

PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE: A CRITICAL STUDY

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Abstract

A preface, which is included in the front matter of a book, is your chance to speak directly to your readers about why you wrote the book, what it's about, and why it's important. Many books don't require one, especially works of fiction, but if you're wondering how to write a preface, here's an overview.

Keywords: *preface, Shakespeare, critical study, criticism*

Dr. Johnson preface to Shakespeare is one of the most famous critical essays of the eighteenth century and yet too many students have forgotten that it is precisely a preface to the plays of Shakespeare edited by Dr Johnson himself. Johnson love for Shakespeare plays is well known now here is this more manifests them in its notes that his claim to remembrance as a critic of must rest for the famous preface is after all only rarely and personal statement. The present divisions of the commentary into three part the notes on the comedies those on the history plays is arbitrary and mostly a matter of convenience some division was necessary and it seemed advantages to present introduces which could use Johnson reaction to comedy and tragedy history plays and Shakespeare comedies tragedies and history plays and Shakespeare comedies, tragedies and history as appoint of departure were the notes reprinted in the order of appearance of the plays one would fine Macbeth. On the other hand, if you're writing a preface, it's for your own book. A preface, which is included in the front matter of a book, is your chance to speak directly to your readers about why you wrote the book, what it's about, and why it's important. Many books don't require one, especially works of fiction, but if you're wondering how to write a preface, here's an overview. As it is an introduction to a book, a preface should include information about the book. Consider including a few or all of the following ideas:

Discuss how; of writing the book—what you learned, how you felt, and any insights into real life situations gained through the writing. You may also want to include the book came about. Why did you write it? Why did you choose the particular subject? What was your motivation? You could also discuss what your inspiration was (especially if it is a work of fiction); Give a brief description of the book, the main characters, or themes. Give just enough to get the reader interested in reading more; don't give anything away; State the purpose of the book, especially if the work is non-fiction. For example, if your book is intended to educate the reader about famous African scientists in the 20th century, you may want to state this in the preface. You could also describe what the reader can hope to learn by reading the book; Describe the journey how you've changed as an author or as a person during the process; Talk about any problems that came up during the writing and how you dealt with these trials and tribulations; If it is a non-fiction book, discuss your research process. Talk about your sources. Why are they unique? Why is this particular biography of Nixon, for example, special compared to others?; Include acknowledgements. Thank the people who were instrumental in the writing of your book. Depending on the level of formality of the writing, these could range from colleagues to editors to family

members; Talk about how long it took you to write the book, if it's relevant. For example, if you've been researching Nixon and writing the book for 10 years, you may want to mention this fact to give the reader an idea of the thought and effort you put into the project; Include any suggestions about how to read the book if there is a special structure.

Importance of the Problem

Samuel Johnson in his book about Shakespeare gives reason for the strength of Shakespeare and also the weakness that Shakespeare literature brings. This is the strongest element of the book that it has given reasons to identify both parts of Shakespeare literature and is unbiased in his approach. Samuel Johnson writes "nothing can please many and please long, but just representation of general nature" the nature here is derived from the nature that Dryden talks about in his book. He explains now Shakespeare has a way of portraying nature as just and fulfilling and this is strength according to Johnson as well. Johnson carries on with his defiance for Shakespeare is a good dramatist. He does what a dramatists needs to do and that is to deal with the university problem. And he does it best. He has a way of understanding people ways of life and portrays them well in evil and goodness.

Need of the Problem

Eighteenth century writer Samuel Johnson is one of the most significant figures in the most English literature. Educational ventures were not successful however although one of his students David Garrick later famous as Ana actor became a lifelong friend Johnson having given up teaching went to London try the literary life thus began to long period of hack writing for the gentlemen magazine. He founded his own periodical the rambler in which he published between 1750 and 1752 considerable number of document, eloquent, insightful essays on literature, criticism and moral. Beginning in 1747 while busy with other kinds of writing and always burdened with poverty, Johnson was also dictionary commissioned by a group of book sellers. After more than eight years in preparations the dictionary of the English language. In 1764 he and the eminent English portraits sir Johnson Reynolds founded the literary club its membership includes such as Garrick the literary club. its membership included such statement Edmund burke the play wrights Oliver goldsmith and Richard briskly Sheridan and a young Scottish lawyer James Boswell Johnson last major work. the lives of the English poets was begun in 1778 when he was nearly 70 years old and complete in ten years in 1781. The work is a distinctive blend of biography and literary criticism.

