man is at liberty to choose between evil and good, and that he can put aside a criminal inheritance.

By extension, Seneca is of the opinion that the criminal cannot shun the excruciating voice of his guilty conscience. He maintains that even the most depraved characters retain some sense of good, and they are not blind to their depravity but prefer to ignore it. This is shown by the fact that they vainly attempt to conceal their crime and even if the crimes are successful, they will enjoy the fruits while suppressing the fact of their misconduct. A good conscience is ready to come into open and be seen by all, but wickedness is afraid even of the darkness. Also, Seneca, quite believes that crime cannot be kept hidden, but it cannot be enjoyed without fear. The chief and greatest punishment that criminals suffer is the fact that they have sin, and no crime-no matter if it be protected -remains unpunished, because crime is its own punishment. The criminal is torn by fear, anxiety and feeling of insecurity. "Luck, Seneca observes, frees many a man from the

consequences of sin, but from fear never".⁽¹⁶⁾ The only way out of these obsessive fears is suicide. For Seneca suicide is preferable to life when it saves honour and gives an escape from unlocked- for consequences.⁽¹⁷⁾

Seneca's Thyestes is in substance a study of crime and punishment. The crime which doomed the House of Pelops to a series of feuds and violent acts from generation to generation was that of Tantalus, a son of Zeus, who served his son Pelops as food at a banquet of the gods. Restored to life by Zeus, Pelops got a wife and a kingdom by treachery, and on his death after many other ruthless acts of conquest his throne became a subject of controversy between his sons Atreus and Thyestes. Their agreements to rule the kingdom in turns were violated more than once. Each brother enjoyed periods of prosperity and suffered periods of banishment. At the time of the play's action, Atreus is in possession and is plotting to trick his brother by a false show of reconciliation. Thyestes, with his three sons, returns from exile, to be the victim of an atrocious crime recalling the crime of their first ancestor. The curse on the house in the persons of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and Aegisthus, son erf Thyestes and in the murder of Clytaemnestria by her son Orestes.

In fact, the infusion of Senecan blood into English drama does not mean merely a new tone of life and a new repertoire of bloodshed but a new life and soul. Out-of the welter of the horrible scenes emerge the introspective studies of revenge, jealousy, ambition- the passions of Hamlet, Othello, or Macbeth, and the use of histories to handle the

problems of political power, the corruption or the loneliness of kingship. These are the kinds of topic which lie at the centre of the austere formal, and at first sight almost inhuman, tragedies of Seneca whose influence on the Elizabethan drama cannot be denied.

Towards a Shakespearean Conception of Crime and Punishment

As a general law, as is well-known, illustrated in many Shakespearean dramas, is that an initial crime, or misdeed, breeds more mischief and carries with it the sufferings, or death, of other wholly innocent victims before the criminal is meted out his final punishment. For Shakespeare, evil of all kinds amounts to physical and emotional suffering, which are difficult to separate from each other. Emotional suffering arises from frustration and the anticipation of frustration' thwarted ambition, unrequited love, disappointment of all kinds, grief, jealousy, envy, and hate. Since these forms of suffering are common, man also suffers from fear; and fear is the more acute since man cannot always be certain just when, how, and to what extent evil will fall on him. That is, uncertainty is an occasion and a form of suffering. To some extent, these forms of suffering would exist even if every one were morally perfect, but of course suffering arises in part from violation of moral norms, such as disloyalty and breaches of implicit trust.

Shakespeare views passion as the prime mover of sin and crime. The mere thought of crime is regarded as with as much horror as the crime itself. The passions are represented to show the confusion and misery to which they lead. Shakespeare does not see reason as a kind of antithesis to passion; he sees reason and passion as two complementary aspects of humanity⁽¹⁸⁾. Hence, it is necessary to look briefly at the motive of revenge, because it is a stepping stone to our understanding of many subsidiary passions.

