Shakespeare's Cognitive Relativism and Pseudo-Political History

Shahab Yar Khan*

Incessant, gruesome political intrigues and a moral vacuum, the real cost of any social or international armed conflict, provide the framework for Shakespeare's concept of history on stage. Shakespeare, within the narrow boundaries of chronicles, created his own space through divergences from the sources that Jean Froissart,[1] Edward Hall,[2] and Raphael Holinshed[3] supplied for history plays like Richard III and tragedies (pseudo-political-histories) like King Lear. *Shakespeare* projected on stage, through these plays, his own brand of 'theatrical cognitive relativism'. Sense of history, consequently, is not always accurate in these plays but, at the same time, it is not wrong either. Historical contingencies are kept to the order in these plays, like in Richard III for instance, as they frequently appear to build the psychological profiles of characters. The history thus written by Shakespeare is not a database but the study of inner selves as shaped by the forces of historical circumstances.

Shakespeare probably began the cycle of history plays in 1589 with three parts of Henry VI and Richard III. Edward III, Richard II and two parts of Henry IV followed with certain breaks.[3] During these breaks appeared plays like, The Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona, King John, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and The Merchant of Venice. The cycle of the history plays finally concluded with two parts of Henry IV[4] (leading to the third Falstaff play, The Merry Wives of Windsor) and with Henry V in 1599. These plays, if read together, give us the true sense of the greatest epic of England ever composed in a somewhat similar sense, the way we consider Mahabharata an epic but under the classification of 'history' (itehaas) in India. The intended treatment of epic style is visible in Shakespeare's plan as he completes the cycle with the only true royal hero of English history, King Henry V.

* Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

These plays can be classified as 'linked productions' as these 'make a statement about a destiny for England' (Michael Hattaway, Shakespeare's History Plays, p.10) and its people. As a 'linked production' between people's socio-economic exigencies and the psychobiography of the ruling and intellectual elite, Shakespearean drama aims at:

1) Improving the basic concept of civic life which yields in providing adequate social energy from the model of speech, conduct and decorum presented on stage,
2) Improving the capacity of efficient thinking by questioning the validity of established norms of the forces of status quo,
3) Targeted efforts to improve the living conditions of people by challenging the methods of governance and by exposing the crooked faces of the so-called nobility.

These plays, as a result, focus on the element of change in human life rather than on historical accuracy and as these plays are essentially designed to provoke the people in the circles of power, many perhaps saw these as oppositional works. The Privy Council in November 1589 had already taken steps to put strict checks over theatrical productions as some of these 'without judgment or decorum' had dealt with 'the matters of divinity and state.' Shakespeare's plays definitely went through state censorship but perhaps it taught him to say things with more tact; he learnt to express emotion without the utterance of emotion. This tendency of Shakespeare forces us to track the contextual meaning of a phrase by studying the string of recurring patterns in a play. In recent times, computational studies have helped a bit in furthering our understanding of these patterns but Shakespeare's neologism, needed for his unique metaphysical and socio-political understanding of life, urges us to evolve a deeper insight into the texts and only then verify their meaning to a wide range of contemporary global audiences.

King Lear, in this regard, is a good example 'to see the revolution of time'.[5] This play uses the story of King Leir of Britain (8th century CE?) to address the concerns of the early seventeenth-century English people living under a management where 'dog's obeyed in office'. The insecure and corrupt monarchy, which was ready to divide Shakespeare's Albion between the two possible heirs to the throne, Prince Henry (Duke of Cornwall) and Prince Charles (Duke of Albany), in case of another

