

**THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH IN THE APPLICATION OF
INTROSPECTION IN SHAKESPEAREAN CHARACTERS**

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“An uncriticized life is not worth living.”

....Socrates

The very term **INTROSPECTION** is associated with psychology. It is effectively inserted in Shakespearean characters. Shakespeare as a psychologist who has closely observed every step of human-behavior in his time and has promptly exposed in his plays both the faces of man and its effects on himself and on the society.

When Shakespeare speaks through “**Casca**” in the play “**Julius Caesar**” in the very first Act Lean Cassius can read the minds and mend them. “**He reads much: He is a great observer and he looks quite through the deeds of men.**”^{*1}

Here, it is said that how Shakespeare has created “**Cassius**” as a close observer of mankind and who understands strength and weakness of them and acts to sow the seeds of conspiracy against the **Caesar**. He has a profound knowledge of human behaviour and thus he understands well both Caesar and Brutus. A noble **Brutus** becomes conspirator just because of Cassius. He rages Brutus with his sharp sense of his words and resolves himself to kill Caesar on the **Ides of March in Rome**.^{*2}

Cassius can assess the behavior of men and its out-come is far and against the system. When Cassius sows the seeds of conspiracy Brutus never gets a nap till the assassination of Caesar and it is followed even after his end.

However, **Brutus** has not lost the sense of introspection throughout the play. For the right and just cause he is instigated but not for power. Though he kills Caesar, he is not treated as ignoble. Anthony at the funeral says, “The nobility and honesty in the personality of Brutus is inculcated just because of his experiencing and ever undergoing experiment introspection in every concrete and complex context. When Cassius has raised money to support their armies using methods not compatible with Brutus sense of honesty, Brutus is disturbed because he fears that Conspiracy has become prompt, perhaps ever more prompt than the tyrant they hoped to replace”. (Caesar) For the first time, Brutus implies that one of the reasons for the assassination is Caesar's dishonesty, when he says, “**Didn't great 'Julius Caesar' bleed for justice sake?**”^{*3} **Brutus** has developed the handsome personality just because of his ever conscious over introspection on his every deed. **Brutus** is a man who nobly accepts his Fate. He chooses

personal honour over a strict adherence to an abstract philosophy. He acts calmly and reasonably to **Cassius'** death, as he had earlier in a moment of crisis when **Popilius** revealed that the conspiracy was no longer a secret.

In the last moments, he got satisfaction of being certain in his own mind that he has been faithful to the principles embodying the honour and nobility on which he has placed so much value throughout his life. Brutus even prepares himself finally the eventuality of defeat. His *stoic-philosophy* requires that he shows fortitude that specifically forbids suicide. He resolves to choose personal honour over philosophical consistency and has to commit suicide before he will allow **Antony** and **Octavius** to drag his body through Rome. **Brutus's** sense of despair and his fatalism are further emphasized by his desire to end the war one way or another and by his resigned acceptance of the fate of which they will learn soon enough.

Ways and means of Introspection:-The four ways of introspection in Shakespearean plays can be seen as:-

- a. *Personal Introspection*
- b. *Political Introspection*
- c. *Religious Introspection*
- d. *Social Introspection*

To get into introspection is a Law of Nature. It is to be done by both the king and his subjects in any system on Personal, Political, Religious and Social level. But the man is going against to this and he never cares for the values of introspection. Today there is a war, threat, terrorism and massacre everywhere in the globe due to the lack of introspection on Personal, Political, Religious and Social levels. Enlightenment in man can be obtained by the repentance and realization that is through constant suffering.

In Shakespearean tragic-characters, we can certainly come across the basic concept of human suffering which is the rejuvenation of man. Such a man has realized and explored to experience to become human. It is really the process of man to human. But there is no room for such process for modern man. To have the touch with that we should taste the words of Shakespeare.

On the contrary, suffering breeds revenge instead of repentance to realization. Modern man's suffering leads to revenge and that results in rage. So it is an utter spiritual downfall of man and it is endanger to humanity and human love. The association of suffering and revenge is natural but outcome of this is very disastrous one today. Personal revenge is more harmful and dangerous than the revenge on the system. Because it kills one's self and then others.

In Shakespearean plays, we can see the revenge on the entire system but not personal. Revenge on the system takes much time to take option whereas revenge on personal is in haste. Taking decision in haste is really waste but not fruitful. Revenge against the system is a long-process where man is thoughtful and reflective that leads to realization and into reality.

Authority today has become guiltless but it is mere personal revenge where man loses his personality as a responsible person. The political system at any age and time should believe on some values like human values and human relations, otherwise, the political system will have a split personality. He (man in power) can't lead the system which he represents. On the other hand he spoils and he is being spoiled himself. So, Shakespeare is the most relevant for the thoughts on human values today. Shakespeare conducts an enquiry into the conduct of each man in his plays to trace and insert the humanity as a whole.

Personal Introspection:- King as a person and as a human being looks into the self and he is endowed with all kinds of emotions like fear, love, hate, anger, violence and sympathy. In

whatever the position or status he is as a human being he has a little touch with natural feelings. There shall be imbalance of emotions, if any one of the emotions has become dominant over the other, naturally there shall be tragic flaw, which makes him to suffer and realize his flaw and tries to balance the imbalanced emotions.

King Lear's injustice in the division of his kingdom among his two daughters and disowning the third **Cordelia**, leads him to suffer with the chain of shocks and ultimately undergoes introspection then into realization.

When Lear speaks with daughter Cordelia in Act-V-Scenes, it becomes clear:

Lear: - “No, no, no, no! Come lets away to prison.

We two alone will sing like birds in the cage when thou dost ask me blessing.

