AN INVENTORY OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS BY GENRE

D.Prabudas

(Lecturer and Head, Dept. of English, CSSR & SRRM Degree PG College, Kamalapura.)

ABSTRACT

Shakespeare produced 37 immense plays, hundreds of sonnets, and a number of poems. He touched all the genres in his carrier comedy, tragedy and history. Shakespeare became more popular in the Elizabethan era and is well known for his globe theatre. He mixed the essentials of comedy into tragedy and into Historical plays and he has not given an appropriate ending to some plays that are called problems plays. Shakespeare's works can be classified into four major periods Pre-1594, 1594-1600, 1601-1608, Post-1608. The article presents Shakespeare's plays by Genre.

Keywords*: Comical Plays, Tragical Plays, Historical Plays, Roman Plays, Problem Plays.*

INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare was born on April 26th, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. His father, John Shakespeare was a burgess of the recently constituted corporation of Stratford. His mother, Mary Arden was a locally landed heiress. William Shakespeare had two older sisters, Joan and Judith and three younger brothers, Gilbert, Richard and Edmund. At the age of 18, he married 26 years old Anne Hathaway. He started his carrier around 1592 as an actor and then play writer. His first collection of works was printed in 1623. He touched all the genres of plays. His plays are generally categorised as Comedies, Tragedies and Histories. Just as Shakespeare's 'comedies' have some dark themes and tragic situations while the 'tragedies' have some high comic moments, the Shakespeare's 'history' plays contain comedy, tragedy and everything in between. According to Frederick s boa Troilus and Cressida" All's well

that ends well, "Measure for, measure" and "Troilus and Cressida" are considered as problem plays which were produced between 1599 and 1605. According to Edward Dowden "Troilus and Cressida" "All's well that ends well" and "Hamlet" is also considered a problem play.

SHAKESPEAREAN COMICAL PLAYS

Shakespeare gave priority to the Romantic Comedy. Most of his comedies are of the romantics. The main aim of Shakespeare's comics is connected with love. However, even though love is the main concept in his plays, Shakespeare's conception of love is never of the Petrarchan kind. In fact, in his play 'As You Like It', he imparts a realistic touch of love in the comedy. In his comedies, lovers usually experience a set of obstacles -before they get united in a harmonious union. The play frequently ends with a 'marriage or a celebration with a happy moment'. All conflicts get clear at the end. Shakespeare's romantic comedies are away from the real world. However, even when the characters depart to a newer imaginary world, Shakespeare adds the flavor of love and realism to his plays. Allardyce Nicoll states in this regard that: "There are contemporary figures and contemporary fashions in Love's Labour Lost; Bottom and his companions mingle with the fairies; this is the key characteristic of Shakespeare's romantic plays world the combination of realism and fantasy. We can see in his plays.*All's Well That Ends Well, The Comedy Of Errors, Loves Labours Lost, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado Nothing, The Winter's Tale, As You Like*, are some of the comical plays of Shakespeare.

SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGICAL PLAYS

In the 16th century Shakespeare developed tragedies in his plays. Shakespeare's tragedies are typically the easiest to identify because they contain a heroic figure, a man of noble descent, with a fatal flaw. His weakness precipitates his downfall and the demise of those around him. Other elements of tragedy are a serious theme and ending with the death of someone important.He gives much priority to

the hero in his plays. The tragedy ends with sadness the tragic hero dies at the end however even the hero dies the moral is ultimately restored at the end of the play. According to AC Bradley, a Shakespearean tragedy has been divided into three parts: An exposition of the state of affairs—the beginning, growth and vicissitudes of the conflict, final tragic outcome.We can observe in his plays that the hero as the supreme characteristic elements but due to his error of judgment or weakness he falls from a great height to earth in his plays. *Othello* we can see the king Othello, for instance, tragedy occurs as a result of Othello's tragic flaw sexual jealousy. *Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, Othello, Macbeth, Hamlet, Antony,* and *Cleopatra* are some great tragedy plays of Shakespeare.

SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORICAL PLAYS

We all know that Shakespeare lived during the reign of kings like King James-I, Richard –III, King Henry- v. His historical plays are related to historical central figures.In all his plays there will be episodic plots and events from the reign of one monarch. And plays concerning the ideology of the chronicle events and personal bias. According to Michael Hathaway Shakespeare's plays are "Related to history mainly by offering representations of historical figures and the creation of theatre out of historical events". His play contains the elements of both tragedy and comedy that exhibits the traits of just one of these genres. *King John, Richard -II ,Henry –IV, Henry- V, Henry- VI ,Henry -VII ,Henry –VIII, Edward III* are the historical plays of Shakespeare.

SHAKESPEARE'S ROMAN PLAYS

Shakespeare's is well known for the Roman plays like *Julius and Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, and Coriolanus.*Though these were tragedies, critics considered them as roman plays as most of these plays are set in Rome. The opening scenes of all these plays are significant to Roman characters. These three plays are Shakespeare's most postmodern plays. For example Julius Caesar a tragedy play has a central character, called Brutus, a tragic

figure.Although we find many issues in the play, It's fitting to take hold of the ancient Rome setting and call these plays 'roman plays.

SHAKESPEARE'S PROBLEM PLAYS

It was critic Frederick Boas who first used the term problem play. Most of all Shakespeare's plays come under the categories of tragedies, comedies or histories, but some plays are different from the genres, According to Edward Dowden, these three plays All's well that ends well, *Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida* of Shakespeare have a noticeable change. 'All's Well that Ends Well' was and earnest'; 'Measure for Measure' was 'dark and while `Troilus and Cressida' was 'strange. Along with the above plays, *Hamlet* is also considered problem play.

CONCLUSION

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

-Romeo and Juliet

Whatever they were named, William Shakespeare's plays would still be great works of art, so it may not matter what we call them. Despite their categorical differences, all of Shakespeare's plays have a few things in common: Time, Unity, Women and the monarchy.

REFERENCES

[1]. "Elizabethan Period (1558–1603), from Pro Quest Period Pages". *ProQuest. 2005.*

[2]. Humor in Shakespeare's Plays." Shakespeare's World and Work. Ed. John F. Andrews. 2001. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. eNotes.com. December 2005. 14 June 2007.

[3]. *Wilson, F. P. (1945). Elizabethan and Jacobean. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 26.*

[4]. Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957: 12–27.

[5]. Edward Rand, Horace and the Spirit of Comedy (Houston: Rice Institute Press, 1937, passim.

[6]. https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/plays.php.

[7]. http://www.williamshakespeare.info/william-shakespeare-plays.htm.

[8]. https://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/shakespeares-plays/.

[9]. http://shakespeare.mit.edu/

[10]. https://www.sutori.com/story/william-shakespeare-9a7f42d5-a27c-4193-86e8-ac89cf83e86.