

Chapter 1 : The genius of Shakespeare - Jonathan Bate - Google Books

Hazlitt observed, "The most striking peculiarity of Shakespeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds." It is perhaps this quality that has earned Shakespeare the supreme accolade, that of lending his name to an era.

No writer of any country, nor any age, has ever enjoyed such universal popularity. Neither has any writer been so praised. Other than a monarch or an emperor, few can boast that a time or place is so exclusively theirs. No other artist, let alone writer, has had their name inscribed on such a towering edifice. Shakespeare is by far and without doubt the most popular and successful writer of all time. But what of the man himself? Who was William Shakespeare? The life of William Shakespeare is shrouded in mystery. There is no record of him receiving an education, buying a book or writing a single letter, and no original manuscript of a Shakespeare play survives. There is no direct record of his conversations, and no one in his home town seems to have known that he was a successful playwright while he was alive. There is not even a contemporary portrait to reveal his true appearance. Less is known about Shakespeare than almost any other playwright of his time. According to it, he was born on 23 April , in an upstairs room of a Stratford house in Warwickshire. His father ran a successful glove making business on Henley Street. In , his father was elected alderman, and three days later he became chief magistrate. William began his education at the local grammar school, learning to read and write. By his early teens, he had mastered Latin and the art of acting. By his early teens he had moved into the upper school where he studied logic, poetry and history. In November , at eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, and by twenty-one he had fathered three children: In , when Shakespeare was twenty-three, the premier acting company The Queens Men visited Stratford. Just before their performance one of the players died and Shakespeare stood in for that person. His natural talent so impressed the players that he was offered a permanent place in the troupe. Before long his writing potential was noticed by the Earl of Southampton, who used his influence to make Shakespeare a full-time actor and eventually a dramatist. By , Shakespeare was one of the most accomplished dramatists of his day. In March of that year two of his plays were performed before the Queen herself. Over the next twenty years he wrote no fewer than thirty-seven plays. In , he bought shares in the newly built theatre in Southwark. His financial acumen had already reaped rewards. As early as Shakespeare returned to buy New Place, the second largest house in the town of Stratford. In his company earned the highest accolade of all. Unfortunately, on 29 June the Globe burned to the ground, and although it was rebuilt the following year, Shakespeare retired to Stratford. Shakespeare led a peaceful retirement, and hardly returned to London at all. Sadly, on his birthday in , Shakespeare contracted a fever and died in his sleep, aged fifty-two. Shakespeare mixed freely with royalty and commoner alike. He never looked down on anyone and made no enemies. He was a self-made man, a devoted husband and a kindly father. Although Shakespeare has been dead for many centuries, his legacy to literature is still remembered when his plays are read. The comedies, the tragedies, the romantic plays, and the chronicled or historical plays. The first division, is the Period of Early Experimentation To this period belong: Many critics have remarked that the work of this period is, as a whole, extremely slight in texture. His critics have also said that the treatment of life in these plays is very superficial, and the art is evidently immature. There is evidence of this in Romeo and Juliet. The tragic end of these " On the other hand, many readers have also noted that the works of this period are characterized by the youthful exuberance of imagination, and by the extravagance of language. Shakespeare has characterized his work by the constant use of puns, conceits and other affections. The works of this period are: They reflect a deeper knowledge of human life and human nature. The characterization and the humour have become more penetrating while the thought has become more weighty. Many readers have noticed that the rime has been largely abandoned for prose and blank verse and that the blank verse itself has lost its stiffness. This is a period of gloom and depression and it marks the full maturity of his powers. His dramatic power, his intellectual power, and his power of expression are at their highest. This period is considered by many experts as the time of his supreme masterpieces. However, many people argue that Shakespeare fails to see the better part of human nature. His work is, in fact, more concerned with the darker side of human

experience. The themes of these plays tend to dwell on the sins and weaknesses of man, and a lot of emphasis is thrown on evil, thus the tone is either grave or fierce. The plays of this period are: During this period the temper of Shakespeare has changed from bitter and gloomy, to serene and peaceful. As one observer put it, "The heavy clouds have melted away from the sky, and a tender and graceful tone prevails. In these plays, the plays are based on tragic passion, but this time the evil is controlled, and then conquered by the good. They are often careless in construction and unsatisfactory in characterization, while there is a decline in style and versification also. The Renaissance is a period of European history that saw a renewed interest in the arts. The Renaissance began in 14th- century Italy and spread to the rest of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During the course of this period, the European feudal society of the Middle Ages, with its agricultural economy and church-dominated intellectual and cultural life, was transformed into a society which was dominated by political institutions, with a more urban, fiscal economy. A great deal of work was put forward increasing the standards of education, the arts, and music. Renaissance literally means rebirth. This period was given this name because it was believed to be the end of the Middle Ages, and the birth of a new era. Shakespeare lived during the renaissance period, and so many of the features of this period had a huge impact on him. The Renaissance also affected Shakespeare in many other ways. The articulate language spoken in those times was also a major characteristic of that era. A lot of time and money was spent on the aspect of Drama and literature, and this explains why the literary works that stem from this period are of such a high standard. The Renaissance was a period in which people traveled a lot. Shakespeare is believed to have traveled a great deal during his life. He allegedly made many journeys to Italy which was the birthplace of the Renaissance. Perhaps the influence that the Renaissance had on him encouraged him to set many of his plays in Italy. The settings of such plays are described with a great deal of accuracy. Since the Renaissance was a period in which plenty of attention was paid to the development of drama and literature, the Elizabethan theatre underwent a great deal of improvements as well. During the middle ages, there were hardly any theatres at all in Britain. Drama was usually staged in the streets or in other unofficial places. They were generally a nuisance because they attracted crowds and this blocked the streets. Sometimes, they were staged in the market square or the village common. There was no entrance fee, and all the actors were amateurs. The plays were seen by rich and poor alike. The crowds here lacked discipline, and if the play was not well acted out, the audience was known to pelt the actors on stage with anything they could lay their hands on. During the Renaissance, however, the major interest in drama sparked of a sudden increase in the building of theatres. In spite of objections by the residents, and criticism by the Puritans, during the period between and , no fewer than thirty major theatres were opened in London alone. Considering the fact that London only had , inhabitants, this shows how keen the interest in drama was. They usually resembled large wooden sheds partly thatched with rushes. There was usually a flagstaff on the roof and a trench around the theatre building. Private theatres were designed on the model of the Guild Halls, while the private theatres were made to resemble inn yards. The private theatres were more luxurious, being fully roofed and seated. In the public theatres, on the other hand, the auditorium, as in ancient Greece was open to the sky. Only the stage was roofed, which made it difficult for plays to be seen in bad weather. There were no tickets. An amount of five pence in modern reckoning admitted a customer to standing room in the yard. Rich spectators watched the performances from boxes on each side of the stage, paying about twelve shillings for the privilege of a seat. In an upper box was the orchestra. The Globe theatre, the largest in London, composed of ten performers with different instruments. The fashionable part of the house was the stage itself. There sat the royal patrons of the theatre and their friends.