Johnson points to remember in preface to Shakespeare characters are a just representation of human nature as they deal with passions and passions .they are also true to the age sex, professions to which they belong and hence the speech of one cannot be put in the mouth of another his characters are not exaggerated even when the dialogues is level with life, Shakespeare plays are a storehouse of practical wisdom and from them can be formulated a philosophy them can be formulated a philosophy of life moreover his play represent the different passions and not love alone in this his plays mirror life. Shakespeare has of tragic comedy Shakespeare has been much criticizes for mixing tragedy and comedy but Johnson defends him in Johnson says that in mixing tragedy and comedy Shakespeare has been true nature because even in real life there is a mangling of god and evil, joy and sorrows ,tears and smiles etc this

may be against the classical rules but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. Moreover, tragedy and comedy being nearer to life combines with itself the pleasure and instruction of both. Tragedy and comedy, Shakespeare's use of tragic comedy does not weaken the effect of a tragedy because it does not interpret the progress of passions. In fact, Shakespeare knew that pleasure consisted in variety. Contained melancholy is often not pleasing. Shakespeare had the power to move whether to tears. Shakespeare's comic genius, Johnson says that comedy came natural to Shakespeare; he seems to produce his comic scenes are durable and hence their popularity has not suffered with the passing of time. The language of his comic scenes is the language of real life.

Shakespeare writes tragedies with great appearance of toil and study but there is always something wanting in his tragic scenes which seems to be skill. His comedy is instinctive. Shakespeare's histories are neither tragedy nor comedy; hence he is not required to follow classical rules of unities. The only unity he needs to maintain in his histories is the consistency and naturalness in his history of action. His plots have variety and complexity of nature. But have a beginning and middle and an end and one event is logically connected with another and the plot makes gradual advancement to words in the document.

Shakespeare shows no regard for the unities of time and place and according to Johnson, place and according to Johnson these have troubled the poet more than it has pleased the audience. The observance of these unities is considered necessary to provide credibility to the drama but any fictions can never be real and the audience knows this if a spectator can imagine the stage to be Alexandria and the actors to be Antony and Cleopatra; he is a delusion and much more drama is a no-time.

Style of the Preface to Shakespeare

Shakespeare engaged in dramatic poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the public judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor critics of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: He therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as *Rhyme* has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comic scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comic, but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragic scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comic scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits, are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tint, without any remains of former luster; but the discriminations of true passion are the colors of

nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabric's of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of *Shakespeare*.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a stile which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language as to remain settled and unaltered; this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comic dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other authour equally remote, and among his other Excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unraveled; he does not endeavor to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and *Shakespeare* is the poet of nature: But his plan has commonly what *Aristotle* requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

About the Preface

Preface to Shakespeare by Samuel Johnson the essay is divided into three parts: 1. Shakespeare's general nature: Excellency; Shakespeare's Faults Samuel Johnson was the acknowledge Shakespeare's faults. Shakespeare's faults are big, not minor; Shakespeare's poetry, however, sometimes delight without teaching. For example, when Portia dressed up as a man, attended trials, and saved Antonio which wasn't morally accepted for a woman to do so at that time; Shakespeare used too much language, expressions, and soliloquies in Hamlet which made it tiring, sixth fault in his narration of all genres he used too many words to express simple ideas.

Review Related Literature

It helps the researcher identify and define a researcher problem. It helps justify the need for studding a problem. It prevents unnecessary duplication of a study. It can be a source of a theoretical basis for the study. it helps formulate and refine research instruments it provided lesson for data analysis and interpretation while the research problem is still being conceptualized the researcher must already start reviewing literature in defying the research problem the researcher must be able to show evidence that the problem really exists and is worth investigations. it is important that

researcher knows what is already known about the problem have found about it and what questions still need to be answered before the research questions are finalized.

Theories which the researcher uses to explain the existence of a research problem and used as a basis in analyzing relationships between variables can be generated from reference books on the theories that must have already been read. Adequate literature at the start of the researcher's activity. Review the precise definition of the research problem, note key variables specified in the study objectives and hypothesis using an index of general references. Search for relevant primary and secondary sources guided by the search terms.