assassination attempt on King James' life after the gun powder plot, was warned of a devastating civil war in *King Lear*. Although the break out of the English Civil War between Royalists and Parliamentarians had diverse and multiple reasons, Shakespeare's forecast was correct as hundreds and thousands died along with the death of the English monarchy in the mid-seventeenth century. Several centuries later, three communities in another part of the world went for another civil war claiming to be the heirs of a land where they had lived side by side for a millennium; once again hundreds and thousands died and the entire socio-political structure collapsed. The land we call Bosnia and Herzegovina is the story of an Albion. The tale of political machinations and the destruction of people's lives and properties began in 1990. Three decades later, despite a ceasefire holding fragile peace in the country, it is a story without any apt happy end in sight. Four decades before the Bosnian war, in 1947, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, the heirs of the land called Punjab (now a divided province between India and Pakistan), had witnessed their Albion. As far as we travel back and forth in history, we find *King Lear* shaping our inner states within the context of our own historical truths. The sublime in the art of Shakespeare is not, therefore, limited to poetic greatness, psychological insights and linguistic excellence; it is an art of the manifestation of the world as it exists and as it could have existed. This world is Shakespeare's art; 'all the world's (his) stage'.[6]

Shakespearean art of presenting history on stage could not possibly describe the world and its oddities as illusion and 'unreality'. Suffering appears to be the most concrete image within Shakespeare's scheme of conceiving the plot details. Starvation, humiliation, physical pain, and agony of death exist in these plays as the cosmological principle of correlation between 'being' and 'nothingness'. This ancient philosophical discourse receives further treatment in Shakespearean art when the question of class distinctions and the exploitation of the weak becomes an idea directly linked with the concept of suffering. Shakespearean art is thus uniquely 'divine' in a social sense as it questions the validity of existing systems of governance, religious institutions, and concepts of cultural exclusiveness. It sends a warning to all the 'powerful' people crawling on the surface of the earth that their perceptions are wrong as in front of cosmic powers they are all vulnerable:

> King Lear: They flattered me like a dog and told me I had the white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to everything that I said "ay" and "no" to was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to. They are not men o' their words; they told me I was everything. 'Tis a lie. I am not ague-proof. (King Lear. IV. VI. 115-124)

Suffering is Shakespeare's Philiosophia Perennis. It can cure the one who inflicts it and the one upon whom it is inflicted. Suffering, when it 'singed (Lear's) white head', led him to cry out loud, 'Take Physic, Pomp' (III. IV. 33). This remarkable sentence was suggested by Shakespeare as part of his medicinal therapy for all the diseases of his ailing society; as such for any society ever to be established on earth. This cured Lear immediately as it liberated him from all forms of pride and artificial social norms and decorum. Naked beggar, Edgar disguised as Tom of Bedlam, becomes his model of life as the original man who owes 'worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume' (III. IV. 111-112). Perenniality or perpetuity, at this stage, becomes a social concept in Shakespearean drama. Shakespeare understands the word 'Perenniality' in its earthly context; it has little to do with eternity as it implies the notion of duration. This concept is more of a cyclical nature communicating the sense of something that subsists continuously. The terrestrial nature of humanity, with change as the only permanent truth of existence, constitutes the basic features of King Lear and all other plays classified as history or pseudo-history.

This cycle is observed so intensely that it becomes impossible to ignore its significance while going through the text of the play. Lear's superego dissolves gradually into ego and finally into 'id' in Act III while the lowly beggar, Edgar already in the state of 'id' after erasing all the marks of his identity in Act II, begins to recover:

> Edgar: When we our betters see bearing our woes,
> We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
> Who alone suffers suffers most i' th' mind,
> Leaving free things and happy shows behind.
> But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip

When grief hath mates and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now
When that which makes me bend makes the King bow!
He childed as I fathered. (King Lear. III. VI. 111-120)

Shakespeare offers with more dramatic success than anyone else the contrasts between Perennial consciousness and triumphalism of the self-acclaimed 'high achievers' of societies. To put emphasis on this contrast, most of his tragedies and histories begin at a point when the increasingly clouded senility of the monarch is already under scrutiny. See the beginning of King Lear, for instance:

Kent:I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

King Lear perhaps reigned for over half a century but Shakespeare's kings in tragedies and histories, even if ruled lesser, were on thrones rather for too long. Most of these rulers were attacked by this senility in their minds and their judgments rendering them literally powerless in front of their enemies, courtiers and self-seeking members of the royal families. It is possible that during most of their reigns, these kings had been efficient and trustworthy but the structural pattern of the plays introduces them to the audiences at the point when the prestige of their crown was about to sink to its nadir. This sets Shakespearean drama in the context of all those phases of our political lives where the persistence of the diffusion of social life as an elite phenomenon disrupts life itself.