Chapter 2 : Preface to Shakespeare Summary - blog.quintoapp.com

What is the peculiarity of Othello? What is the distinctive impression that it leaves? What is the distinctive impression that it leaves? Of all Shakespeare's tragedies, I would answer, not even excepting King Lear, Othello is the most painfully exciting and the most terrible.

Sympathy for the Devil Shakespeare the genius Genius may be difficult to define, but most of us are aware that there is a qualitative as well as quantitative difference between a genius and someone who is very good at something. Robert Hooke was a leading physicist—his rival Isaac Newton was a genius. There is a difference between one who has mastered an art or science, and one who moves it to another level, who revolutionizes it, leaving it and everything it touches permanently altered—a difference not only in degree but in kind. Shakespeare was a writer who grew immensely over a fairly short period of time though not so impossibly short as the Stratford bio would have it, one who was not afraid to experiment and fail. We have only to compare works like Hamlet or King Lear with an early never revised play like Titus Andronicus. Yet even Titus was an immense leap forward from the period just preceding, one C. Try reading any of these out loud! The difference is not only one of time. A gulf in style, in wit, in richness, in ease of expression and comprehension separates their language from his. This would be achievement enough, but even this is not the sole reason he has achieved iconic stature worldwide, that has spread his works and his name to the farthest reaches of the planet. As psychologist Bruno Bettelheim and poet Robert Bly assure us, human psychology is best revealed, explained, and even healed through story-telling. It is story that reflects us to ourselves, that tells us who we are, as humans, as members of any particular community, as a sex, as youths, as elders, as professionals, as individuals. While History is true in the sense that it reports the facts truthfully we hope, it is little more than the cold earth out of which is born the stories that inspire us, that move our hearts: Out of the dull clay of history Shakespeare brought to life, for everyone who had a penny to spare, the great Romans: He brought to life the great flawed heroes, the Bastard Fauconbridge, Prince Hal, Brutus, and Antony, and perhaps the greatest, most living fictional being of all time, Hamlet the Dane. He took stories from every possible source, but never without altering or enhancing them to suit his purpose. This was nothing new. From the time of the Bards and shamans, storytellers have been borrowing from each other in this way, adding their own spin and style. We can look at some examples, but the possibilities are endless. These he tweaked, combined, and retold through the words and actions of characters so alive that they still live with us today. He has left his imprint on every facet of our modern life. He wrote the best poetry and the best prose in English, or perhaps in any Western language. That is inseparable from his cognitive strength; he thought more comprehensively and originally than any other writer. It is startling that a third achievement should overgo these, yet I join Johnsonian tradition in arguing, nearly four centuries after Shakespeare, that he went beyond all precedents even Chaucer and invented the human as we continue to know it. And where did he get his stories? From his life, his loves, and his amazing education. He may be the most important person in all of western history. He is everywhere and yet, strangely, he is also nowhere, for however well we may know his stories, we know nothing of the man himself. Nor have we been able to decipher from the mouths of his characters his personal religious or philosophic views. It is almost as though, through the process of giving life to the greatest panoply of characters in literature, his own life was absorbed, leaving not a rack behind. Why should this be? There is, of course, a biography, but as anyone who has read more than one or two biographies of great artists, particularly the great romantic poets, must soon come to realize, these biographies of Shakespeare fall short of telling us anything that might bring the writer himself to life. We do sometimes get reasons for his apparent obsession with suing his neighbors for small debts, his even more peculiar disinterest in the publication of his plays, or, in fact, in anything that went on in London during his years of fame. We get convoluted explanations for why, despite the learning demonstrated in the plays, there is no record of a university or even a grammar school education. We get bizarre explanations for the fact that the only things written in his own hand are six childish signatures on legal documents. We get no explanation for the fact that ten eyewitnesses of the period who should have had every reason for noting him in print, did not. The two

Shakespeares Everything falls into place once we realize that the name means two different things , things that are irreconcilable, that cannot be seen as one and the same, that the author and the man who sold him his name are two separate people. Then let them stand aside and make way for those of us who are undaunted by the truth. They, and those who pay attention to them, condemn us as snobs because we hold that the author had to have been a courtier. We are only following the evidence, something they refuse to do.

