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William Shakespeare

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William Shakespeare, everybody must, at least once in their lifetime, have heard of his name. Since he is the one who has shaped the world of literatures and made a valuable impact to today's entertainment world. It could be said without any doubts that Shakespeare most important contribution to the mankind is his literature. But what is so special about his literatures that make it is so influential until nowadays? Some might say it is because of the interesting plots, or others would suggested it is because of his distinguish language¹. However, one of the most important reasons that shall never be looked over is his ability to create human-like characters in a new dimension².

Shakespeare was born in England. Although most of his private life still remained mysterious, his works have been wide acknowledged to people around the world. His works consist of not only one type of story, namely tragedy, but every kind of stories³. Romance, melodrama, comedy, adventure, and fairly tales, had once been

¹ Jenson, Ashlee. "The Importance of Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Online*. 28 Jan. 2012
<<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/essays/importance.html>>

² Jenson, Ashlee. "The Importance of Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Online*. 28 Jan. 2012
<<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/essays/importance.html>>

narrated by Shakespeare. William Shakespeare had a very unique style in writing. His vision was far beyond his time, making his plays fit for all ages. His strategies in writing were different compared to other writers in his time. He introduced multiple plot twists, complicated story scenes, the development of genres, and the development of characters' personalities and behaviors⁴.

For character development, Shakespeare did not just go on putting variety characters into his plays. He looked deeper into his own mind to investigate the human nature in order to create practical personalities and realistic behaviors for each of his characters⁵. This makes every characters of his have their own unique psychological-depth personalities⁶. All of them can present human nature very well that the audience or the readers can relate themselves with these characters directly⁷. Even though Shakespeare's characters were not real human-beings, they were all so well created that it seemed as if they were actually alive. This makes critics spend a lot of time analyzing Shakespeare's characters. One of the most investigated characters and debated about is Hamlet. For Hamlet had such a distinctive characteristic that was hard to find in any

³ Wikipedia contributors. "William Shakespeare." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 28 Jan. 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=William_Shakespeare&oldid=473409981>

⁴ Jenson, Ashlee. "The Importance of Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Online*. 28 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/essays/importance.html>>

⁵ Mabillard, Amanda. "Why Study Shakespeare?" *Shakespeare Online*. 28 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/biography/whystudyshakespeare.html>>

⁶ Mabillard, Amanda. "Why Study Shakespeare?" *Shakespeare Online*. 28 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/biography/whystudyshakespeare.html>>

⁷ Mabillard, Amanda. "Why Study Shakespeare?" *Shakespeare Online*. 28 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/biography/whystudyshakespeare.html>>

other literatures at that time⁸. Sigmund Freud, the psychologist, was once using Hamlet to explain the concept of Oedipus complexity, or the stage that happens when a boy is in love with his own mother⁹. Hamlet was said to be the best tragic hero that Shakespeare ever created¹⁰. In Shakespeare's plays, the tragic heroes are often high position people who are not overwhelming good¹¹. They have to fight their own basic human instinct and greed. Most of the time, they choose to commit a crime that lead to their downfall and bring their life to the end¹². These kinds of characteristic can still be seen everywhere nowadays.

Furthermore, inner conflicts were put into the characters' minds to reflect the real human thought¹³. The characters would be confronted with the choice of their own happiness or the righteousness. Shakespeare combined different characters with various society statues in order to show how the actions of each of them can affect others like in the real world does¹⁴. For example in Romeo and Juliet play, they both fall in love with each other even though their families are sworn enemies. They are confronted to choose between their own happiness and their families' happiness. As everyone knows they

⁸ Armstrong, Philip. *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis*. 2001. P.163-188.

⁹ Armstrong, Philip. *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis*. 2001. P.163-188.

¹⁰ Jamieson, Lee. "Hamlet Character Analysis." *About.com Shakespeare*. 1 Feb. 2012.
<http://shakespeare.about.com/od/hamlet/a/hamlet_char.htm>

¹¹ Chandler, David . "The Essence of Shakespearean Tragedy." *The L Curve*. 1 Feb. 2012.
<<http://www.lcurve.org/writings/Tragedy.htm>>

¹² Chandler, David . "The Essence of Shakespearean Tragedy." *The L Curve*. 1 Feb. 2012.
<<http://www.lcurve.org/writings/Tragedy.htm>>

¹³ Gill, Richard. *Mastering Shakespeare*. 1998. p.41-44

¹⁴ Gill, Richard. *Mastering Shakespeare*. 1998. p.41-44

choose their own happiness which bring about the death of them both and Paris, the man who Juliet is supposed to marry. However, this tragedy leads the two families to end the conflicts between them.

Moreover, the characters' personalities in Shakespeare's plays were not fixed as the stories go on¹⁵. They were all changed through the circumstance that each of them faced. Some might change because of the social pressure, the interaction with other characters, or some even might change because of the situation they have faced¹⁶. Time plays a significant role in determining emotions and feelings of the characters. In the beginning of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Demetrius and Lysander are in love with Hermia, and then as the story goes on they both fall in love with Helena instead. Finally in the end, everything works out that Lysander is back to be in love with Hermia and Demetrius is in love with Helena¹⁷.

Besides from representing the human nature through his characters, Shakespeare also tried to bring out the value of his characters by revealing the reasons behind the act of the characters and the consequences after the acts has been committed¹⁸. For example after *Macbeth*, with the support from his wife, has murdered the king. They both were haunted with the guilty feeling and became paranoia that eventually brought their tragic ends. This play showed not only the consequence after the action but also the value of

¹⁵ Andrew, John F. *Shakespeare's World And Work*. 2001. p.49-53

¹⁶ Andrew, John F. *Shakespeare's World And Work*. 2001. p.49-53

¹⁷ Hazlitt, William. "UTEL Characters of Shakespear's Plays ." *University Of Toronto Libralies*. 1 Feb. 2012. <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw_charsp/charsp_ch111.html>

¹⁸ Gill, Richard. *Mastering Shakespeare*. 1998. p.41-44

the characters, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, i.e. a warrior can turn into nothing because of the awful action, and a woman can influence his man and guide him to do what he first had doubted¹⁹.

Even though it is seemed to be just only the created characters in literatures, Shakespeare has given complexities to each of them that left the next generation with many lessons. Trying to give each of the characters in every plays he wrote, the unique personalities, are yet easily related to people. Shakespeare wanted the audience and the readers to know what it is like to have the feeling rather than to understand the reason of that feeling²⁰. Using his characters, Shakespeare created many perspectives and actions in the screen plays that would lighten up more of his audience's understandings with themselves and the world²¹. His literatures are considered timeless as all of them are base on the universal truth. Also with various factors and strategies Shakespeare has used, his literatures become the most important contribution to mankind that gives people entertainment, creativities, and lessons.

¹⁹ Dusiaberre, Juliet. *Shakespeare And The Nature Of Women*. 1975. p.272-304

²⁰ Gill, Richard. *Mastering Shakespeare*. 1998. p.4-6

²¹ Gill, Richard. *Mastering Shakespeare*. 1998. p.49-59