

Is ' Time' Really now ' out of joint' in the 21st Century?

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ABSTRACT

Hamlet play is a revenge tragedy; a planned murder of a murderer after much of procrastination and calculations of the risks and benefits for Denmark. The consequences were weighed not by and for only the royal family of Denmark; but for the future of the country after the demise of the members of the members of the royal family, be it the family member from the monarchy aristocrats, capitalists, imperialists, socialists, pseudo socialists in the era of terrorism, late capitalism, neo colonialism etc in the post-modern saga.

In the play Hamlet mortality is one of the leitmotifs. And this is not for only one individual; but valid for any ideology whatsoever in the world. And the rebellious attitude is always to perpetuate in the world. There is no denying its relevance even in the early or late 21st century.

This is a time of mass migrations and ethnic fluxes with upsurges and onslaughts by the ISIS terrorists – Al Queda jihadis, as in Hamlet's period there was the arousal of the Protestants in the precincts of Christian religion subduing the Catholic streams or sects. With passage of time rebels would simply change their slogans-cum-signboards with varying charters of demands, but the spirit of "to be or not to be" would surely perpetuate with revenges of various hues taking place with the validity of the adage, "old order changeth yielding place to new" in the varying shades colours and characters. This precisely implies that the Hamletian dilemmas would continue to persist with flow of time.

Keywords:- Ghost, Regicide, Suicide, Homicide, Adultery, Soliloque, Schizophrenia, delusion, Hallucination, Insanity, Crazyiness, Morbidity.

Section 1: Superb Revenge-play 'Hamlet' and its Peak Popularity: Powerful Reasons

Reasons for the enduring popularity of Hamlet:

(i)Hamlet evokes people's / viewer's sympathy, more aptly speaking that is empathy. (ii)His character is flesh and blood and too realistic. (iii)Hamlet is extremely philosophical and contemplative, contrary to the calculative characters we confront day and night. (iv)His melancholy is in many ways endearing. (v)He is the quintessential teenager. (vi)His lamentation, "something is rotten in the state of Denmark" is suggestive of the moral corruption of 'Claudius', his Human Depravity arch-enemy in the psychological plane. (vii)In today's world with so many problems and too few solutions it is natural to feel somewhat powerless and paralyzed. (viii)Hamlet is the poster-child of modern malaise: hesitancy and indecisiveness. (ix)The world is full of uncertainties and suffers from randomness and non-deterministic nature. So to be cocksure on any issue under the sun would be a gross folly, according to his own view. (x)Though he is atheist and a non-believer of reason or believes in supernatural elements/ things he is all the time extremely shaky in nature. (xi)The vivid varieties and vastness of Human experience. (xii)The consolation of Providence [1].

Section 2: Etymology of the Name Hamlet

The name Hamlet has a lot of controversy and meaning. Etymologically Hamlet's name is Icelandic noun, which means a 'fool'. Another translation of that name is by analysis of the word aml-ooi which is a noun meaning 'raving mad' and consequently, amla which means 'routine'. Later on, the names were integrated to be Amlodhe in the Irish dialect. Due to the change in phonetic laws, the name Amlodhe change to Amlaidhe. The origin of this name can be termed to be wild. "The obnoxious character That is Hamlet English Literature Essay." [2]

Section 3: Relevance of Hamlet

Hamlet is the most well-known and most frequently performed of any play in written records of the cultural history. So, what is so special about it? There are several important factors that led to this productions success, which are significantly revealing about societies theatrical values. It is the historic tradition of the play that entices people to come, the curiosity as to the new interpretation of the play, and the deep character development that pulls the audience

in. Hamlet expertly does a dance between being traditional and modern theatre, and it does that so well that the audience gets completely engrossed in the writing and character development by Shakespeare. As the life rolls on with the passage of time newer and newer varieties of complexities of life and the societies are gradually mounting and they are all the time on the rise in depth, direction and dimension. In the plane of mental 'psyche' of the people the spectrum is becoming more and more variegated, colourful and complex.

The deep characters that Shakespeare built up have stood the test of time and our culture's desire is to see these novel characters in a new light. Trying to re-examine these traditional characters and with these different interpretation of the play we can see these characters in a new light and with flash-in-the-pan ideas.