Chapter 3 : Shakespeare's Othello - Tragedy of Passion

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How long would it take a monkey typing randomly to reproduce the complete works of William great name, incidentally Shakespeare? Once we know that, we can answer how long it would take a barrelful. If that is, we knew how many monkeys would fit in a standard barrel. In experiments conducted by your author, I can tell you the answer is eleven, but you have to press hard. A typewritten work is composed, of course, of words, and in between those words are spaces and the occasional punctuation. Separating the words are headings, themselves comprised of words and numbers. A standard newspaper-style column, of the kind you read at websites such as this, is words. If Will wrote columns, , words would fill about 1, columns. And if he wrote one column per day, then it would only take three years to have an oeuvre. After that, of course, comes retirement. Sounds like a government job, no? Now, each, or nearly each, word Shakespeare wrote was accompanied by a space, this being a peculiarity of English. There are no spaces in Chinese and Japanese, for example. Each word consists of letters, there being in English 26 of them: Gather your monkeys and sit them in front of a keyboard. In order to reproduce Shakespeare, what has to happen first? Has your monkey reproduced the complete works of Shakespeare? No, sir, he has not. So our monkey has to have every i dotted, every t crossed, in the proper order. There are 45 possibilities, so the chance is 1 in 45, or 0. And so on for each character. What are the chances of your monkey typing, in order, all the characters? This is a 1 divided by a 1 followed by 12 million zeros. Keep in mind that a googol no, the other one is defined as , which is just plain large. Our number rather, its inverse is much, muchâ€”much! However, our number is smaller than a googolplex. The universe is roughly 14 billion years old, which is about 4. It now becomes tricky. Or, more fairly, do we throw out the stream of characters that do not match the matching stream of Shakespeare? Do we, that is, let the monkey continuously start over until he gets it right? The number ,, is so mind-bogglingly small that it is never going to happen. Even if we let a barrelful of monkeys type characters a second, they are never going to finish. And so we conclude what we already knew: I also ignored all the other keys on a standard keyboard: If you find any errors in calculations or logic or whatever, please email them to obama whitehouse. Another way to think of it is that a space adds to the average word length by one.

Chapter 4 : The Probability of Monkeys Typing Shakespeare – William M. Briggs

Shakespeare the genius. What may have been a peculiarity of Shakespeare's was the way he combined elements from two or more (or three, or four, or five).

Many now shy away from the topic. However, the indicators of truth within the sonnets remain undimmed. Evidence that the poems are substantially fiction is as remote as ever. If part or most of the work were found to be reliably biographic, there would be significant payback in areas of historical research, literary analysis and human interest. Inquiry continues to be relevant, particularly when there is new information. Unusually, there is no foreword, dedication, commentary or other acknowledgment by the author, who had conformed with such custom in his earlier publications of poetry. The sonnets are almost entirely expressed in the first person, "I" and addressed to the second, "you", "thou" or "thee". Though so characterized, that poem shares little in common with other published Complaints of the period. It is based on no known antecedents; it is far shorter; and it is a work of thinly disguised levity, given the improbable sexual capabilities of its hero who, in other respects, resembles the principal character of the preceding sonnets. Perhaps part of the reason for this peculiarity was yet another one: There is no other publication of that era which so graphically depicts sexual activity between men. The Ganymede poems of Richard Barnfield, more emotionally oriented and attacked by contemporary readers, are tame by comparison. The Sonnets are numbered and categorized into a primary sequence and a secondary collection. The primary sequence, Sonnets, appears to be addressed to, or directly concerned with, an aristocratic Fair Friend of the poet. Unusual, overlapping themes imply that the Fair Friend is also associated with the secondary collection. The primary sequence, read as autobiography, suggests a highly unusual underlying story, for which there are no literary antecedents. The following summary of that story is derived from a detailed analysis of every sonnet see Hidden Song. In Sonnets the Fair Friend is a beautiful, effeminate-looking youth, reluctant to wed. He is urged, almost ad nauseam, to marry and sire a son. The poet teases his wasteful masturbation. The relationship and affection between Friend and poet deepen through Sonnets. Disquiet and separation unfold in Sonnets. The hard-up poet begs for support from his wealthy Friend. An unspecified lewd betrayal of the poet by the Friend is bemoaned, but forgiven, in Sonnets. The poet acknowledges the risk of scandal via Sonnets. He glumly accepts that he must stay away from the Friend. Sonnets portray further periods of separation regretted by the poet. However, in Sonnet 48 appears the first hint of a theme of jealousy, which eventually comes to predominate. Thereafter his jealousy becomes a pervasive theme, although he attempts to balance his complaints with interspersions of flattery and patronage poems. Eventually, however, he is driven to insult in Sonnet 69.1, which affront he attempts to defuse in Sonnet. In this context they suggest wry, self-deprecating and witty attempts to placate an angry Friend, who has responded that, to him, the poet is dead. Finally, in Sonnets, he directly acknowledges the source of his jealousy: The poet produces more patronage poetry in Sonnets, albeit spiced with barbs on the exaggerations of the Rival and the tastes of the Friend. In Sonnet 84 he insults the latter for a second time. The poet seems assured that the absence is permanent, and he never again alludes to the rivalry. Equanimity returns in Sonnets 95 and. However, the relationship is less intense and more distant. There are signs in Sonnets of significant periods of non-communication. Sonnet suggests the poet has run out of inspiration. Sonnets burst upon the reader with renewed vigour. An apparently more mature and rather timeworn Friend is unimpressed. He uses a pet form of address to maintain this conceit, but from now on he is on the defensive. As the sequence draws to a close, he reacts ever more strongly with wounded pride and righteous indignation. In Sonnet the poet rejects the now-hostile Friend, to bring to a close the story of their relationship. Sonnet cleverly draws together several of the preceding themes, in an envoi of regret and finality. The construction of the above story depends implicitly on two key assumptions: Certain factors encourage these assumptions, the first being the internal coherence of the various threads. He is a writer and poet eg: Sonnets 23, 26, 76, ; he is a commoner eg: Sonnets 25, 26, 89, ; up to around Sonnet 94 he is unwealthy e. Sonnets 26, 29, 37, 80 ; he lacks university education Sonnet 78 ; and his name is Will Sonnets 57, , , 5. Third, the language of the sonnets is consistent with a male addressee or main subject throughout the primary sequence. He it was to whom Shakespeare