Playwriting became a tool to protest against 'the elite phenomenon' in Shakespeare's hands. Without hesitation, play after play, the link production while inciting the individual selves to stand up for the cause of justice, kept on threatening the authorities. Richard II, for instance, was performed in an atmosphere where the very reference to King Richard II was equivalent to taking a political side against Queen Elizabeth I. King Richard II who thought that he was safe in the company of four hundred archers[7] and a large number of knights engaged around him, had become synonymous to Elizabeth in her last days, 'I am Richard II, know ye not that.' The saga began when a cousin of Elizabeth, Robert Devereux succeeded to the title of Earl of Essex at a tender age. Despite being in the queen's favour, he fell from glory to disgrace when he began proclaiming

support for James VI of Scotland as her successor. The earl of Essex (or his allies) commissioned a performance of the accession of King Henry IV and the killing of Richard II. John Hayward's Henry IV (1599) also qualifies among the candidates of the plays which were staged in public to prepare the mob for revolution but Shakespeare's Richard II is the only dramatic text which stages the murder of the king with whom Queen Elizabeth identified her own plight. Shakespeare's play among these rebellious texts helps to illuminate that the people and the representatives of their thoughts, the playwrights, did not want to legitimize the pomp and preposterousness of the anointed monarch. Richard's taxation policy which obliged appellants to pay up to 1,000 Pounds to regain the king's favours and forced loans amounting to around seventeen thousand Pounds made him the fitting subject of public wrath. When people stand against injustice and incompetence, regimes and empires fall. Shakespeare celebrates people as the source of all the power in Richard II. When people joined the Duke of Lancaster against haughty Richard, they saw the true model of leadership:

> How he did seem to dive into their hearts
> With humble and familiar courtesy;
> What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
> Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles. (Richard II. I. IV. 26-29)

Once again the contrast between the corruption of triumphalism and sobriety of perennial wisdom is at work in the passage quoted above. But the profound 'compound of charm and terror'[8], a character in whom guile, venom and psychological power to win against odds is demonstrated at its best is King Richard III. He is that character where history and tragic fiction celebrate a union of unprecedented scale, making him the only king of Shakespeare whose misshapen body from the very beginning of both the play as well his reign gives us the idea of something ominous about him.

> Richard: I that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
> Cheated of features by dissembling Nature,
> Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world scarce half made up –
> And that so lamely and unfashionable

> That dogs bark at me, as I halt by them – (King Richard III. I. I. 18-23)

How much truth supported by historical data is narrated by Sir Thomas More and adopted by William Shakespeare in this depiction is beside the point. We shall discuss the literary figure of Richard III even if the late twentieth century unearths the far-sighted man of exceptional gifts of administration with a perfectly normal physique. We need to study the way Richard III appears to us in the play as the vilest even if he was the wisest English monarch in history. Besides, Thomas More's account cannot be easily ignored as mere fiction which he composed to appease the royal house of the Tudors. More was an eyewitness[9] to most of the reign of Richard III and his immediate predecessors in bureaucracy along with his father, a prominent lawyer and member of London gentry, definitely served as the source behind this portrayal of Richard III. Shakespeare, perhaps, also had in his mind while delineating the character outline that a man of integrity like Sir Thomas More was beyond the scope of becoming a political propagandist for the sake of winning the heart of his king, Henry VIII.