The play has been performed by the greatest actors of their generations. Besides, the play has some significant universal themes first daunting challenge of the language of Elizabethan England. Secondly, the choice to perform the characters in an 'emo'-fashion provided a new way of examining the characters. This style allows Hamlet to seem far less whiny, and far more manic. In addition it made him seem much more juvenile, which is closer to the original intention of Shakespeare and makes his actions and conflicted ideas seem far more reasonable 1599-1601 society was full of evils and hideous deeds. [3]

Traits of Hamletian features

- (i) Male Chauvinism (ii) Distrastful (iii) Resentful (iv) Highly Intellectual and Philosophical Schemer (v) A sensitive and courageous hero (vi) Highly Rhetorical (vii) Enigmatic Personality (viii) Rash, Brusque and Impulsive careless (ix) Avenger (x) Indecisive

Section 4: Christianity in Crisis in Elizabethan Era in England

Undoubtedly, it is difficult to find free space on a battleground that thousands of horses' hooves have crushed; similarly, when researching *Hamlet*, one finds a plethora of papers in diverse fields including philosophy, religion, feminism, literature, psychology, culture, and history covering a wide range of aspects of the play.

The tragedy *Hamlet* was written by William Shakespeare in 1600 to 1601, (Shakespeare, 2005) in the Elizabethan era (referring to Queen Elizabeth I), a period when religious conflicts were much in evidence. This study examines the function of religious beliefs for the

people and for the events of *Hamlet*, offering a new perspective on the characters' motives. The essay discusses the actions and thoughts of the characters, especially the protagonist, to elicit the influence of religion on them. The central questions which this study addresses are: Are the characters believers? Was the main protagonist, Hamlet, a believer? Is faith given a positive or negative value in the play? To what extent does religion help to illustrate the play's events and help the readers to understand them? Was Shakespeare against religious phenomena in this play or not?

Religious environment

In general, this play is located in a context of religious beliefs, and the consideration of religion is very important in understanding the characters' motives. Horatio, for instance, prays for Hamlet when he emerges from his dialogue with the ghost:

HORATIO: Heaven secure him!

HAMLET: So be it! (*Hamlet*, I. 5. 116-117)

The speech by Hamlet's father's ghost, who describes himself as having been a sinful person during his life, reveals the depth of his faith, and includes advice about the sins that have been committed. He says:

Murder most foul, as in the best it is;

But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

(*Hamlet*, I .5, 127-128)

Describing how he wants his son to kill his brother, he talks about the 'murder' in the context of his faith and justifies his request on religious grounds. He wants his son to kill Claudius for a supreme purpose:

Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest (*Hamlet*, I .5, 82-83)

Although *Hamlet* is considered "a tragedy of revenge" (Deutermann, 2011), the ghost does not primarily want to get revenge on his brother, but wants to stop the debauchery. It appears that the ghost is a Christian because he insists that Horatio and Marcellus should swear on the sword, which is in the form of a cross (*Hamlet* I .5, 155, 161, 181). Even Claudius is devout at times; he blames himself and asks for forgiveness in church (*Hamlet* III .3.37-49). In addition, most characters in this play, including Laertes (*Hamlet*, I.3.54), Polonius (*Hamlet*, I.3.56-60) and the clown (*Hamlet*, V.1. 22) are believers.

In *Hamlet*, vestiges of “the Ghost's faith in the efficacy of the traditional sacramental system” (Stegner, 2007) emphasize that the faith of metaphysics affects the actions and moves the characters. For example, many “recent critics have observed the importance of confessional rites in *Hamlet*” (Stegner, 2007).

Was Hamlet religious?

Hamlet is in general a part of his community, and consequently his speech and his behavior reflect his religious faith. He does not commit suicide, because of his need to comply with the orders of his God:

Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden
(*Hamlet*, I.2,131-135).

Some of Hamlet's words show him to be pious and strongly against immorality. He criticizes the spread of inebriation and debauchery in his society:

This heavy-headed revel east and west makes
us traduced and tax'd of other nations: They
clepe us drunkards, and with swinish Phrase
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes. From our
achievements, though perform'd at height,
(*Hamlet*, I.4, 17-21).

In the author's view, Hamlet is as much a believer as anyone in his community. However, he becomes more pious after the shock of the illegal marriage. Why did the community consider this kind of marriage illegal? How do we know that Hamlet was affected by this?

Claudius is described as lewd and lascivious, not because he killed his brother but because he married his brother's widow. This kind of marriage was considered illegal at the time, and is described as 'damned incest'. Accordingly, one of the main reasons for Hamlet's aversion to his uncle is this 'damned incest', a religious reason. It is worth noting that some religions today, such as Islam, consider this kind of marriage legal. Our suspicions are confirmed that Hamlet had feelings of frustration and anger before his conversation with the ghost of his

father. In my opinion, Hamlet's feelings about this culturally unacceptable marriage control him and direct his behavior.