addressed, in and , his only known dedications. Each address was as we shall see unusual in its intimacy. There are numerous other correspondences between the Sonnets and Southampton. This starts immediately, in Sonnet 10 , and continues intermittently: Sometimes this has been disguised by commentator mindset or editorial changes to the Sonnets. In Sonnet 52 Shakespeare represents the penis as a key, as did Marlowe and Sidney before him 12 " whereupon the whole poem becomes homoerotic. Based on portraiture and independent narrative description, Southampton was an unusually effeminate-looking youth: Sonnet 17 is, literally, cryptic. It likens itself to a tomb, which hides the existence of the addressee. Its punch-line couplet suggests that the addressee exists in the rhyme. The odds of chance coincidence of these occurrences within one sonnet are more than 20, to 1 against. The phases of the suggested story are consistent with the histories of both men. Given Wriothesley as Fair Friend, internal references point to the composing of Sonnets around The London playhouses were then shut for extended periods 18 and Shakespeare was clearly focused on the young Earl, as is borne out by his two long poems of dedication. The separations discernible in Sonnets correspond to the period to , when each party had significantly divergent career paths and distractions. Sonnets point to a failed attempt by Shakespeare to re-cultivate Southampton after his release from the Tower at a time when the London playhouses were again shut and the Earl had been elevated to more wealth and status than ever before. Moreover, the congruence applies to all aspects of the underlying story, including " crucially - the two extraordinary triangular relationships depicted in the poems. Consider first the intimacy, jealousy and insults of the poet, described above in relation to Sonnets His disrespect is ascribed to the appearance of a Rival, who has displaced the previously favoured poet in the affections and esteem of the Friend. The imputation to Shakespeare a common actor of such unusual and intimate behaviour with the high-born Earl of Southampton is, initially, incredible. It is probably a significant factor for the rejection of biography in the Sonnets by so many commentators. Right Honourable, I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden, only if your Honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather: A cursory reading of the above is unlikely to arouse any sense of disaffection or disinformation. The address looks like the conventional interpretation of it - a grovelling supplication to a superior who has perhaps not even met the author. However, the latter is Shakespeare, master of the pun. More significantly, however, this double meaning represents but one element in a persistence of ambiguity - as indicated in the following rendition of the dedication in valid, alternate meanings: I know not how you will perceive offense, as I address my frank and truthful lines to your Lordship. Nor do I know how people will censure me for choosing so substantial a work to uphold such a lightweight. If only you seem pleased I shall congratulate myself and vow to work as hard as I can to honour you with a more serious labour. But, if the first dedicatee of my art proves twisted from how he was, I shall be sorry its promoter was so noble: I leave it for your honourable scrutiny. I leave your honour to the one who most warms your heart, who I hope will be the constant slave of your selfishness, as all do eagerly expect. Such intent would not have been inconsistent with the circumstances of publication, given the contextual bitterness. Moreover, linguistic features of the address point to a high probability of deliberate punning. Supplementary analysis shows that the odds of the phenomenon occurring by accident are in the order of one in many millions! The substance for all these conclusions may be examined in the article: Accordingly, the presence of the punning provides several pieces of information. It shows at the high levels of probability indicated above that Shakespeare had an unusually intimate and stormy relationship with the Earl - which must have started, at the least, several months before April It affirms that Southampton had originally been a champion of the poet and his works. However, Shakespeare was now badly upset by a change of attitude and the threat of losing that sponsorship. He was sufficiently moved to vent his feelings by raising a silent finger to the Earl in what was designed to look like a respectful supplication. These discoveries, independent of the Sonnets, expand the histories of Shakespeare and Southampton. Remarkably, however, they correspond perfectly with the unique story underlying Sonnets , as summarized above. Yet just such a relationship is evoked in an address of June to the same young aristocrat by the waspish writer, Thomas Nashe. Amongst

their sacred number I dare not ascribe myself, though now and then I speak English On analysis of the evidence, it becomes clear that this relationship had turned sour in and that the whole of the address was a disrespectful jibe at Southampton with sideswipes at Shakespeare.

Chapter 5 : Lectures and Memoirs - Shakespeare's Peculiarity | The British Academy

Viola. Like most of Shakespeare's heroines, Viola is a tremendously likable figure. She has no serious faults, and we can easily discount the peculiarity of her decision to dress as a man, since it sets the entire plot in motion.