Timeline in this play is as confusing as elsewhere in Shakespeare. Lady Anne's seduction scene (I. II) set against the funeral of Henry VI (1471)[10], historically speaking, could not possibly happen after the arrest of Duke of Clarence in 1478 (I. I). Shakespeare's chronology suggests three months time period between the actions of the two scenes but there is an entire era of dynastic wars and destruction in between the two historical events of Richard's marriage with Lady Anne which preceded his plot against the life of his brother George, Duke of Clarence. However, despite historical inaccuracy, these two strands cannot be separated. Both the events are important to understand the evolution of a mind in Richard III which knew how to prey upon a victim who is 'voluntarily' credulous. Richard enjoys not only the nature of his advances but the way, within the passage of a few lines, he conquered a daughter-in-law and a widow of a foe in mourning:

> Hath she forgot already that brave prince,
> Edward, her lord, whom I some three months since
> Stabbed in my angry mood at Tewkesbury? (Lines, 260-263)

In this particular passage the time scale, three months, is not to incite the historians to have an academic debate on its accuracy or lack of accuracy. It was believed to be spiritually righteous and socially noble for a widow to observe one full year in mourning after husband's death before entering a new marital accord. During the time of mourning, Lady Anne could have not been wooed by another man. One of the main purposes of this tradition was to erase any doubt as to the fatherhood of a child born after death of the husband.[11] But Richard is a perfect Machiavellian who delights in using people's fear as a weapon for his own convenience. He also knows that the great rituals, norm, traditions of our fake societies lay vanquished when practical wisdom preys upon the victims of these societies. He sees humans only as beasts of prey and among them his triumphalism based on his naturalism, made him the deadliest.

To counter back Richard's villainous triumphalism, Shakespeare immediately introduces in the play the dissenting voices of perennial nature through the female characters. The characters of, Elizabeth, the Duchess, Lady Anne and Margaret remind us that moral and political disorders are deeply interconnected realities and none can be restored unless both are overhauled. These females, however, happen to be pure victims of patriarchal idiosyncrasies. It is through their grief stricken lamentation, cries for justice and curses upon the system and those who represent the system that we see the divine retribution as a forecast. Shakespeare introduced Elizabethan world view through curses in the play as effective means of revenge and forecast of ominous consequences:

> For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
> For joyful mother, one that wails the name; ...
> Thus hath the course of justice whirl'd about
> And left thee but a very prey to time. (IV. IV)
> I do find more pain in banishment
> Than death can yield me here by my abode.
> A husband and a son thou ow'st to me; . . .
> And thou a kingdom; —all of you, allegiance.
> The sorrow that I have by right is yours.
> And all the pleasures you usurp are mine. (I. III. 168–173)
> Thy woes will make them sharp and pierce like mine. (IV. IV. 125)

Richard sees all these women as tools to achieve his political goals and they all lament alike for their losses and their disgrace. Grief has its own genealogy and does not distinguish a lady of the house of York from the one of the house of Lancaster. It's impact on pale skin and dark, Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Jew, literate and illiterate does not carry marks of distinctions. Shakespeare captures this tragic universality of the states of sorrow through the female characters in the play. The Duchess sums up:

I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me. Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen, and each hour's joy wrack'd with a week of ten. (IV. I).

The Duchess expresses the grief which befalls all who live under the circumstances where corrupt and ruthless political establishments exploit the vulnerable and the week. This grief is not time bound. It keeps on striking the roots of civilization every now and then. Be it Europe during the great wars, the Balkans at the close of the previous century, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, or recently Pakistan or any other part of the world where suppression rules supreme, the sorrow of the victims and the Duchess in Richard III shall remain monotones of complaint, 'psalms of grief'.