It is suggested that the main evidence for the change in Hamlet after the shock of the ghost's revelations is his relationship with Ophelia. Before the shock, Hamlet tries to give Ophelia gifts and develops a relationship with her, but he changes his opinion of her because he changes his opinion of all women. Hamlet, in a conversation with

Ophelia, advises her to be chaste, and then says:

Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a
breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent
honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things
that it were better my mother had not borne me
(*Hamlet*, III. I, 121-124).

The ideal woman for Hamlet now appears to be one in a 'nunnery', and the dialogue between him and Ophelia reveals that Hamlet may have decided to become celibate and to see all sexual relationships as degenerate. His mother's betrayal of his father, evidenced by her marriage to Claudius, has made him lose trust in women in general. Therefore, when Ophelia describes 'the initiation' of his play, prepared by Hamlet, as 'brief', Hamlet answers her 'as women's love' (*Hamlet*, III.2,162-163).

Religion is the framework through which a pious believer looks at the universe and judges right from wrong. Religion also helps the believer to remain balanced when he receives a shock; usually disasters cause the believer to become more pious and ascetic. The shock Hamlet received causes him to regard himself not just as a believer, but as a savior:

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together (*Hamlet*, I.5, I I. I,188-190).

We appear to be left with an unanswered question. If Hamlet knew everything that his uncle did, why does he seem hesitant? To answer this, we must explore why Shakespeare repeats the 'crowing of the cock' without obvious significance.

Hesitation and concern are the most prominent characteristics of the protagonist's personality, including his uncertainty about the nature of the ghost. During the Middle Ages, the cock was an important Christian symbol. It crowed at the birth and death of Christ, and it heralded the dawn that "brings light to the sins of the night and rouses men to the worship of

God” (Guiley,2008). Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (a Roman Christian poet who was born in Spain in 348) sang: “the night-wandering demons, who rejoice in dunnest shades, at the crowing of the cock tremble and scatter in sore affright” (Summers, 1973). The ‘cock crowing’ appears to be an important symbol in the structure of *Hamlet*, because Marcellus, the officer, tells Hamlet that the ghost of his father “faded on the crowing of the cock” (*Hamlet*, I.I.158). As Hamlet holds the belief that the ‘cock crowing’ disperses demons, he wonders if this ghost is just a demon. Hamlet remains bewildered and his comments show his indecision over the ghost’s essence:

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn’d,
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from
 hell,
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
 Thou comest in such a questionable shape
 (*Hamlet*, I.4, 39-43)

Hamlet is not naturally indecisive. However, he is a believer and through his faith tries to control his behavior, balancing his feelings of rage with his religious beliefs.

He says:

The spirit that I have seen
 may be the devil: and the devil hath power
 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
 As he is very potent with such spirits,
 Abuses me to damn me (*Hamlet*, II.2, 596-601)

To the author, Shakespeare makes the ‘cock crowing’ an implied reason for Hamlet’s hesitation and because of it, Hamlet seems indecisive. In the same context, the spirit of Hamlet’s father warns Hamlet of the murder.

In addition, religious passion influences the time of the killing; Hamlet does not kill his uncle when he is asking for forgiveness in the church (*Hamlet*, III 3, 37-49), because he does not want to send him to heaven. However, his religious passion affects his desire for revenge. He could have sent Claudius to his death without the opportunity to atone for his sins, as Claudius did with his brother.

Finally, did Shakespeare want to send a religious message through this play?

Shakespeare's religious belief is not clear in his literary works; however, some writers believe that Shakespeare “did not follow or support any one religion” (Baylis, 2010), and others think that it would “be helpful to characterize Shakespeare formally as a religious dramatist. The fact is that he chose, by and large, to leave religion alone” (Murray, 2000). In fact, too much emphasis on Shakespeare’s religion leads “to a reductive appreciation of his art” (Voss, 2002). However, no-one can understand *Hamlet* without considering the role of religion. Denmark was Catholic during the period in which *Hamlet* was set, and many writers think Shakespeare could “have been a Roman Catholic” (Jamieson n.d.). Furthermore, there is some evidence that suggests Hamlet’s environment was Catholic (Baylis, 2010). The text has been analyzed without any prior consideration about religion. We can determine something of Shakespeare’s religious opinions from his characters. Shakespeare does not criticize religion, and his view of right and wrong depends on religion, or, at least, is not incompatible with it. Shakespeare praises chastity, for example, through Laertes (*Hamlet*, I.3, 16-20), Polonius (*Hamlet*, I.3, 101-103), and Hamlet (*Hamlet*, III.1. 111–115). In addition, the tragic end for all the sinful characters strongly suggests that Shakespeare has a moral opinion, and wants to express his disapproval of evil and immorality. In general, this play provides an ascetic view of life, especially in the conversation with the clowns. For instance, they discussed in depth Christianity's attitude towards burying the suicide victim (*Hamlet*, V .1, 86-180).