I'll kneel down and ask of thee forgiveness:

So we'll live and pray, sing and tell old tales and laugh at gilded butterflies and hear poor rogues talk of court news and we'll talk with them too,

Who loses and who wins: who's in who is out:

And take upon us the mystery of things, as we were God's spies:

*And we'll wear at in a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones, that ebb and flow by the moon.”*4*

The last stage of his life with Cordelia in prison holds the mirror to his realization and reconciliation with his beloved youngest daughter Cordelia.

In his old age with the act of madness Lear exalts and becomes highly, emotional and takes wrong decision in dividing his kingdom by the glorious words of Goneril and Regan but he expects more loving words from Cordelia. Then he says to Cordelia ‘*nothing will come out of nothing*’ and sends Cordelia out with bare hands. When Lear becomes highly emotional he can never think of practical life and even he fails to judge the reality of life. He becomes so blind that it leads him to gloom. He understands the facts and realizes his follies at his last stage of his life with sense of introspection.

Lear with his personal introspection becomes man and ultimately human. In the very storm scene in III act of the play Lear's Introspection begins after his utter madness and lunatic position and that really changes him to human and experience both the social strata of higher and lower. With this experience he becomes complete man. Just with a small misjudgment Lear has to endow all sorts of emotional experience. The physical and psychological experience makes him a man-experience in all the walks of life. It is a lesson for us to understand the saying “*To err is human, to forgive is god.*” However the sense of introspection in the life of King Lear brings a various changes in him and he becomes a legend in the history of Shakespearean plays.

In his great tragedies particularly the term **introspection** plays a remarkable and meaningful role in bringing changes in positive prospective of one's life. It is well inserted in Shakespearean characters. The word ‘Sense of Introspection’ is used in Shakespearean plays and it is evergreen and ever losing. Till the doomsday and to the end of human species, it is relevant and remarkable. That is why Shakespeare has become universal and his every word is experienced and thoughtful and must for the present context.

Political Introspection: - Every tragic character in Shakespearean plays either he is a King, Duke, Emperor, Prince, Clown or Soldier occupies the position. He gets authority as his political power. In his authority he is endowed with professional emotions but they are not heart-rendered. In exercising his professional emotions he comes under conflict. Even in the conflict he may look into the self but there would never be natural evaluation out of his realization.

In *Macbeth* Act II scene II, we can see the Political Introspection without evaluation, when Macbeth speaks with Lady Macbeth:-

*“Will all great Neptune’s Ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?
No this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine,
making the green one red.”**5 Act - II Scene - II Line 60-64, PP 127.

In other words, there is a serious reflection due to guilt up killing Duncan by Macbeth who speaks out that even the water in ocean becomes blood if he washes his blood-soaked hands. Then the green sea turns into a red sea. There is a political introspection of Macbeth in this context exposed but it is thrown away in the present context. In above words there is fear in personal liberation from his wretched action done to Duncan.

Political Introspection is very much essential in the present context at all level. The entire system is polluted, corrupted and exploited without political introspection. The whole world is in threat with political system. Not even developing countries like India and China but the big boss of the world the America is not free from threat. So it is the need of the hour to think of political introspection in order to avoid disastrous things plotted at world level.

So, Shakespeare as a psychologist has really exposed the sense of political introspection in his major characters like Macbeth, King Lear, Othello, Julius Caesar, Richard III and Leontaus and so on. Without political introspection no political or social system is healthy in the world. So it is a must in every political context of the world. Because a ruler is a leader who guides the citizens his country. He is the law maker and law breaker too. As he rules and leads a system so the people live. He is held responsible for all the illegal and immoral activities in any system. In the light of this, the political introspection of Shakespearean character is relevant and universal.

Religious introspection: - Introspection in man is done in many ways. It is also done on religious way. We can widely see it in the play ‘Hamlet.’ The famous soliloquy of Hamlet *“To be or not to be”* reveals religious introspection of Hamlet. As a student of Philosophy, Hamlet is more religious than rest. This introspection prevents him to kill the murderer of his own father even after the *‘Play with in the play’* when Claudius involves in prayer before Jesus. Religious introspection of Hamlet over Claudius avoids either of them out of immediate disaster. Throughout the play we can see the inaction of Hamlet with his religious introspection with philosophical brooding.

Social Introspection: - The King, in Shakespearean plays as a higher social class in the society realizes himself through characters like clown and fool. In the play *“The Merchant of Venice”* Shylock as a merchant (ie., vyshya) has the higher strata in the system who is mocked by just the words of Cobbler. When he says *‘Mend thy sole’*..... There is a pun in the sole as soul. Mending the sole of his shoes is at one meaning and mending his soul for his follies is another.

In the order of social system, it is to be realized from lower ladder of the society. It is a moral lesson to the higher class in the system. There is a mockery at merchant class for their cheating and exploiting common people. There is a psychological and sociological change in higher class like King/Queen in Shakespeare’s plays.

In Social Introspection the down fall of a person is noticed. There is an evaluation from lower to higher position. In Shakespeare’s plays, usually either the Clown or Fool mocks at the authority, the king. Through the Clown or Fool in reality the king falls himself down to the lower status. Because of his evil deeds, he repents for the sin or crime. Lear in the Lunatic position of his continuous shocks, he comes down to the level of common life. He experiences and understands the practical life at all levels. Thus, social introspection leads to state of awakening into the self and his entire personality is changed.

With the effect of introspection a beast becomes man and man becomes human. There shall be proper social, economic, political and ethical changes in his personality. It leads into self-realization and self-reliance in one's life. The sense of introspection is the seed in every man but it should sprout and grow as a plant gives the fruit. The life of man becomes fruitful with the proper effects of introspection. In the light of this, *Shakespeare* has become relevant as a psychologist and humanist.

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