It is not only Elizabeth who implores Margret to teach her cursing; it is the psychological need of all those who are powerless in front of the tide of tsunami of sorrow and suffer as the victims of the disorder of the corrupt political systems. The wailing queens of Shakespeare's Richard III are spokeswomen of our age as well. Their protests against cruelty and suppression expose the guilty even if the guilty happens to be the ultimate spearhead of the system. Anne and Margaret call Richard the plague, scourge. He is repeatedly compared with beast, animals and often referred to as the devil himself. Anne's soul harrowing curses shake the audiences:

> O God, which this blood mad'st, revenge his death!
> O earth, which this blood drink'st, revenge his death!
> Either heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead
> Or earth gap open wide and eat him quick. (I. II. 63-66)

Divine vengeance did happen in the play. The Elizabethans would have been delighted to see that the beliefs they upheld for ages were fully functional in the play but Shakespeare did bother them a bit by using

Richmond instead of God's wrath as the source of restoration of order. Vengeance belongs to us not to God as God is above and greater than revenge. Shakespeare also elaborates the meaning of revenge for his audience and for all those who have the good fortunes of understanding the purpose behind the staging of pseudo-history. Richmond punished the source of the evil in the state and the rest, if abiding by the rules of justice, were forgiven. Evil comes to extinction if the model of the life set by evil transforms to harmony, love and peace. There cannot be a greater revenge than eternal death of the essence of evil. Richmond's revenge is not of a personal nature as he unites the two houses by restoring the moral order that transcends political affiliation and religious creeds.

Voices of dissent function in these plays as normative doctrine. Their implications are wide ranging. Shakespearean drama in general can be subjected to many theories and philosophical trends as every age studies it within the sets of its socio-political domain but these particular voices remain independent of cultures and philosophical theories. These dissenting voices go beyond sociology of knowledge, beyond the perspectives which are socially located.

In their basic essence, these voices of dissent are reformationist. Reform is Shakespeare's theatrical cognitive relativism. His relativism is not theory bound but human instinct bound. As species, the entire mankind is encouraged to go beyond the manmade origins of societies and strip of the symbols of power as representational. Shakespeare's relativism thus cannot be studied in terms of moral virtue but as cognitive supremacy of human instinct. Human instinct, liberated from the fears of social virtue and domination of authority, emerges as combination of dominating physical presence on stage through powerful rhetoric with scorn for hypocrisy of political establishments.

The manner in which the characters of the Fool in King Lear and Sir John Falstaff (arguably based on the historical figure of Lord John Oldcastle who, in 1417, suffered a miserable death for his Wycliffite views)[12] in Henry IV plays prick the conscience, makes their rhetoric the sharpest criticism of socio-political institutions the world of English literature had seen. Harold Bloom calls Hamlet 'death's ambassador' and Falstaff as 'embassy of life'. Falstaff did not die on stage and the Fool mysteriously disappeared from the action of the play because Shakespeare wanted these

characters to have living impressions on his audience. Bloom calls Falstaff, in a very Shakespearean manner, 'life itself.' Falstaff achieves this stature because he emancipates us from the fake disciplines of civilization through gnosis, through full knowledge of human nature. Both Falstaff and the Fool share with us the knowledge which precedes the sphere of the action of their plays. They are, therefore, superior to the action; they forecast it and lead the audience to believe that as an individual soul we live existence filled with fright of the unknown but the moment we become aware of the hylic and the psychic world, we rise above it. They keep their eyes fixed on the unmanifested, things yet to happen, both in the characters they interact with and in the universe of their plays. In this way, they become familiar with the pneumatic world. Philosophically speaking, the bearer of the knowledge of the unmanifested is superior to the one with the knowledge of the manifested; this gives these characters the fullness of activity. Despite being the subordinate roles in their plays' action, their appearance brings fullness to the audience. One may question the moral nature of conduct but the concept of morality is applicable only to action. Shakespeare was rather careful to not to assign much of the action to these characters but to focus on the formless world of their wit and imagination.