Shakespeare also hides some criticism of the church and clergy. Ophelia, for example, warns her brother not to do “as some ungracious pastors” (*Hamlet*, I.3, 47).

Shakespeare shows the harsh face of the church when the priest refuses to treat Ophelia in the same way as those who died naturally. He considers that she lost her right to be buried in consecrated ground when she took her own life:

As we have warranties: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o’ersways the
order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet: for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on
her;

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home
(*Hamlet*, V .1, 223-229)

Moreover, Shakespeare employs Grecian religious figures, for example, Hyperion (*Hamlet*, I.2, 140), Niobe (*Hamlet*, I.2, 149), and the God of sun (*Hamlet*, II.2, 181-182). These symbols have rhetorical functions; they do not however, function in the structure of this play. In general, Shakespeare includes a religious message and a meditative view of life. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare reveals the role of religion in his worldview.

Christianity is the principal influence on Hamlet, and on the other characters from Danish society in this play. In addition; however, the Grecian religious symbols do not have a fundamental significance in the structure of the text as does Christian religion. Shakespeare's most important formative influence was the town's grammar school, as it was there he learned to read, speak, write, and think in Latin from his early years (Spencer, viii).

Shakespeare, by the power of his rhetoric, is able to make us sympathize with the protagonist. However, aside from the rhetoric, when we re-evaluate the behavior of the protagonist in the context of his religious values, we find that he kills Claudius, Polonius, and Laertes, and he causes the deaths of Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, his mother and himself.

There is an additional insight. Hamlet, after the shock of his discoveries, becomes virtually another person and re-evaluates the situation in accordance with his religious views. Perhaps the ghost is just an illusion or mental disorder making him imagine this tale, and the murder of his father is illusory because he is not able to accept this kind of marriage and he wants to justify his crimes. In addition, Claudius's asking for forgiveness in church could be re-interpreted. Perhaps, he simply feels bad about the marriage as it was not particularly acceptable culturally. Following this interpretation, the play raises many questions, and leaves an open door for answers. It can be said that religion must be a starting point for any literary analysis of *Hamlet*, or at least that it must be used to highlight the characters and their actions, enabling us to form deep and logical interpretations [4].

Section 5: Hamlet play Reviews : Tributes to this Shakespearean 'Problem Play' [5]

Ever the course of former Globe artistic director Dominic Dromgoole's beguiling account of a quixotic project – staging a production of *Hamlet* in every country in the world over two years – a curious thing happens. Dromgoole is an erudite and fascinating, if occasionally self-contradictory, guide to all things Shakespearean, and there's a real sense of the camaraderie and sheer fun of assembling a company and, quite literally, putting the show on wherever they can. Yet as Dromgoole and his actors take themselves out of their comfort zone – most notably to Somalia and a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan – the universal themes explored in the play take on a new and thrilling resonance, as the actors learn as much from their audiences as vice versa. By the end of the book, Dromgoole has, indeed, “held the mirror up to nature”, and the stories he has discovered are truly compelling and sometimes vital ones [6].

Few shows are seemingly more exclusive than this. Tom Hiddleston plays the great Dane in a Kenneth Branagh production designed to raise funds for the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Since it runs for three weeks in a 160-seat auditorium and all the seats were long since sold by public ballot, you might expect it to have an air of chi-chi privilege.

Yet the first performance had none of the air-kissing ballyhoo one associates with first nights. If anything, the occasion was remarkable for the traditionalism of Branagh's production, the romanticism of Hiddleston's Hamlet and the rapt concentration of the audience.

Hiddleston, as we know from past performances, is an accomplished Shakespearean actor. His Coriolanus was marked by a reckless impetuosity and his Cassio by a quiet grace. Both elements are present in this modern-dress Hamlet.

But, if I had to pick out Hiddleston's key quality, it would be his ability to combine a sweet sadness with an incandescent fury. He suggests a fierce intellect gnawed by intense melancholy and yet subject to bouts of intemperate rage.

The grief is there from the start. The first thing we see in this production is Hiddleston's Hamlet sitting at a piano and softly singing to himself “And will he not come again?": the refrain that Ophelia later applies to her dead dad here becomes Hamlet's lament for his own father.

