



## SHAKESPEARE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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### Abstract

The perpetual genius of Shakespeare can be attributed to the fact that even though the centuries have passed since the mother Earth bore this extraordinary gem, we still use his dialogues and vocabulary almost every day. Can you imagine the English language without Shakespeare? Some geniuses die only in flesh but their existence is not ephemeral. They speak to us through generations because of their immense contribution to our daily language. Since, English is the third most spoken language in the world, the contributions made to this language will always be known and acknowledged. This paper highlights the contribution of Shakespeare to English language and how ubiquitous is his presence in our everyday use lexicon.

Keywords- Shakespeare, Quotes, Vocabulary, Phrases, Language.

### INTRODUCTION

Although written centuries ago, the influence of the works of the "Bard of Avon" is still prominent in everyday English. William Shakespeare, also known as, the father of English Drama, introduced around 1700 words and many more proverbs and phrases. His quotes are the living proof of his greatness and deft. His ornate proverbs and phrases, and skillful use of common words made him the England's national poet and one of the most important figures of Elizabethan era. In today's world even if someone has not read Shakespeare at all, it is impossible for him/her to stay unacquainted with his ubiquitous vocabulary, proverbs and phrases. We don't realize that commonly used phrases like "catch a cold", "A Night Owl", "break the ice" etc. are either coined or popularized by William Shakespeare.

### DISCUSSION

The immortal Shakespearean plays like 'Hamlet', 'Macbeth', 'Taming of the shrew', 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Julius Caesar', 'Tempest', 'King Lear',

'Othello', 'Pericles', 'Twelfth Night', etc. are replete with highly quotable phrases and proverbs. From psychologically titillating to heart-warming, his quotes cover a wide variety of genres. English language will be bland and banal without the usage of these catchy and witty quotes. Shakespeare not only coined but popularized so many words, phrases and proverbs which otherwise would have remained unnoticed by the common people. Shakespeare's English not only appears formal but also very casual and nonchalant.

The moral dilemma, pain, fear and trauma of the characters in Shakespearean plays resonate so much with the modern humans that the lines spoken in these tragedies are used so extensively to describe our thoughts even today. The modern society as well as the Shakespearean society is same in the sense that human emotions remain unchanged and placid through centuries. Love, hatred, jealousy and ambition are ubiquitous and will hold the same value and meaning in the coming centuries. Shakespeare is the painter of such emotions. Each play seems like a mosaic of all the

emotions depicted through different characters reechoing with some or the other part of our lives.

Shakespeare's depiction of Julius Caesar in his play gave rise to so many quotable phrases. The political reign and bloody assassination of this phenomenal leader gave birth to so many terms which are still used extensively by the proletariat and the bourgeois class of today. The term "et tu, Brute?" has become a cliché in our language which barely translates to "you too, Brutus?" signifying backstabbing and betrayal. The phrase is often used these days to show an unexpected betrayal from a close friend. The quote which is probably most heard and quoted from this play is, "Cowards die many times before their death". Julius Caesar is one of the most powerful plays of Shakespeare. The quotes in this play signify the strong mind of a powerful and just leader who is betrayed and killed. Although he was a political and elite figure, still the commoners can easily relate to the quotes. "Men at some time are the masters of their own fates.", "The fault is not in our stars but in ourselves", "Death, a necessary end, will come when it comes", are some of the most quoted lines.

'Hamlet' is said to be the masterpiece of Shakespeare which appeals not only to author's mind but also to his heart. It arouses the feelings of love, pity, fear and excitement. I find, "to be, or not be, that is the question" to be one of the most quotable lines in day-to-day lives from this play. The line spoken by Hamlet, "There is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so", is a clichéd and timeworn quote. Polonius' quote, "Brevity is the soul of wit", has become a way of thinking, writing and living life. I don't know whether these quotes make this play undying or the undying nature of this play makes these quotes so popular. Quotes like, "There's daggers in men's smiles", "Blood will have blood", "A deed without a name", "What's done cannot be undone", are a few of the many which make Macbeth a living tragedy in our hearts. The sleepwalking scene comes to life every time we hear these quotes. We hear these quotes and also use them frequently without even knowing that they were written by none other than Shakespeare. The uniqueness of the characters of the play Macbeth is

well reciprocated by the dialogues spoken by them which became an integral part of our language.