The Elizabethans viewed revenge as a serious matter, and their interest in it as a criminal passion resulted in different discussions of the different passions which excited it. Anger was often assigned to be the first cause. Grimestone in his study of passions differentiates between anger and hatred, which are of prime importance for our understanding of the villain revengers of Shakespearean traedy. Hatred was to be defined' as "natural wrath which Had endured too long and had turned to unnatural malice".⁽¹⁹⁾ According to Grimestone, anger results from personal mistakes; anger may be particular, but hatred may be universal; anger can be removed by patience; anger is painful, hatred is cold; anger has limits in revenge, but hatred is boundless and aims at the total destruction of its object.⁽²⁰⁾

Jealousy was another cause of revenge and murder. Jealousy bursts out so far, inasmuch as it turns into extreme hatred, and from thence falls into madness. If jealousy is not governed by reason, it may

leave its destructive marks on man's public reputation and his private life.⁽²¹⁾ In the thinking of the Renaissance, jealousy was not viewed as one of the simple passions, but a compounded passion. It is a combination of envy and hatred. Hatred finds its opposite in love and is opposed to love. Yet while jealousy is opposed to love, it stems often from love. Like envy, jealousy has something of the grief and fear that results from seeing another possesses what one has already possessed.⁽²²⁾

Ambition in Elizabethan English denotes aspiration for power, but connotes always that aspiration is evil. For an Elizabethan gentleman to aspire to be king would imply a willingness or desire to break or challenge the divine order in society, and to take the power from one whom Providence has designed it.⁽²³⁾ Ambition was also regarded as the forerunner of revenge and death. All the unbridled passions in man are impulsive; but that of ambition is impetuously furious and furiously outrageous.⁽²⁴⁾ Macbeth is a good example of ambition. Macbeth has been guilty of the sin of ambition before the advent of the Witches. He is punished for his criminal ambition, but much more for its grave consequences, his acts of murder, usurpation, and the tyranny.

In Shakespeare's England there was a persistent condemnation of revenge, a condemnation which was founded on the biblical allusion to the fact that revenge is assigned to God only. Hence, the audience was prevented by its moral and religious implications from applauding the motives of the stage-revengers. This assertion

is intensified by the fact that the revengers are portrayed as suffering from heart-rending solitude.

In their attempts to shape the world in accordance with their desires, Shakespeare's tragic heroes are driven by their passions to make up their minds. In Shakespeare there are stories in which men are moved in various ways towards crime and folly, there are the most remarkable and wonderful revelations of the state of strength, purity and beauty in the nature of mankind out of which the evil practices arise. Writing about Shakespeare's tragic heroes, many critics conclude that, for the most part, they get their suffering from their passionate misdeeds. Those critics maintain that Shakespeare's heroes act and speak by the influence of those passions which are conducive to self-destruction.

In Hamlet (1601), and before the scene of play-within-the play, Hamlet has a word with Horatio. He tells him what the Ghost has told him of his father's murder and asks him to keep a close watch on the king's face during the play. He seizes the opportunity to reveal very frankly his affection and admiration. He incidentally speaks about the relation of tragic guilt to reward and punishment which constitutes the core of the Shakespearean tragedy. He also believes that man cannot be free from the influence of passion. Hamlet tells his close friend, Horatio:

... for thou hast been For one, in suffering all, thou suffers nothing, A man that Fortune's buffets and regards, Has to 'en wills equal shanks: and bless 'a are (whose Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled, That they are not a pipe for Fortune's Jinger To sound what stop she please. Give me that man that is not passion's slave, and I will wear him In my heart's core,,ay, in my heart of heart, As I do thee.⁽²⁵⁾

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The tragic hero sins under the tremendous impact of passion, his reason failing to guide his passion. His passion may lead him to insanity, but as long as his passion is in conflict with reason, he has not perpetrated mortal sin. When, however, passion has taken possession of his will, has perverted his will, when in harmony with passion, his reason directs evil through the will, then we have a villain, one who is died in sin, and one whose sin is mortal.⁽²⁶⁾ This is the distinction to be made in order to see the difference between the villain and the tragic hero.

In addition to the influence of passion upon the heroes of Shakespeare's tragedies, there is also the influence of outside forces, human and supernatural. which contribute to the arousal of the criminal dispositions in Shakespeare's tragic heroes. Brutus, Othello and Macbeth have been profoundly influenced by such forces. These forces are necessary mechanisms to the events of the

play, and without the intervention of these forces, there would have been no tragedy. Crimes and their punishments cannot be looked upon in isolation of these forces. Indubitably, one of the most outstanding characteristic of the Shakespearean -tragedy is the use of the supernatural. Shakespeare always introduces into his plays different forms of the supernatural, such as ghosts, spirits, witches and so forth. These transcendental beings are of considerable significance and their contribution to the course of the events can be seen in the fact that they are always put in close connection with characters.⁽²⁷⁾ Accordingly, these powers in Shakespearean drama are considered important dramatic devices in that they inform the spectators of what happened, of what is happening, and of what will happen in the play. Hence, the role these supernatural beings play in relation to crime and punishment must not go unnoticed.