Emotion is never far from the surface in this performance. When Polonius takes his leave of Hamlet and the prince says there's nothing he'd more willingly part with "except my life", Hiddleston's sardonic jest turns into a well of unstoppable tears.

It is not, however, a sentimental performance. One notices the self-obsession in this Hamlet who constantly emphasises the first person singular.

There is also a genuine fury which he seems to have inherited from his father. Hiddleston bangs tables and pummels cushions in rage at his failure to achieve revenge.

And when he does finally think he has accomplished the task, by thrusting a dagger through a door that seems to conceal Claudius, Hiddleston leaps about on an ecstatic high only to learn he has murdered the wrong man. There is a genuine danger to this Hamlet as well as a delicacy of soul.

If Branagh's production is dubbed "traditional", it is because it ultimately gives us a vision of Hamlet as a man likely, had he been put on, "to have proved most royal".

But the production, played by a cast of 10, has its quirky features. James Cotterill's design, with its white sofas and tall windows, stresses the domestic rather than the political aspect of the play. Sean Foley plays Polonius less as a crafty statesman than as a conscious joker who hands out a packet of contraceptives to his departing son.

Hamlet's stalwart friend also here becomes Horatia but, although the role is excellently played by Caroline Martin, the reviewer started to wonder if their spiritual closeness implied and sexual intimacy, as homoeroticism was quite prevalent in Elizabethan England.

Branagh, who has himself played Hamlet many times and also directed it for the movies, clearly understands the play inside out and gets a range of subtle performances.

One of the best comes from Nicholas Farrell, whose Claudius starts as a wholly plausible, persuasive head of state and then slowly reveals his moral turpitude: I loved the moment when he inquired, in astonishment, "From Hamlet?" as letters arrived from his supposedly murdered nephew.

Kathryn Wilder is a striking Ophelia forcing people at gunpoint into mourning her dead father. And Ansu Kabia plays a sonorous Ghost, a rhetorical Player King and a rapping gravedigger with equal aplomb.

In one way, it is sad that this production will be seen by so few people. But its purpose is to raise money in a good cause rather than to embellish reputations.

And, even if it rarely shocks one into new awareness, it has clarity, swiftness and, in the person of Hiddleston, a compelling Hamlet with a genuine nobility of soul.

Hamlet is at the Jerwood Vanbrugh theatre, London, until 23 September. The ballot scheme for tickets has now closed. Michael Billington's ticket was acquired through the ballot and paid for by the Guardian [7].

Prince Hamlet is depressed, disillusional, and maniacal. Having been summoned home to Denmark from school in Germany to attend his father's funeral, he is shocked to find his mother Gertrude already remarried to his Uncle Claudius, the dead king's brother, who has declared himself the king, though young Hamlet is the actual heir to the crown. Hamlet, rightly, suspects foul play.

Shakespeare's "Hamlet" is considered by many Bard experts to be his greatest tragedy script. For years, the melancholy tale of death, betrayal, family dysfunction, and revenge has been a staple on the programs of major theatres and analyzed in many a school classroom.

"Hamlet" is filled with intrigue, betrayal, deception and revenge. On a dark brumal night, a ghost walks the ramparts of Elsinore Castle in Denmark. The apparition resembles the recently deceased King. When Hamlet's friend, Horatio sees the illusion, he brings the Prince of Denmark to see the ghost, who speaks to him, declaring that it is indeed his father's spirit, and he was murdered by his brother, Claudius. The ghost disappears with the dawn, leaving Hamlet with no option but revenge.

We observe as Hamlet schemes, acts irrationally, considers suicide ("To be, or not to be: that is the question"), and comes to the realization that death wouldn't be the escape he craves.

In this, and many other scenes, Hamlet displays his personal tragic flaw, a requirement that Shakespeare incorporated, based on Greek theatrical tradition, as a trait element of tragic heroes. The Prince is unable to make decisions, and when he decides, the outcome has tragic consequences. In the play, eight of the nine primary characters, including Hamlet, Ophelia, her father, her brother, his mother and uncle all die, because of Hamlet's actions.

The play is filled with many themes, each identified by a quote.

Political intrigue: The king has been killed, there is a new king on the throne, one of questionable right to the seat, the deceased king's son acting erratically, something's clearly off. ("Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.")

Awareness of the process of life: As Hamlet stands at the newly dug grave which will soon house Ophelia, he looks at a skull, which the gravedigger has identified, says, "Oh Yorick I knew him well." Yes, it is The Remains of Yorick, the court jester who was the young man's companion and tutor. Hamlet realizes that death eliminates the differences between people as we all ultimately crumble into dust.