The quote from the play 'Romeo and Juliet', "What's in a name?" is seen being quoted by people now and then in many languages. Shakespeare's quotes are so catchy that other languages also make use of them in one way or the other.

Lovers have always been quoting Shakespeare to profess their undying love for each other. Romeo's line, "Under love's heavy burden do I sink", describes the sweet agony of every lover's heart and therefore it stood the test of the time. The line by Friar Lawrence, "Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast", is often quoted by elders who value moderation and patience in love. Almost every quote of Shakespeare can be related to life, resonating to a particular stage or phase. Hence, they are so omnipresent.

Apart from writing highly quotable lines and proverbs Shakespeare also gave some phrases that we speak almost every day. If you have ever say, "catch a cold", "dead as a door nail", "the world is your oyster", "to lie low", "a night owl", "wild-geese chase", "in a pickle", "heart of gold", "break the ice", "vanish into thin air", "all of a sudden", "up in arms", "devil incarnate", "all that glitters is not gold"; you are quoting Shakespeare. It is surprising that these centuries old phrases which are so commonly used are either given or popularized by one man. It is hard to imagine English as it is today without Shakespeare.

The introduction of these phrases and vocabulary by Shakespeare enriched our language. It definitely made English more expressive and colorful. Shakespeare had a habit of playing with words and their forms which unexpectedly gave rise to 1700 new words. He changed the form of the words, decorated them and used them with dexterity in his plays and poems. He was very skillful at borrowing Latin words and transforming them. So, even if you want to exclude Shakespeare's influence from your day to day spoken language, you cannot. Shakespeare's contribution is vast and ceaseless covering every genre. Hence, no one, who speaks English, is untouched by Shakespeare's vocabulary. While reading Shakespeare's works we

realize how commonly his quotes are used. Be it 'Othello', 'Twelfth night' or 'Hamlet' every play has the element of novelty and universality which made his writings stand the test of time. Oxford dictionary attributes 357 words originally to Shakespeare making his presence in the field of English language and literature a pretty permanent one.

Shakespeare invented new words by changing nouns into verbs, changing verbs into adjectives, by connecting different words, adding affixes or just by coming up with a completely new word. The king of all poets, with an undying urge to better express himself unknowingly coined many new words. The words which were already in use started holding a new meaning and context that Shakespeare gave them. For example, the word 'stomach' was the name of the part of body before Shakespeare changed it's meaning to 'courage' (Henry V). Shakespeare here very deftly changed a 'common noun' to 'abstract noun'. Shakespeare first used the word 'affined' to infer 'united by affinity' (Othello) and 'attasked' to express 'taken to task' (King Lear). There are so many more examples of this kind. Shakespeare took so many Latin words and molded them beautifully and artistically to something new. For example, the word 'incarnardine' (Macbeth) is derived from the latin word 'incarnardino'. From another latin word 'oppuganus', Shakespeare made up the word, 'oopugnancy'. Some other very really common words that were given centuries ago by Shakespeare are 'arouse', 'accuse', 'critic', 'hint', 'gossip', 'torture', 'eyeball', 'lower', 'assassination', etc. Can you imagine how different our language would have been if it wasn't for Shakespeare.

Andrew Dickson, in his book, "Worlds Elsewhere: Journeys around Shakespeare's Globe", admits that he also tried to coin new words but it never worked for him. He explained the reason behind the widespread usage Shakespeare's coinages is that he never tried too hard to make up new words, he rather just played with them and used them as needed. Dickson also points out that many words that are attributed to Shakespeare where actually already in use and understood by people but are popularized by Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's dramas are very poetic. He had the exceptional talent of combining poetry and drama and hence his plays are riveting not just because of the storyline but also because of the brilliant verbal performances. Every character in the play has a very poetic way of expressing his/her emotions which makes the lines worth remembering. Hence, it is used again and again by people. Shakespeare's success was such that the dialogues from his plays entered common parlance. It's both the quality and quantity of his work that Shakespeare has to be remembered in the coming centuries as well. No other writer came closer to contributing as much as Shakespeare to the English language. A mercurial and inquisitive man whose life revolved around stories and ideas to create something new changed the very basics of English language for good.

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