Images of ulcers, pleurisy, full body pustules, apoplexy, and madness parallel the sins of drunkenness, espionage, war, adultery, and murder, to reinforce the central idea that Denmark is dying. So how do you pronounce Jaques, anyway? Here is our comprehensive list of every Shakespearean character and the play in which he or she appears. Included is our spelled pronunciation guide, essential for all drama students and teachers. Themes in *The Tempest* "The great and striking peculiarity of this play is that its action lies wholly in the ideal world. It differs, therefore, from every other work of Shakespeare in the character of its mediation. Our poet, in most of his dramas, portrays the real world, and exhibits man as acting from clear conscious motives, and not from supernatural influences. But here he completely reverses his procedure; from beginning to end the chief instrumentalities of the poem are external; its conflicts and solutions are brought about by powers seemingly beyond human might and intelligence. Included is a paraphrase of the poem in contemporary English. Why is King Lear Important? The story of King Lear and his three daughters is an old tale, well known in England for centuries before Shakespeare wrote the definitive play on the subject. What Did Shakespeare Look Like? The Stratford Bust, located on the wall of the chancel of Holy Trinity Church at Stratford-upon-Avon, is the oldest and, along with the Droeshout Portrait, most credible of all the known images of Shakespeare. But there are many representations of the Bard that have been handed down throughout the centuries, each with its own fascinating story to tell. Only the rare drama was actually intended to be read as well as performed. Writers would usually sell their plays to the theatrical company which staged the performances, and if the company committed a particular play to paper, it would create only one copy - the official copy - in the form of a prompt-book. A prompt-book was a transcript of the play used during performances, cluttered with stage directions, instructions for sound effects, and the names of the actors. Unprincipled publishers would steal the prompt-book, and sell copies for about fivepence apiece. And how did Shakespeare spell his own name, anyway? Find essential facts fast with this handy chronological reference guide to every Elizabethan and quasi-Elizabethan playhouse from to The Poet Maker There are no records of any significant tributes to Shakespeare by his fellow actors and writers at the time of his death. When he died in the nation mourned and eulogies poured forth from distraught writers whose characters would surely die with him. While most people know that Shakespeare is the most popular dramatist and poet the world has ever produced, students new to his work often wonder why this is so. The following are the top reasons why Shakespeare has stood the test of time.

Chapter 6 : Biography in the Sonnets - realshakespeare

1 WILLIAM HAZLITT *From On Shakespeare and Milton* 1 ****The striking peculiarity of Shakespeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds*”so that it contained a uni-

If we require the originality which consists in weaving, like a spider, their web from their own bowels; in finding clay and making bricks and building the house; no great men are original. Nor does valuable originality consist in unlikeness to other men. The hero is in the press of knights and the thick of events; and seeing what men want and sharing their desire, he adds the needful length of sight and of arm, to come at the desired point. The greatest genius is the most indebted man. A poet is no rattle-brain, saying what comes uppermost, and, because he says every thing, saying at last something good; but a heart in unison with his time and country. There is nothing whimsical and fantastic in his production, but sweet and sad earnest, freighted with the weightiest convictions and pointed with the most determined aim which any man or class knows of in his times. The Genius of our life is jealous of individuals, and will not have any individual great, except through the general. There is no choice to genius. A great man does not wake up on some fine morning and say, "I am full of life, I will go to sea and find an Antarctic continent: I will ransack botany and find a new food for man: I have a new architecture in my mind: I foresee a new mechanic power": He stands where all the eyes of men look one way, and their hands all point in the direction in which he should go. The Church has reared him amidst rites and pomps, and he carries out the advice which her music gave him, and builds a cathedral needed by her chants and processions. He finds a war raging: He finds two counties groping to bring coal, or flour, or fish, from the place of production to the place of consumption, and he hits on a railroad. Every master has found his materials collected, and his power lay in his sympathy with his people and in his love of the materials he wrought in. What an economy of power! All is done to his hand. The world has brought him thus far on his way. The human race has gone out before him, sunk the hills, filled the hollows and bridged the rivers. Men, nations, poets, artisans, women, all have worked for him, and he enters into their labors. Choose any other thing, out of the line of tendency, out of the national feeling and history, and he would have all to do for himself: Great genial power, one would almost say, consists in not being original at all; in being altogether receptive; in letting the world do all, and suffering the spirit of the hour to pass unobstructed through the mind. The court took offence easily at political allusions and attempted to suppress them. The Puritans, a growing and energetic party, and the religious among the Anglican church, would suppress them. But the people wanted them. Inn-yards, houses without roofs, and extemporaneous enclosures at country fairs were the ready theatres of strolling players. The people had tasted this new joy; and, as we could not hope to suppress newspapers now,- no, not by the strongest party,- neither then could king, prelate, or puritan, alone or united, suppress an organ which was ballad, epic, newspaper, caucus, lecture, Punch and library, at the same time. Probably king, prelate and puritan, all found their own account in it. The secure possession, by the stage, of the public mind, is of the first importance to the poet who works for it. He loses no time in idle experiments. Here is audience and expectation prepared. In the case of Shakespeare there is much more. At the time when he left Stratford and went up to London, a great body of stage-plays of all dates and writers existed in manuscript and were in turn produced on the boards. All the mass has been treated, with more or less skill, by every playwright, and the prompter has the soiled and tattered manuscripts. It is now no longer possible to say who wrote them first. They have been the property of the Theatre so long, and so many rising geniuses have enlarged or altered them, inserting a speech or a whole scene, or adding a song, that no man can any longer claim copyright in this work of numbers. Happily, no man wishes to. They are not yet desired in that way. We have few readers, many spectators and hearers. They had best lie where they are. Shakespeare, in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays waste stock, in which any experiment could be freely tried. Had the prestige which hedges about a modern tragedy existed, nothing could have been done. The rude warm blood of the living England circulated in the play, as in street-ballads, and gave body which he wanted to his airy and majestic fancy. The poet needs a ground in popular tradition on which he may work, and which, again, may restrain his art within the due temperance. It holds him to the