Women and their roles: "Frailty, thy name is woman!" and "The doth protest too much, methinks" highlight Hamlet's perception that women, like his mother, are weak, as she is not even strong enough to mourn but escapes her angst by insincerely moving on. She is also manipulated by a man, unable to act on her own. Irony is a part of life that becomes a message when Polonius gives advice to his son, Laertes, that "This above all: to thine own self be true." Yet he does not follow his sage words and both he and Laertes die because they are not true to themselves.

The script goes on with more and more Shakespearean ideas such as, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in wisdom! How infinite in faculty!" and "Brevity is the soul of wit."

Charles Fee, the director of Hamlet at Great Lakes Theater, in his program notes explains some of the artistic decisions of this production. He states, "In choosing to double cast the role of Hamlet with a woman and a man playing alternate performances, we are exploring the possibility that Hamlet's nature and his responses to the dramatic action may reveal more depth and elicit more compassion than we would experience through a single actor's interpretation."

As for a female playing the lead role, this is not that unusual. In 1775, Sarah Sidons portrayed the Prince of Denmark in British stagings, while in 1820 Sarah Bartley did an American production in the role.

Probably the best known of female Hamlets was Sarah Bernhard, who, at the turn of the century, was much praised for her performances. On the other hand, Dame Judith Anderson's 1970 Carnegie Hall performances, at age 73, were "deemed weak and ill-conceived by critics."

Joseph Papp, who established The Public Theater, explained, regarding a woman portraying the role, "I have always felt that there is a strong female side to Hamlet – not feminine so much as female. To me that has to do with an easier capacity to express emotion. The person playing Hamlet should be able to weep unabashedly and unashamedly. There are men who can do that, but they should be young; Hamlet is a very young person, an adolescent, a student."

Papp went on to warn, "I think most people would not approve of having a woman in the role. I think most audiences are conservative about a change of sex of any kind, and they consider 'Hamlet' sacrosanct."

Papp may well have been right. In an intermission conversation with people at the GLT preview performance I was told by several Shakespeare traditionalists, "Why don't these people leave Shakespeare as it was written." And, "Why can't they leave things alone and not tinker with greatness."

I found Laura Welsh Berg's portrayal of Hamlet appealing and providing a different emotional dimension to the role. There was an introspection that I hadn't heard in the many, many performances I had seen before, with males performing the role.

Frustration emerged however, since the actors referred to "her" as "he", "him", and "sir", when I was aware that Berg was a female and was using "feminine" gesture patterns and vocal tonations. (As per the research on masculine-feminine studies by Sandra Bern and Deborah Tannen.)

Also, the relationship to Ophelia was confusing with the masculine gender terms. If played as a woman-to-a-woman, truly a new, a modern dimension, would have been introduced. If the intent was to stretch the interpretation, why not go all the way? (The same could be done by adding a male-male component to the male Hamlet version.)

A third issue might be the assumption that members of the audience are going to see the performances of both Berg and the other Hamlet, Jonathan Dyrud. If not, there is going to be no way to gain the appreciation which Fee explained might happen in the duo casting.

Fee's program notes also state, "Our scenic design will allow part of the audience to sit onstage, surrounding the actors, as well as on either side of the platform downstage." He explains, "For those sitting onstage the experience my feel like being in the play rather than passively watching the play."

Having some of the audience on stage was a departure. In Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, the groundlings stood around the stage in close proximity to the actors. Several persons who were seated in the added seats which hugged the stage apron on two sides, expressed their pleasure in seeing and "feeling" the action up close.

On the other hand, a local reviewer who was seated on stage, moved into orchestra seats for the second act, as he said he couldn't hear many of the lines in the first act, as they were projected into the auditorium, with the actor's backs to those ensconced on stage. He also indicated that he could not see a great deal of action because of the wooden framing which blocked much of the stage and all of the action portrayed in the alcove at the rear of the center stage.

Fee nicely added some humor to the performance, which relieved a degree of thye tension without eliminating the angst. The pacing was sprightly, making the long production seem short, with a high degree of audience attention.

The cast was excellent. Berg earned her standing audience curtain call. Erin Partin was superlative as Ophelia. Her "insane" scene was spell-binding. Laura Perrotta was properly conflicted as Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. David Anthony Smith nicely developed the king of Denmark, Hamlet's uncle, who killed the youth's father, into a disliked not overly-done melodramatic maniac. This added a nice realistic dimension to the role. Strong performances

were also presented by Doug Fred Miller (Polonius), Nic Steen (Laertes), and Christopher Tocco (Horatio).

