

Romance, Conflict, Ambition and Power in the Select Plays of William Shakespeare

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Abstract:

Shakespeare was an English poet and playwright and dramatist. He is described as England's National Poet. He has written plays, sonnets and narrative poems. His plays have been extremely influential and have been translated into multiple languages. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon in England. This paper studies some of the author's works.

Key Words: Shakespeare, Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, The Taming of The Shrew, Macbeth.

I. Introduction

Shakespeare was an English poet and playwright and dramatist. He is described as England's National Poet. He has written plays, sonnets and narrative poems. His plays have been extremely influential and have been translated into multiple languages. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon in England. He belongs to the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras and was part of the English Renaissance. The English Renaissance was cultural phenomenon that occurred in England during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Shakespeare's most famous comedies include *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Taming of The Shrew* and *The Tempest*. His famous tragedies are *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Hamlet*.

II. The Merchant of Venice

The Merchant of Venice is a famous play of Shakespeare's. The protagonist is a merchant named Antonio. He takes a loan for the sake of his friend, Bassanio. The loan is given to him by a Jewish moneylender named, Shylock. Shylock agrees to lend the money on one condition i.e., if Antonio is unable to repay the debt, then Shylock may take a pound of Antonio's flesh. Antonio signs the contract, despite Bassanio's misgivings. Antonio is unable to repair the loan.

However, Portia, who later marries Bassanio, in a disguise, saves Antonio in court by saying that Shylock may take a Antony's pound of flesh but must not spill even a drop of blood. This, conflict is a main theme in the play.

III. The Taming of The Shrew

The Taming of The Shrew is a comedy by William Shakespeare. The protagonists are Katherina and Petruchio. Petruchio tries to court Katherina, a very headstrong woman. Another plot revolves around the life of Katherina's sister, Bianca, who is described as the ideal woman in the play. There is a sort of competition amongst suitors for Bianca's hand in marriage. Petruchio employs a number of tactics and ways to make Catherine obedient. He even keeps her from eating, in order to make her compliant. They get married towards the end of the play. Romance is a central theme in the play.

IV. Macbeth

Macbeth is a tragedy written by William Shakespeare. Political ambition and ensuing repercussions are at the heart of the play. The place is set in Scotland and England. Macbeth is a Scottish general, who gets a prophecy from three witches that he would be King of Scotland one day. Filled with political ambition and desire, he

kills Duncan, the reigning king and takes over the throne. However, consumed with guilt, his wife eventually passes away. However, Macbeth is later defeated towards the end of the play, and Malcolm, the elder son of Duncan, gets the throne. Ambition is at the heart of the play.

V. Hamlet

Hamlet is a tragedy written by William Shakespeare. The full name of the play is *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. This is Shakespeare's longest play. This play is set in Denmark, and Hamlet is the prince of the country. It is revealed through the course of the play that Hamlet's father was in fact murdered by his brother, Claudius. Claudius's goals were to possess the throne of Denmark and to marry a father. However, Hamlet struggles to take revenge against his uncle, Claudius. He hence pretends to be mad and the play ends with a duel, where Claudius, the Queen, Hamlet and his opponent are all killed. The desire for power is at the heart of the play, as it sets the whole play in motion.

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