

SHAKESPEARE, THE DIVINE INCARNATE: A READING OF THE 'DISEASED ELSINORE' IN HAMLET

"Shakespeare – The Nearest Thing In Incarnation To The Eye of God" - Lawrence Olivier

Dr. Manjari Johri

Assistant Professor, Amity University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

Received: 14 Dec 2018

Accepted: 24 Dec 2018

Published: 31 Dec 2018

ABSTRACT

To borrow the words of Sir Lawrence Olivier, the great Hollywood actor, who has enacted innumerable roles of Shakespearean characters, it may rightly be said that Shakespeare was akin to God. The act of creation is attributed to God, and in English plays we see hundreds of characters having been created by the sheer imaginative brilliance of William Shakespeare (1564-1616). He wrote 37 plays, which can be divided into three broad categories of Comedies, Tragedies, and Histories. In these plays, he is known to have created more than a hundred major characters and many hundreds of highly distinctive minor ones. One is struck with awe and wonder at the sheer range of the writer, whose characters develop rather than unfold through the course of the play. As Harold Bloom rightly points out in his seminal work, *Shakespeare The Invention of the Human*, "The plays remain the outward limit of human achievement: aesthetically, cognitively, in certain ways morally, even spiritually". Bloom goes on to assert that the gifted playwright has invented human beings. This thought echoes and is the central premise of the book mentioned above. It also reminds us of what Lawrence Olivier says about Shakespeare, the 'nearest thing in incarnation to the eye of God'.

This paper attempts to establish Shakespeare as the Divine Incarnate, who despite being human has acquired a Godlike stature through the sheer force of his creativity. It would be attempted to delve deep into one of his four major tragedies, *Hamlet*, to establish Shakespeare's unmatched genius in delving into the psyche of the characters to reveal to us shades of the psychology of human beings, much before the knowledge of the modern day psychology was even known to mankind. At the time when Ben Jonson was still writing the comedy of humor, or Marlowe recreating the characters of *Dr. Faustus* and *Tamburlaine*, here was an 'upstart crow', not belonging to the elite group of University Wits, but one, who through his poetic genius and an unmistakable understanding of the human mind was creating characters who are still as alive and relevant to us after four hundred years of their creation.

KEYWORDS: *Divine, Invention, Psychology of the Characters, Conscious and the Subconscious*