Kim Krumm Sorenson's opulent costume designs, Rick Martin's lighting and Ken Merckx's fight choreography added much to the performance. High praise to Lynn Robert Berg and Doug Fred Miller whose coaching made the speeches easy to understand.

Capsule judgement: The preview performance of "Hamlet" grabbed and held the audience's attention. Laura Welsh Berg was convincing and gave a "different" dimension to the role of the Prince of Denmark. Though Shakespeare traditionalists may scream "something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (GLT), other who see the "female" version of the play should leave saying, "Good-night, sweet prince; And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest." [8]

Section 6: Life and 'Death' In Shakespeare's Hamlet

The issue of death is inseparably linked with a traditional idea of tragedy. But the concept of death was restricted by the ancient religious dogmas. The Renaissance gave birth to new visions and interpretations of various issues of existence, especially concerning life and death. The decline and decay of every individual is an old theme with many ways of being expressed during the Renaissance. He goes beyond the ancient and Renaissance conception on death. With both religious dogmas and atheistic values; for him, death simultaneously embodies everything and nothing. Renaissance thinking of Michel de Montaigne, Thomas More, Sir Walter Raleigh and Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus.

Executions and mutilations were usually conducted in public and were rather popular among certain groups of British population. As Michael Neill (1997) puts it, death and other funerary issues constitute a crucial part of any Elizabethan drama that is aimed at transforming individual death into a common recollection. Death became an integral part of existence of as Nigel Llewellyn (1991) claims, Images reminding people about their own mortality were to be found in all kinds of public and private situations In early Modern England, Death always accompanied the individual on the streets or at home among the family.

Ophelia's death does not fall under the category of revenge; instead her suicide is closely connected with her sexual desires towards Hamlet. Dollimore (1998) demonstrates that there is a close connection between sexual desires and death; the Renaissance ideas on love reveal that love is a changing phenomenon, and if it is so, sexual desires are also exposed to

changes. According to Dollimore (1998), For the Jacobean, as for us, what connects death with desire is mutability. Christian dogma that human desires bring destruction and death, as is just the case with Eve's desire for an apple. Claudius' obsession with wealth and power results in many deaths and troubles; thus Shakespeare reveals that Claudius deserves death.

He seems to form a certain unconcern towards death. In his search of revenge, Hamlet thinks much about death and afterlife. But these attempts to revenge for his father are only a prerequisite to Hamlet's thoughts of committing suicide. This obsession with death gradually drives him mad; William Shakespeare demonstrates this obsession with implicit mockery.

Hamlet's gloomy thoughts. As he claims, No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned into dust; the dust is earth (Shakespeare, 1985 5.1.201-206). In fact, the image of the grave is shown several times throughout the play to reveal the character's attitude towards death. With the exception of Hamlet, all characters demonstrate fear and pity at the sight of the grave that they associate with death. As Hamlet constantly thinks of death, he does not value his own life, as well as other people's lives. As a result, Hamlet appears to be also responsible for the death of Ophelia, Claudius, Polonius, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.

Thus, Hamlet's obsession transforms him from a miserable youth into a cruel murderer. However, contrary to other characters' deaths that are portrayed with a certain degree of irony, Hamlet's death is depicted in more serious terms. From the very beginning of Shakespeare's play each death seems to be blackened and is soon forgotten by other characters. For instance, Hamlet demonstrates that his father's death is already neglected by people, although King Hamlet died only a couple of months ago. When Horatio claims, My lord, I came to see your father's funeral, Hamlet responds: I prithee, do not mock me, fellow student. I think it was to see my mother's wedding (Shakespeare, 1985 1.2.183-185). Such an ironic viewpoint reveals that even the most generous people are forgotten. The death of Polonius is also ignored by the principal characters; Ophelia and Laertes are too preoccupied with their emotions and feelings to remember their father, and Hamlet who accidentally kills Polonius expresses only some sympathetic words: Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell (Shakespeare, 1985 3.4.38). Ophelia's death is described in even more ironical portrayal, as the dramatist presupposes that her death is a result of suicide and asks: Is she to be buried in Christian burial, when she wilfully seeks her own salvation? (Shakespeare, 1985

3.4.38). Similar to Ophelia's death, the deaths of Gertrude, Claudius, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are able to arouse only sympathy in readers. In this regard, Hamlet's death stands out against a background of other deaths; it evokes respect and powerful emotions towards the character. Although Hamlet expresses irony to death throughout the play, his death is a tragedy for those who knew him.

