

An analysis of henry iv, part 1

Literature



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An Analysis of Henry IV, Part There is no other more widely studied that Shakespeare in the academic field of literature. This is because all of his works are of great worth for various purposes. The value of studying Shakespeare is immense in that all of his works calls desperately for the audience or reader to engage in critical thought. The majority of his works contain a mix of many elements. There is hatred and love, rivalry and innocence, royalty and paupers. It is the complex flavors of his work that call for attention and fame, intriguing the mind, elevating the senses, and educating the listener. There are also a variety of literarily elements, such as dramatic irony, anagnorisis, and the cleaver use of messenger speeches. This paper will address the presence of these three last elements by taking a look at the Shakespeare play, Henry IV, part 1. Some incidences in which the three elements appear in this work will be explored, all though their occurrences are not limited to the examples featured herein.

Messenger speeches have been used creatively in many literary works. Shakespeare is also known for employing them in a great number of his works. The messenger serves to add depth to the story line, often reinforcing the significance of the actions or speech of a main character. The messenger speeches in Henry IV can be found to be very cleverly employed. One in particular occurs in Act 2, Scene 2 where Hotspur is addressing the troops. Hotspur, not a clever orator, tells the troops openly that he is not good at making speeches. The messenger speech in this scene are not as significant in their content as they are in the fact that Hotspur, who claims to be a poor speaker delivers a poor speech indeed, because the messengers interrupt him twice. His claim that he cannot speak well is ironically reinforced by these interruptions.

The use of dramatic irony in Shakespeare's works often appear in a comical manner. The mix of comedy and tragedy is part of what has drawn fans in. There is indeed dramatic irony present in many of his works, however its appearance in Henry IV will be focused on here. In Act 5, Scene 3 Douglas encounters blunt, who is dressed as a king. Douglas announces to him that Lord of Stafford has earlier been killed and then he proceeds to kill Blunt. Later on, Douglas encounters King Henry and, thinking him an imposter, challenges him by saying "thou counterfeitst a king?". It is, of course known to the audience that this is the real king that Douglas is addressing. It is also known to the audience that Douglas has killed other imposters, but the characters in this scene do not realize what is going on. Moreover, the question of whether Henry is being a counterfeit king, speaks to the audience more of his character, rather than his dress.

It is not a simple task to identify the appearance of anagnorisis in the play Henry IV. All of the characters flux in and out of information. However, there is one character in particular which has been said to be the very personification of anagnorisis, Falstaff. As it has been stated, "Aristotle's concept of anagnorisis and catharsis would seem relevant, for example, in describing Falstaff's role as tragic victim-only one role among several, needless to say, but involved and crucial" (Toiler, 1965: p. 65). This ironic chief justice is considered by many to be the height of entertainment. Falstaff is ever the mischievous character, boosting himself up by his own tongue, but a thief and a coward in reality.

These three elements are not the only ones to be included in Shakespeare's work. However, they are ones that are often found and very significant.

While the study of Henry IV has performed here, such elements can also be

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found in plays such as Hamlet, Macbeth, and more. Shakespeare proves himself to be a master of these elements. It unknown rather or not he realized all of the many elements that is works contained, but he has, nonetheless, employed them all cleverly. Shakespeare's mix of drama and comedy, seasoned with the excellent execution of messenger speeches, anagnorisis, and dramatic irony has created literary texts that are beneficial in educational studies, as well as entertainment. His works enlighten the mind and cause readers to think, while bringing to light the depth of human character. The depth of his work continues to be beneficial to man.

Works Cited

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