All the characters, with a reformist agenda in Shakespearean drama, reproach the symbols of absolute authority of dogmatic assurance for raising an argument against logic and fundamentals of the 'science of human psyche'. Whether these are the tragic, sullen voices of female victims in Richard III or the tragicomical malapropism of Lear's Fool and Falstaff, Shakespeare makes certain that these characters have no real advocates within their plays. This gives their voices distinct complexions. Without a manifest exaggeration, with no one else in the play resembling their tone, these characters leave the deepest impressions on audience's mind.

These characters appear throughout Shakespearean drama. If on one hand a set of reformists like Rosalind (a woman who challenges the male supremacy by offering a new model of social life and romance in As You Like it), Paulina (the sage in whom feminine political wisdom reaches its peak in The Winter's Tale), Viola (the ultimate symbol of honour, duty, good judgment and self-restraint in The Twelfth Night), Cordelia (a role model queen who as an epitome of the virtues of filial tenderness and

justice, sacrificed her life to restore peace and harmony in King Lear), Perdita (the voice of the commoners opposing the stereotypes of the nobility in The Winter's Tale), Emilia (a remarkable gender critic in Othello), Beatrice (a woman of unsurpassable intellectual power who in a chauvinistic society controls the central stage and pushes men in the wings) urge reforms in their mystical and intellectual way by challenging the traditional wisdom, several others appear comically to criticize the decadent social structures.

One can easily create a list of characters including Falstaff (a 'satirist against power'), the Fool (an archetype who encapsulates the dichotomy of 'nothing' and 'all' within his 'honest Machiavellianism' in King Lear), Touchstone (the witty critic of aesthetics, arts and pseudo mystical cults of Nature in As You Like it), Feste (a reformer who gives to people when they did not want to hear 'a song of good life' in The Twelfth Night), Dogberry (voice of a fool with implication of reformed theology in Much Ado About Nothing), Gravediggers (by virtue of deeper notion of decorum of existence and intuitive wisdom they come to dominate a character like Hamlet and enrich his perceptions), and Mercutio (the voice of realism amidst the teenage fancies in Romeo and Juliet).

These fourteen characters form two septenary series. The first of these is a celestial reference to the future. A future matriarchal community based on the virtues of the female characters enlisted above shall thrive and help mankind to escape the cataclysmic tragedy engendered by thousands of year's old patriarchal system. The other series relates to the past and the present as the characters included are mainly social critics who without any practical solution to the problems that encompass their stories represent different states of the terrestrial world. The two septenary symbolise the correspondence between the spatial and the temporal. Celestial and terrestrial in Shakespeare's cognitive relativism do not succeed each other, they co-exist. In this way, Shakespearean drama is an attempt at foreseeing the future within the limited boundary of history. As means of social organization, it helps us to establish harmonious relationship between knowledge and the action inherent within that form of knowledge. Intuition, knowledge and action are the coherent principles of proper functioning of any social system. Shakespearean drama, the prime example of 'proper functioning' of intuition, knowledge and action,

helps us to see the present as a consequence and future as a work plan. To read Shakespearean drama as a work plan is:

'.....to read the book of fate
And see the revolutions of the times.' (2 Henry IV. III. I. 40-41)

Bibliography

1- Ackroyd, Peter. The Life of Thomas More. Anchor Books, 1999.
2- Bloom, H. Shakespeare, the Invention of the Human. Riverhead, 1999.
3- Conrad Jr, Robert J. John Fischer and Thomas More: Keeping Their Souls While Losing Their Heads. Tan Books, 2006.
4- Frank, T Marzials. Passages From Froissart (With an Introduction by Frank T. Marzials). BiblioBazar, 2009.
5- Greenblatt, Stephen. Will in the World. Pimlico, 2005.
6- Hattaway, Michael. Shakespeare's History Plays. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
7- Lings, Martin. The Secret of Shakespeare. Shail Academy, Lahore, Pakistan, 2005
8- Norwich, Julius John. Shakespeare's Kings. Viking, 1999.
9- Shakespeare, William. The Illustrated Stratford Shakespeare. Chancellor Press, 2001.
10- Yar Khan, Shahab. Book of Fate to See the Revolution of Time. Dobra Knjiga, Sarajevo. Bosnia, 2023.
11- Begg, Edleen. Shakespeare's Debt to Hall and to Holinshed in Richard III. University of North Carolina Press. (https://www.jstor.org/stable/4172274)
12- Bernhard, Jussen. Virgins–Widows–Spouses: On the language of moral distinction as applied to women and men in the Middle Ages. The History of the Family, 7 (1), 2002. (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1081602X0100094X)