As Horatio claims, Now cracks a noble heart. / Goodnight sweet prince. And a flight of angels sing thee to thy rest (Shakespeare, 1985 5.2.397-398). Hamlet's death is the tragedy for the whole country, because it has lost its noble king and can hardly find another great person. Fortinbras considers that For he was likely, had he been put upon, to have proved most royal Speak loudly for him (Shakespeare, 1985 5.2.443-446). Hamlet's noble death corresponds with the ideas of death maintained by such a Renaissance philosopher as Michel de Montaigne (1910) who claims that death uncovers the true essence of a person. According to him, a person can be really judged at his/her last moments. The similar attitude towards death is revealed by Sir Walter Raleigh who claimed that only death could provide people with real understanding of life. During his imprisonment Raleigh demonstrated real courage and was not afraid of death. As he wrote in the letter to his wife, I perceive that my death was determined from the first day (Raleigh, 1940, p.82). In this regard, Hamlet's real self is obvious only after his death. At the end of the play Hamlet accepts his death with courage and inevitability. However, Shakespeare demonstrates that, despite Hamlet's indifference to life, he needs much time and courage to prepare himself for killing and death. As Hamlet observes numerous deaths, he becomes immune to his own fortune. He starts to perceive death with irony, realising that life has no value for him. To a certain extent, it is Hamlet's insanity that helps him to adjust to the idea of death and succeed in his revenge. As Hamlet collides with cruel reality, he seems to be mentally destroyed by it: Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so, / Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd; His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy (Shakespeare, 1985 2.233-235) [9].

Section 7: Hamlet and the Festival of Youth

How old was Hamlet. By all yardsticks in the play, Hamlet in the Shakespearean play was at most a thirtyish person and so pretty young. Now Oxford dictionary has anointed that its international word of the year 2017 is 'Youthquake', while dictionary.com offered the term to be 'complicit': youthquake is defined as a significant cultural, political or social change arising from the actions or influences of young triumphed over a politically pointed shortlist

that included ‘antifa’, ‘broflake’ and white fragility [10]. This term had come to surface in 1960s to describe the youth culture of swinging London. But it surged first in coverage of the British parliamentary polls in June 2017 when spike in voting by young people helped deal a blow to the conservative Party before spreading to political commentary in NZ, Australia, the US and elsewhere. The word originally referred to changes in fashion caused by baby boomers’ coming of age. Now we are seeing it emerge in an electoral politics context, as millennials displace baby boomers. Such incorporations or inductions reflect not just social and political issues, but is also intended to highlight the ways language changes over time [11].

The rhythm of change is influenced and determined by the technological innovations and other cultural inputs. The medium is the message all over again. Hamlet was grabbed and constantly over powered by a spirit of revenge which was somewhat familial in Shakespeare’s Hamlet. In the present era we confront with revenge of political variety which one might term as the “revenge of the losers” through the growth of crisis of globalisation and neoliberalism of the earlier phases. It is nowadays an accepted fact that the discontent of globalisation is a leftover of the US economic crisis of 2008; and the impact was palpable on the global scale. By all socio-political indications there is no likelihood of the end of globalisation; it would stay within [12].

End of Capitalism? [13]

What is going on? Responses to the current economic situation fall into two broad categories – those who argue that we need more of the same but more carefully moderated, and those who lay the responsibility firmly at the door of what is broadly termed neo-liberal economics.

‘Post-Everything’ [14]

For the past decade or so, Hamid Dabashi, the increasingly prolific Iranian – born but New York – based sociologist of religion and cultural critic, has been working on an ideology of resistance that defies the new globalised world order and challenges the allegedly inevitable Clash of Civilisations thesis.

Introduction: The Last Post [15]

One knows the story. Prince Hamlet grieves the untimely and mysterious death of his father and resents Claudius, his uncle, for marrying his mother and taking over the kingdom of Denmark with dictatorial glee. But then one day, Hamlet is visited by the ghost of his father who names Claudius as his killer and demands vengeance.

Section 8: Lessons from Hamlet

- (a) The mysteries, and vastness of human experience
- (b) The tragedy of life in a fallen world inhabited by the debased poors and dehumanised rich
- (c) Human Depravity and human suffering
- (d) The consolation of Providence
- (e) To Thine own self be true.

An eminent English poet, and essayist cum drama-critic. T.S. Eliot commented that “Hamlet is most certainly an artistic failure”. In response C.S. Lewis retorted and quipped by stating that “if this is failure, then failure is better than success” [16].

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