people, supplies a foundation for his edifice, and in furnishing so much work done to his hand, leaves him at leisure and in full strength for the audacities of his imagination. In short, the poet owes to his legend what sculpture owed to the temple. Sculpture in Egypt and in Greece grew up in subordination to architecture. It was the ornament of the temple wall: As soon as the statue was begun for itself, and with no reference to the temple or palace, the art began to decline: This balance-wheel, which the sculptor found in architecture, the perilous irritability of poetic talent found in the accumulated dramatic materials to which the people were already wonted, and which had a certain excellence which no single genius, however extraordinary, could hope to create. The first play was written by a superior, thoughtful man, with a vicious ear. I can mark his lines, and know well their cadence. What is odd, the compliment to Queen Elizabeth is in the bad rhythm. Shakespeare knew that tradition supplies a better fable than any invention can. If he lost any credit of design, he augmented his resources; and, at that day, our petulant demand for originality was not so much pressed. There was no literature for the million. The universal reading, the cheap press, were unknown. A great poet who appears in illiterate times, absorbs into his sphere all the light which is any where radiating. Every intellectual jewel, every flower of sentiment it is his fine office to bring to his people; and he comes to value his memory equally with his invention. He is therefore little solicitous whence his thoughts have been derived; whether through translation, whether through tradition, whether by travel in distant countries, whether by inspiration; from whatever source, they are equally welcome to his uncritical audience. Nay, he borrows very near home. Other men say wise things as well as he; only they say a good many foolish things, and do not know when they have spoken wisely. He knows the sparkle of the true stone, and puts it in high place, wherever he finds it. Such is the happy position of Homer perhaps; of Chaucer, of Saadi. They felt that all wit was their wit. And they are librarians and historiographers, as well as poets. One is charmed with the opulence which feeds so many pensioners. But Chaucer is a huge borrower. Then Petrarch, Boccaccio and the Provençal poets are his benefactors: Troilus and Creseide, from Lollius of Urbino: The Cock and the Fox, from the Lais of Marie: The House of Fame, from the French or Italian: He steals by this apology,- that what he takes has no worth where he finds it and the greatest where he leaves it. It has come to be practically a sort of rule in literature, that a man having once shown himself capable of original writing, is entitled thenceforth to steal from the writings of others at discretion. Thought is the property of him who can entertain it and of him who can adequately place it. A certain awkwardness marks the use of borrowed thoughts; but as soon as we have learned what to do with them they become our own. Thus all originality is relative. Every thinker is retrospective. The learned member of the legislature, at Westminster or at Washington, speaks and votes for thousands. Show us the constituency, and the now invisible channels by which the senator is made aware of their wishes; the crowd of practical and knowing men, who, by correspondence or conversation, are feeding him with evidence, anecdotes and estimates, and it will bereave his fine attitude and resistance of something of their impressiveness. As Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Webster vote, so Locke and Rousseau think, for thousands; and so there were fountains all around Homer, Menu, Saadi, or Milton, from which they drew; friends, lovers, books, traditions, proverbs,- all perished- which, if seen, would go to reduce the wonder. Did the bard speak with authority? Did he feel himself overmatched by any companion? The appeal is to the consciousness of the writer. Is there at last in his breast a Delphi whereof to ask concerning any thought or thing, whether it be verily so, yea or nay? All the debts which such a man could contract to other wit would never disturb his consciousness of originality; for the ministrations of books and of other minds are a whiff of smoke to that most private reality with which he has conversed. Our English Bible is a wonderful specimen of the strength and music of the English language. But it was not made by one man, or at one time; but centuries and churches brought it to perfection. There never was a time when there was not some translation existing. The Liturgy, admired for its energy and pathos, is an anthology of the piety of ages and nations, a translation of the prayers and forms of the Catholic church,- these collected, too, in long periods, from the prayers and meditations of every saint and sacred writer all over the world. He picked out the grains of gold. The nervous language of the Common Law, the impressive forms of our courts and the precision and substantial truth of the legal distinctions, are the contribution of all the sharp-sighted, strong-minded men who have lived in the countries where these laws govern. The translation of Plutarch gets its excellence by being translation on

translation. There never was a time when there was none. All the truly idiomatic and national phrases are kept, and all others successively picked out and thrown away. Something like the same process had gone on, long before, with the originals of these books.

Chapter 7 : Shakespeare Quotes (quotes)

Modeled after Shakespeare's Old Globe in London, the Old Globe Theatre was built in for the presentation of abridged versions of Shakespeare's plays as part of the California Pacific International Exposition.

