

The tragic flaw is not necessarily moral deficiency, although with Shakespeare it may be (e.g. murderous ambition of Richard III or of Macbeth)

The tragic hero with Shakespeare, then, need not be "good" though generally he is "good" and therefore at once wins sympathy in his error. But it is necessary that he should have so much of greatness that in his error and fall we may be vividly conscious of the possibilities of human nature (22).

Thus, two things follow: 1) a Shakespeare tragedy is never depressing; and 2) the central feeling is the impression of waste.

The pity and fear which are stirred by the tragic story seem to unite with and even to merge in, a profound sense of sadness and mystery, which is due to the impression of waste (23)

**ULTIMATE POWER**—the tragic fact as Shakespeare represents it is something piteous, fearful, and mysterious; on the other hand, it does not leave us crushed, rebellious or desperate. The ultimate power at work cannot be adequately described, therefore, as either simply a moral order or fate. Somehow it must combine both of these elements:

**FATE**—we seem men and women confidently attempting to translate thought into action. "They strike into the existing order of things in pursuance of their ideas. But what they achieve is not what they intended; it is terribly unlike it... They fight blindly in the dark, and the power that works through them makes them the instruments of a design which is not theirs".

**MORAL ORDER**—even though the characters may be caught in a larger web, we do hold them responsible for their actions. The critical action of the play is something more or less bad, and the catastrophe is the return of this action upon the head of the agent. It is an example of justice, but not a sentimental poetic justice.

"Justice" is not really the most apt word to express the imaginative experience. We experience pity, horror, etc., but we do not judge. Better to say, simply, that the ultimate power is a moral one which shows itself akin to good and alien from evil. This moral order reacts through the necessity of its own nature both against attacks made upon it and against failure to conform to it.

We remain confronted with the inexplicable fact, or the no less inexplicable appearance, of a world travailing for perfection, but bringing to birth, together with glorious good, an evil which it is able to overcome only by self-torture and self-waste. And this fact or appearance is tragedy (39)