ENDNOTES

1- 1 Jean Froissart (1337-1410?): 'Michelet calls Froissart the Scott of the fourteenth century. There is a pleasure in bringing together the two great names—in making Scott, as it were, smile encouragement on this attempt to popularise once more the great writer who, five hundred years ago, showed so much of Scott's own temper and spirit.' (Passages From Froissart (With an Introduction by Frank T. Marzials). p.vii). Froissart's Chronicles covers events from 1326 to 1400 and inspired many successive generations of authors in England and on the continent.
2- 1 Edward Hall (1498-1547): The writer of the most impressive account of dynastic wars, The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and Yorke, presented the accession of Henry VII as divinely ordained.
3- 1 Raphael Holinshed (1525-1582): Holinshed, in contrast to Hall, was more objective a historian. His formidable chronicles began as a detailed history and geography of the world but various restraints did not allow him to go beyond Britain.
4-
5-
6- 1 2 Henry IV, III. I.
7- 1 As You Like It, II. VII.
8- 1
9- 1 Bloom, H. Shakespeare, the Invention of the Human. P.65

10- 1 Thomas More (1478-1535) was at least seven years of age at the time of the battle of Bosworth Field in 1485.
11- 1 Henry VI (d. May 21, 1471) was definitely not stabbed to death by Richard III as claimed in the play.
12- 1 (https://www.quora.com/For-men-and-women-widowed-in-the-middle-ages).
13- 1 In 1 Henry IV (I. ii. 41), Hal calls Falstaff, 'my old lad of the castle'; however, in 2 Henry IV, the epilogue disclaims it, 'Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man'.

Abstract

Gruesome political intrigues and a moral vacuum, the real cost of any armed conflict, provide the framework for Shakespeare's concept of history on stage. History plays can be classified as 'linked productions' as these 'make a statement about a destiny for England' and its people. These plays focus on the element of change in human life rather than on historical accuracy. As far as we travel back and forth in history, we find these plays shaping our inner states within the context of our own historical truths. The sublime in the art of Shakespeare is not, therefore, limited to poetic greatness, psychological insights and linguistic excellence; it is an art of the manifestation of the world as it exists and as it could have existed. Shakespearean art is uniquely 'divine' in a social sense. It questions the validity of our existing systems of governance, religious institutions, and concepts of cultural exclusiveness. It sends a warning to all the 'powerful' people crawling on the surface of the earth that their perceptions are wrong; in front of cosmic powers they are all vulnerable. Concept of 'suffering', consequently, becomes Shakespeare's Philiosophia Perennis. 'Perenniality' in its earthly context is of a cyclical nature communicating the sense of something that subsists continuously. The terrestrial nature of humanity, with change as the only permanent truth of existence, constitutes the basic features of the plays classified as history or pseudo-history. This cycle is observed so intensely that it becomes impossible to ignore its significance as it starts corresponding to the age we live in.

Keyword: Theatrical cognitive relativism; history plays; chronicles; linked productions; psychobiography; metaphysical and socio-political understanding of life; Bosnia and Herzegovina, the story of an Albion; the Punjab; Philiosophia Perennis; the corruption of triumphalism and sobriety of perennial wisdom; Voices of dissent; normative doctrine; the tragicomical malapropism.