There is practically no doubt that Othello was the tragedy written next after Hamlet. Such external evidence as we possess points to this conclusion, and it is confirmed by similarities of style, diction and versification, and also by the fact that ideas and phrases of the earlier play are echoed in the later. The heroes of the two plays are doubtless extremely unlike, so unlike that each could have dealt without much difficulty with the situation which proved fatal to the other; but still each is a man exceptionally noble and trustful, and each endures the shock of a terrible disillusionment. This theme is treated by Shakespeare for the first time in Hamlet, for the second in Othello. These four dramas may so far be grouped together in distinction from the remaining tragedies. But in point of substance, and, in certain respects, in point of style, the unlikeness of Othello to Hamlet is much greater than the likeness, and the later play belongs decidedly to one group with its successors. We have seen that, like them, it is a tragedy of passion, a description inapplicable to Julius Caesar or Hamlet. And with this change goes another, an enlargement in the stature of the hero. They are not merely exceptional men, they are huge men; as it were, survivors of the heroic age living in a later and smaller world. Othello is the first of these men, a being essentially large and grand, towering above his fellows, holding a volume of force which in repose ensures preeminence without an effort, and in commotion reminds us rather of the fury of the elements than of the tumult of common human passion. What is the distinctive impression that it leaves? Evil is displayed before him, not indeed with the profusion found in King Lear, but forming, as it were, the soul of a single character, and united with an intellectual superiority so great that he watches its advance fascinated and appalled. He sees it, in itself almost irresistible, aided at every step by fortunate accidents and the innocent mistakes of its victims. He seems to breathe an atmosphere as fateful as that of King Lear, but more confined and oppressive, the darkness not of night but of a close-shut murderous room. His imagination is excited to intense activity, but it is the activity of concentration rather than dilation. I will not dwell now on aspects of the play which modify this impression, and I reserve for later discussion one of its principal sources, the character of Iago. But if we glance at some of its other sources, we shall find at the same time certain distinguishing characteristics of Othello. Othello is not only the most masterly of the tragedies in point of construction, but its method of construction is unusual. And this method, by which the conflict begins late, and advances without appreciable pause and with accelerating speed to the catastrophe, is a main cause of the painful tension just described. To this may be added that, after the conflict has begun, there is very little relief by way of the ridiculous. The clown is a poor one; we hardly attend to him and quickly forget him; I believe most readers of Shakespeare, if asked whether there is a clown in Othello, would answer No. Such a passion as ambition, however terrible its results, is not itself ignoble; if we separate it in thought from the conditions which make it guilty, it does not appear despicable; it is not a kind of suffering, its nature is active; and therefore we can watch its course without shrinking. But jealousy, and especially sexual jealousy, brings with it a sense of shame and humiliation. For this reason it is generally hidden; if we perceive it we ourselves are ashamed and turn our eyes away; and when it is not hidden it commonly stirs contempt as well as pity. Nor is this all. And this, with what it leads to, the blow to Desdemona, and the scene where she is treated as the inmate of a brothel, a scene far more painful than the murder scene, is another cause of the special effect of this tragedy. I mean the suffering of Desdemona. This is, unless I mistake, the most nearly intolerable spectacle that Shakespeare offers us. For one thing, it is mere suffering; and, *ceteris paribus*, that is much worse to witness than suffering that issues in action. Desdemona is helplessly passive. She can do nothing whatever. She cannot retaliate even in speech; no, not even in silent feeling. And the chief reason of her helplessness only makes the sight of her suffering more exquisitely painful. She is helpless because her nature is infinitely sweet and her love absolute. I would not challenge Mr. We must not say more than this. We must not call the play a tragedy of intrigue as distinguished from a tragedy of character. Still it remains true that an elaborate plot was necessary to elicit the catastrophe; for Othello was no Leontes, and his was the last nature

to engender such jealousy from itself. Now in any novel or play, even if the persons rouse little interest and are never in serious danger, a skilfully-worked intrigue will excite eager attention and suspense. And where, as in Othello, the persons inspire the keenest sympathy and antipathy, and life and death depend on the intrigue, it becomes the source of a tension in which pain almost overpowers pleasure. Nowhere else in Shakespeare do we hold our breath in such anxiety and for so long a time as in the later acts of Othello. And this impression is strengthened in further ways. In the other great tragedies the action is placed in a distant period, so that its general significance is perceived through a thin veil which separates the persons from ourselves and our own world. But Othello is a drama of modern life; when it first appeared it was a drama almost of contemporary life, for the date of the Turkish attack on Cyprus is The characters come close to us, and the application of the drama to ourselves if the phrase may be pardoned is more immediate than it can be in Hamlet or Lear. Besides this, their fortunes affect us as those of private individuals more than is possible in any of the later tragedies with the exception of Timon. Indeed he is already superseded at Cyprus when his fate is consummated, and as we leave him no vision rises on us, as in other tragedies, of peace descending on a distracted land. King Lear is undoubtedly the tragedy which comes nearest to Othello in the impression of darkness and fatefulness, and in the absence of direct indications of any guiding power. In reading Othello the mind is not thus distended. It is more bound down to the spectacle of noble beings caught in toils from which there is no escape; while the prominence of the intrigue diminishes the sense of the dependence of the catastrophe on character, and the part played by accident⁵ in this catastrophe accentuates the feeling of fate. This influence of accident is keenly felt in King Lear only once, and at the very end of the play. In Othello, after the temptation has begun, it is incessant and terrible. The skill of Iago was extraordinary, but so was his good fortune. All this and much more seems to us quite natural, so potent is the art of the dramatist; but it confounds us with a feeling, such as we experience in the Oedipus Tyrannus, that for these star-crossed mortals--both [Greek: On the contrary, it is marvellous that, before the tragedy is over, Shakespeare should have succeeded in toning down this impression into harmony with others more solemn and serene. But has he wholly succeeded? The distaste to which I refer is due chiefly to two causes. First, to many readers in our time, men as well as women, the subject of sexual jealousy, treated with Elizabethan fulness and frankness, is not merely painful but so repulsive that not even the intense tragic emotions which the story generates can overcome this repulsion. But, while it is easy to understand a dislike of Othello thus caused, it does not seem necessary to discuss it, for it may fairly be called personal or subjective. It would become more than this, and would amount to a criticism of the play, only if those who feel it maintained that the fulness and frankness which are disagreeable to them are also needless from a dramatic point of view, or betray a design of appealing to unpoetic feelings in the audience. But I do not think that this is maintained, or that such a view would be plausible. To some readers, again, parts of Othello appear shocking or even horrible. They think--if I may formulate their objection--that in these parts Shakespeare has sinned against the canons of art, by representing on the stage a violence or brutality the effect of which is unnecessarily painful and rather sensational than tragic. The passages which thus give offence are probably those already referred to,--that where Othello strikes Desdemona IV. The issues thus raised ought not to be ignored or impatiently dismissed, but they cannot be decided, it seems to me, by argument. All we can profitably do is to consider narrowly our experience, and to ask ourselves this question: If we feel these objections, do we feel them when we are reading the play with all our force, or only when we are reading it in a half-hearted manner? And if we try the question thus, I believe we shall find that on the whole the fault is ours. The first, and least important, of the three passages--that of the blow--seems to me the most doubtful. I confess that, do what I will, I cannot reconcile myself with it. It seems certain that the blow is by no means a tap on the shoulder with a roll of paper, as some actors, feeling the repulsiveness of the passage, have made it. It must occur, too, on the open stage. And there is not, I think, a sufficiently overwhelming tragic feeling in the passage to make it bearable. But in the other two scenes the case is different. There, it seems to me, if we fully imagine the inward tragedy in the souls of the persons as we read, the more obvious and almost physical sensations of pain or horror do not appear in their own likeness, and only serve to intensify the tragic feelings in which they are absorbed. Whether this would be so in the murder-scene if Desdemona had to be imagined as dragged about the open stage as in some modern