In the tragedies of Shakespeare, crime is an evil act which is born out of sin. Sin rots the soul inwardly, but crime affects others as well, damaging or destroying them. In self-protection or a matter of retaliation, the others-the victim, the victim's relations and friends or the organized society- seek to punish the . criminal often demanding an eye for an eye. a tooth for a tooth. Where the punishment is inflicted by the victim or his immediate relatives, it takes the form of revenge; where society takes punitive measure against the criminal, such an action takes the colour of punishment.

Nevertheless, the sinner or the criminal himself is hardly affected by the punishment from outside, for physical punishment cannot touch the soul, but remorse and repentance can. Repeatedly, Shakespeare affirms that even there is no punishment of the body, yet a man who has sinned is punished in a troubled mind, in such affections as shame and fear. In fact, the punishment for error and for crime presents itself in “the turbulence of soul created by passion”. Such a punishment seems to be more profound and destructive, for it comes from within the criminal’s soul. The American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) says that crime and punishment “grow out of one stem... All the infractions of love and equity in our social relations are speedily punished. They are punished by fear... Commit a crime, and the earth is made of glass. Commit a crime, and it seems as if a coat of snow fell on the ground...”⁽²⁹⁾

Assuredly, one of the most influential repercussions that Shakespeare’s criminals have in common is solitude in the psychological and physical senses of the word. As such, solitude can be viewed as a punishment meted out against those who have violated certain ethical norms, a punishment which greatly intensifies the criminal’s sense of suffering. The tragic burden of Shakespeare’s heroes lies in the intensification of their solitude towards the consequent sense of utter absurdity that overcomes them

after they have deliberately cutoff the bonds with society and humanity. Hence, one must condemn these men for their rejection of the social bonds which should define their human nature. However, one tends to pity them for their isolation, perhaps admire for the defiance with which they encounter the solitary way they have chosen of their own volition, a way which eventually results in sterility, inhumanity, insignificance, and death.

In his Principles of Literary Criticism (1925) LA. Richards makes a distinction between ordinary experience and artistic experience, and in order to illustrate both types of experience, he cites the often-given example of the difference between witnessing a crime in real life and witnessing a crime in tragedy. He argues that the crime in real life is repulsive, because the viewer is out of its context because the viewer sees only a portion of the whole, and because the crime is blurred by details. The crime in tragedy, however, is part of whole, whose details the viewer, is perfectly aware of; and because of mimesis, the crime is approximated to the viewer without the confusing details.⁽³⁰⁾ Thus, when we witness a criminal in tragedies or movies, we pity him/her, because we are well aware of the suffering experienced by that criminal. Yet, whenever we are acquainted with a crime committed in real life, we immediately condemn the criminal, hoping that the criminal will be severely punished for his anti-social conduct.

It seems that William Shakespeare is possessed by the idea of suicide for his tragedies make frequent use of this criminal act. Although suicide is forbidden in the teachings of Christianity, Shakespeare glorifies this act, conveying to his audience the impression that suicide is an acceptable behaviour, because it can be viewed as “a release from suffering, a refuge against anticipated misfortune and the like”.⁽³¹⁾ The majority of Shakespeare’s characters have recourse to suicide when they attempt to seek a way out of their tragic ordeal which is invented out of their own hands. In fact, suicide is conceived of as a self-punishment for anti-social conduct, it is a symptom of depression, despair and spiritual vacuum. The thoughts of Shakespeare’s characters of suicide constitute expressions not only of despair and self-recrimination but also of aggression turned away from the outward and directed inward.

The foremost defining element for the Roman character in Shakespeare is the willingness to commit suicide rather than live ignobly or suffer death by another hand. All the suicides in the Roman plays are shown as a virtuous act.⁽³²⁾ Therefore, Cassius, Titinius, Brutus, and Portia have done away with themselves to express their virtue.