Central Ideas of the Problem

Shakespeare is believed to have violated a law which had been established and recorded jointly by dramatists and critics. But Johnson defends Shakespeare in this matter. Shakespeare in this matter. History plays do not of course come under the review of the law of the three unities because of their nature and because time and place must keep changing in plays of this kind. In his other plays he has largely preserved the unity of action. Although being the dramatist of nature Shakespeare does not unfold any hidden design of the story in his play. His story has generally a beginning, middle, end as required by Aristotle. There is a logical connection between incidents; the conclusions follow generally. Some incidents may be superfluous but the plot as a whole develops gradually and naturally and the end of the play marks also the end of our expectation. Before going further in to the matter it would be worth while taking a look at the historical background of the three unities. Two main reasons had been offered in the past in support of this trinity and both these reasons were false. Firstly it was said that Aristotle had insisted upon them and secondly that without them a play would be incredible. In his defense of Shakespeare in this respect and also in respect of Shakespeare's mingling of tragic and comic scenes, Johnson has been regarded as an outright dissenter against the neoclassical rules and proprieties. The attitude he adopts in these matters is a single one of the reign of neoclassicism which had begun with the restoration. This attitude is a pointer to the coming of the romantic new era.

Scope of the preface to Shakespeare

It is not my design to enter into a Criticism upon this Author; though' to do it effectually and not superficially would be the best occasion that any just Writer could take to form the judgment and taste of our nation. For of all *English* Poets *Shakespeare* must be confessed to be the fairest and fullest subject for Criticism, and to afford the most numerous as well as most conspicuous instances both of Beauties and Faults of all sorts. But this far exceeds the bounds of a Preface, the business of which is only to give an account of the fate of his Works and the disadvantages under which they have been transmitted to us.

Research Methodology

It seems appropriate at this juncture to explain the difference between research methods and research methodology. Research methods may be understood as all those methods that are used for the conduction of research. Thus research methods refer to the methods the researcher uses in performing research operations. In other words all those methods which are used by the researcher during the course of studying the research problem are termed as research methods since the object of research is particularity. The applied research. It is to arrive at a solution for a given problem using the available data and

the unknown aspects of the problem have to be related to each other to make a solution possible. In the first group we include those methods which are concerned with the collection of data. These methods will be used where there data already available is not sufficient to arrive at the required solution. The second group consists of these statistical techniques which are used for establishing relationships between the data. The third group consists of methods which are used to evaluate the accuracy of the result obtained. Research methods falling in the above stated last two groups are generally taken as the analytical tools of research .at times a distinction is also made between research techniques and research methods. Research techniques refer to the behavior and instrument we use in performances observations recording data techniques of processing data and the like research methods refer to the behavior and instruments used in selecting and constructions research techniques. Research methods refer to the behavior and instruments used in selecting and constructing research techniques.

Findings of the Researches

Shakespeare says Johnson has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind but in one composition; Shakespeare was equally at home in writing tragic and comic plays and that he could combine comic and tragic elements in one and the same play “almost his plays are divided between serious ludicrous characters” and they sometimes produce sorrow and sometimes laughter; This was practice contrary to the rules of criticism” but Johnson says there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature; A play in which the comic and tragic have been mingled is capable of conveying all the instruction that tragedy aims at because such a play is closer to the reality of than either pure tragedy.

Suggestion of Society and Education

That praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that are honors due only to excellence are paid to antiquity is a complaint likely to be always continued by those who being able to add nothing to truth hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox those who being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients that regard which is yet denied by envy will be at least bestowed by time. Antiquity like every other quality every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind has undoubtedly that reverence it not from prejudice some seem to admire in discriminately whatever has been long preserved without considering that time has some times co operated with chance all perhaps are more willing to honors past than present excellence and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age as the eye surveys the sun through artificial capacity .The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living we estimate his powers by his worst performances and when his dead we rate them by his best.

Conclusion

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the

players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more. Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider, how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humor of *Patricio* may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of *Cato*. Whether *Shakespeare* knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose, that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and critics, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance.