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Tragedy Constituting Harmony between Man and Universe

The present paper aims at analyzing how the tragic drama sets up a harmony between Man and Universe through the reunion of passion and wisdom. It provides a moral rendering of life with the pursuit of the fundamental question of human survival. The wisdom and knowledge that tragedy offers to the spectators makes it achieve its high seat.

Key Words: Harmony, Catharsis, Wisdom, Enlightenment

Tragedy is a pursuit of the fundamental question of human survival with an affirmation of the fact that life has worth and meaning. Human existence in the universe is expressed as an unending series of victories and calamities. Tragedy creates human vision through a story rising from felicity and grace of life descending into death and destruction underlining the value and nature of Man's relationship with the universe. The series of such stories might start with the tale of Adam and Eve finally bearing the fruit of knowledge for the whole human race.

The tragedian may not be a methodical philosopher but he tries to understand the universe, establishes his own logic and puts forward questions regarding the mysteries of human life and nature. The fundamental and most evident reality about tragedy is that it is a story of suffering- a story that stirs the emotions of 'pity and fear'. The tragic drama sets up a harmony between man and Universe through the therapeutic experience of Catharsis as advocated by Aristotle. The source of pleasure for a human being depends on the integrated kindling of his spiritual powers. Among them are the emotions of pity and fear that are converted into artistic and aesthetic pleasure because of the illusion of drama. The story may or may not end in death. The magnificent action, the gloomy atmosphere, conflict on various levels, suspense, tension, the potential to touch the hearts of the audience and above all the philosophical stature to generate harmony worldwide are ingredients that make the recipe of a perfect tragedy. It provides a moral rendering of life. The wisdom and knowledge that tragedy offers to the spectators makes it achieve its high seat.

Tragedy, whether Greek, Shakespearean or Modern, delineate life as a conflict. As H.G. Hegel puts it, the conflict in tragedy is not a conflict between a 'right' and a 'wrong' but a 'moral conflict' between two 'rights'. (1)

The tragedian takes up the Herculean task of illuminating the minds of the spectators and demonstrates the lesson of not to give up in any condition. Man's identity and dignity is glorified in tragedy through his struggle against all odds in life. Tragedy represents life not as "a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury"(2) but furnishes a vision that lasts "so long as men can breathe, or eyes can see"(3). It creates harmony through the reunion of passion and wisdom and integrates the total culture of a society to fulfill the elemental craving of an individual in pursuit of serenity and prosperity through knowledge and recognition. Tragedy harmonizes and enlightens the spectators and leaves them purged

Of true experience from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismiss,
And calm of mind all passion spent. (4)

Works Cited:

- (1) <http://mason.gmu.edu/> Hegel's interpretation of Antigone, Extract from the Encyclopedia Britannica Online entry on tragedy, 12 April, 1999.
- (2) <http://www.shakespeare-online.com> Shakespeare, William. *Sonnet 18*. Ed. Amanda Mabillard, 12 Nov. 2008.
- (3) Shakespeare William, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene v, line 23, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- (4) <http://www.bartleby.com>, Arthur Quiller-Couch, ed. 1919, *The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250–1900*, John Milton. 1608–1674, 324. From 'Samson Agonistes' ii,