It stands to reason that the attitude towards suicide in Shakespeare’s tragedies, pagan and Christian, is generally one of acceptance. Although some of these suicides resulted from a

misunderstanding of the situation (Romeo, Cassius), many of the suicides are presented as honorable and necessary (Othello, Antony), while others are seen as noble and glorious (Tintinus, Eros, Cleopatra).⁽³³⁾

Generally speaking, in Shakespeare suicide is viewed as an expression of aggression turned against the self. It is a kind of self-punishment for criminal practices directed against the individuals of one's society. Man is provided with evil and good sides which are in constant struggle. Sometimes, when his moral or good side is at variance with the evil side, the good side is overmastered by the evil one. Out of this dominance of evil, many various complications may arise, and lead man, almost inevitably, to create the barriers that set him apart from the self and from the society. Upon realizing that he has violated certain ethical norms, man becomes filled with sadness, meaninglessness, and despair. And that realization leads him to speculate on the golden mean that makes him able to atone for his gross errors.

It is not a crime here and a crime there that terrify one, it is rather the diabolical force or sweep of evil that throws up crimes right and left; it is the camouflaging of evil in terms of good, it is the blocking of all ways of retreat and safety. Not poetic justice, only rough justice, is possible in the end; and "this justice operates like an avalanche or an echo in a closed space",⁽³⁴⁾ Bradley presents his own

definition of poetic justice confirming that this kind of justice cannot be found in the Shakespearean tragedy:

'Poetic justice' means that prosperity and adversity are distributed in proportion to the merits of the agents. Such 'poetic justice is in flagrant contradiction with the facts of life, and it is absent from Shakespeare's tragic picture of life...'⁽³⁵⁾

Poetic justice, then, is more often the exception than the rule. Indeed, it is called poetic justice, because it can be found oftener in literature rather than in life. Sometimes it is true that the innocent are rewarded and the guilty are punished; more often the innocent and the guilty escape together, as in war. At other times, the innocent suffer while the guilty go free.

It is of especial importance that in the Shakespearean tragedy, "villainy never remains victorious and prosperous at the last"⁽³⁶⁾ The good individual must often suffer as much as, or more than, the evil individual through this agonized convulsion, or the good in an individual must be destroyed, and even help to destroy itself, because of the evil in him which is also to be ruined. The process is quite other than one of weighing good and evil, determining relative merits, and administering rewards and punishment in due proportion. It is, indeed, a frightfully, wasteful process, involving both order and disorder. After it has run its course, "what remains is a family, a city, a country, exhausted, pale, and feeble, but alive

through the principle of good which animates it: and, within it, individuals who, if they have not the brilliance or greatness of the tragic character, still have won our respect and confidence”.⁽³⁷⁾

Beyond any shred of question, Shakespeare achieves a much fuller resolution of his tensions and reconciles the audience to the sufferings of his tragic heroes by suggesting that they have not been in vain, that an end to a whole cycle of evil, and now a better day is about to come. This is in fact a specifically Shakespearean medium that “allows the darkest tragedies - and more especially” the darker ones - to end on a note of triumph”.⁽³⁸⁾

Summing up, one would say that Shakespearean tragedy is an archetypal simulacrum of man’s ethics which regulates the lives of men and women alike. Through dramatic insight, Shakespeare finds, a pattern, an order, in the realm of values; through insight he measures the extremes of human feeling, which cannot be measured by any other way. Whoever sees in Shakespearean tragedy only a spectacle of suffering, is seeing only one half the picture skillfully drawn by Shakespeare. In fact, when one traces the rise and fall of the hero’s fortunes, one feels himself joined to him and to all mankind in the justice of a common fate. This is the secret of the reconciliation to suffering which one finds in Shakespearean tragedy.

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* بحث مستل من اطروحة ماجستير باشرافي للطالب حسن محمد والموسومة
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ملخص

ظاهرة الجريمة والعقاب في الدراما الشكسبيرية

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يتناول البحث هذه الظاهرة متتبعا الجذور التاريخية للربط الاجتماعي والسياسي والنفسي بين طرف الجريمة وطرف العقاب في المسرح العالمي. تحدث هذه الظاهرة بمجملها في نمط المأساة الدرامية حيث تستلهم عناصرهم من معاناة الإنسان في الحياة. تبحث الدراسة هذه الظاهرة في المأساة الإغريقية فتتناول بعض النماذج منها وتحللها، ثم تتحول الى "سنكا" الدرامي الروماني المعروف وما أضافه الرجل الى المسرح بهذا الخصوص. وبعد هذه المقدمة يأتي وليم شكسبير ومأساته الدرامية، كيف يفهمها وكيف يعالجها ويقدمها للمشاهد. ينسج البحث خيوطه الأساسية هنا في ان البطل المأساوي يرتكب جريمته ثم ينال عقابه العادل في نهاية المطاف.

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