performances may be doubtful; but there is absolutely no warrant in the text for imagining this, and it is also quite clear that the bed where she is stifled was within the curtains,⁸ and so, presumably, in part concealed. Here, then, Othello does not appear to be, unless perhaps at one point,⁹ open to criticism, though it has more passages than the other three tragedies where, if imagination is not fully exerted, it is shocked or else sensationally excited. If nevertheless we feel it to occupy a place in our minds a little lower than the other three and I believe this feeling, though not general, is not rare, the reason lies not here but in another characteristic, to which I have already referred,—the comparative confinement of the imaginative atmosphere. Othello has not equally with the other three the power of dilating the imagination by vague suggestions of huge universal powers working in the world of individual fate and passion. In one or two of his plays, notably in *Troilus and Cressida*, we are almost painfully conscious of this suppression; we feel an intense intellectual activity, but at the same time a certain coldness and hardness, as though some power in his soul, at once the highest and the sweetest, were for a time in abeyance. In other plays, notably in *The Tempest*, we are constantly aware of the presence of this power; and in such cases we seem to be peculiarly near to Shakespeare himself. Now this is so in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, and, in a slighter degree, in *Macbeth*; but it is much less so in *Othello*. I do not mean that in *Othello* the suppression is marked, or that, as in *Troilus and Cressida*, it strikes us as due to some unpleasant mood; it seems rather to follow simply from the design of a play on a contemporary and wholly mundane subject. Still it makes a difference of the kind I have attempted to indicate, and it leaves an impression that in *Othello* we are not in contact with the whole of Shakespeare. One instance is worth pointing out, because the passage in *Othello* has, oddly enough, given trouble. Desdemona says of the maid Barbara: The whole force of the passages referred to can be felt only by a reader. Even here, however, there is a great difference; for although the idea of such a power is not suggested by *King Lear* as it is by *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, it is repeatedly expressed by persons in the drama. Of such references there are very few in *Othello*. But for somewhat frequent allusions to hell and the devil the view of the characters is almost strictly secular. In like manner *Othello* can only appeal to Fate v. Who can control his fate? Ulrici has good remarks, though he exaggerates, on this point and the element of intrigue. And neither she nor *Othello* observes what handkerchief it is. He lied therefore most rashly, but with his usual luck. For those who know the end of the story there is a terrible irony in the enthusiasm with which Cassio greets the arrival of Desdemona in Cyprus. So swiftly does Fate conduct her to her doom. The dead bodies are not carried out at the end, as they must have been if the bed had been on the main stage for this had no front curtain. Against which may be set the scene of the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*.

Chapter 8 : Home | The Old Globe

Now, each, or nearly each, word Shakespeare wrote was accompanied by a space, this being a peculiarity of English. There are no spaces in Chinese and Japanese, for example. Each word consists of letters, there being in English 26 of them: to make less work for our monkeys, we'll assume case insensitivity: capitals, lower case, all the same to us.

The hero would struggle against overwhelming fate, and his defeat would be so noble that he wins the moral victory over the forces that destroy him. A tragedy evoked pity and terror in the audience; it was a catharsis, or washing clean of the soul, which left the spectator trembling but purified. Aristotle proposed the tragic unities of Place, Time, and Action, that is, the whole tragedy would take place in a single location, for example a house or a city square this included messengers who came in from elsewhere, it would happen during the course of one day including speeches about events which had happened in the past, and it would be a single story, without sub-plots. Othello, apart from Act I in Venice, is located entirely within the fortress at Cyprus. Although logically the play covers an unspecified time lapse of, we presume, two or three weeks, it proceeds, more or less, by major scenes through the hours of the day, starting in Venice with the elopement after midnight, the Senate meeting at dawn, then at Cyprus with the morning storm and afternoon landings and developments, the fateful drinking party in the early evening and the murder at bed time. This is not to say that everything happens in the same day; it obviously cannot, but the impression is of an abstract day unfolding. The plot is fairly unified, focusing on Othello and his fate, and dealing with other people and events only in so far as they are relevant to this focus. Othello is about as near as Shakespeare gets to classical tragedy. The Tragic Flaw A. Bradley saw Shakespearean tragedy characterized by the "tragic flaw," the internal imperfection in the hero that brings him down. His downfall becomes his own doing, and he is no longer, as in classical tragedy, the helpless victim of fate. In his heart he had come to believe what they believed: Thinking this, he could not believe that Desdemona could truly love him for himself. Her love must be a pretense, or a flawed and corrupted emotion. Iago hinted at these ideas, and Othello rushed to accept them, because they echoed his deepest fears and insecurities. Part One, the exposition, outlines the situation, introduces the main characters, and begins the action. Part Two, the development, continues the action and introduces complications. Part Three, the crisis or climax, brings everything to a head. In this part, a change of direction occurs or understanding is precipitated. Part Four includes further developments leading inevitably to Part Five, in which the final crisis of action or revelation and resolution are explained. Othello follows this pattern.

Chapter 9 : Shakespeare's Tragedy

"The striking peculiarity of Shakespeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds"so that it contained a universe of thought and feeling within itself, and has no one peculiar bias, or exclusive excellence more.