SHAKESPEARIAN CRITICISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE NEW CRITICS AND THEIR PREDECESSORS A.C. BRADLEY AND E.E. STOLL

AN ABSTRACT OF
THESIS
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BY
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There have been varieties of critical approaches to Shakespeare’s work after his death. This has by now acquired the dimension of an independent field of study and research. In the last hundred years or so, the mass of Shakespearean studies of every kind has been so vast, that no single scholar can now hope to keep abreast of everything that is written about Shakespeare. Yet there are fashions in literary criticism which follow the general changes in taste and in other artistic matters. Four approaches to Shakespeare's study are especially popular. These are the following: the textual interpretations of Shakespeare, based on authenticity of research and sources; the impressionistic criticism, related to A.C. Bradley; the historical and intellectual study of Shakespeare based on the Elizabethan theatre and the background; then the poetic school of thoughts or the ‘New Critics’, interpretative criticism of the minute analysis of Shakespeare’s use of symbol and imagery. An attempt has been made to consider these important critics of Shakespeare; A.C. Bradley, E.E., Stoll and the ‘New Critic’s’. The number and variety of minds at work in order to interpret and analyze the fascinating work of this supreme artist: Shakespeare, is really amazing and at times bewildering.

Chapter I of this work endeavours to throw light on the various critical commentaries and criticism that was recorded after Shakespeare’s death till the present times. During the 17th and 18th century, Shakespeare was both admired and condemned. There was a lot of adverse criticism regarding Shakespeare
because he did not follow the rules of the three unites, that was the prevalent custom among the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights. However, these adverse criticism regarding Shakespeare did not last long, though certain issues regarding his education, authentic and unauthentic work have continued to interest critics. The early criticism was mostly charges against his moral propriety made by Samuel Johnson in the 18th century and by George Bernard Shaw in the 20th century. Although Johnson defended Shakespeare on the question of the classical rules and generated interest in Shakespeare’s characters when he argued that no one considers the stage play to be real life, this reached its culmination in the late 19th century with the work of A.C. Bradley. The predecessors of Bradley have been highlighted with the purpose of projecting that Bradley was under the sure impact of these romantic critics, who wanted to read the plays of Shakespeare like a novel.

They enquired into the lives of Shakespeare’s characters as if they were real men and women, over-interpretation was one kind of excess which has provoked a wholesale rejection of Bradley and the nineteenth century naturalistic approach.

These opponent critics of Bradley argued that plot rather than character was Shakespeare’s primary concern. Among them E.E. Stoll was the most vociferous, he tries to show that the attempts made by previous critics to demonstrate the consistency of Shakespeare’s characters have only led them to indulge in absurdity. According to Stoll Shakespeare is a great ‘artificer’ who through his skill of craftsmanship makes us believe in impossible situation, that he achieves this great effects from projecting the contrast between the hero and his actions-between the nobility of Macbeth and his career of crime, between
the noble Othello and his jealous man What Shakespeare's plays obeyed certain Elizabethan conventions and traditions that could not be overlooked. The inconsistencies that have been noted by the character analysts would not be noticed when the plays were being performed as the audience does not have time to think and ponder like a reader has. Shakespeare's, poetic dramas did not present, the characters 'true to life' but thrived by creating an illusion of reality. It goes to the credit of Stoll for providing an antidote to William Archer's 'The Old Drama and the New, in which he makes scathing attack on Elizabethan poetic drama. Archer praises lavishly the contemporary well made plays of the twentieth century which he projected as much more superior to the poetic drama of the Elizabethan times. In fact Stoll thinks it to be the greatness of Shakespeare as a dramatic poet to have manipulated and maneuvered and wriggled himself out of so many difficult situation and yet, kept his audiences enthralled, captivated having entertained them to the maximum. Then came the upsurge of the third great approach, in the world of Shakespeare's cosmic vision, with a keen interest in the imagery and symbol of his plays. This new movement became conspicuous in the 1930's and is still quite in demand. This approach was greatly stimulated by the work of Sigmund Freud, which led to the reconsideration of the nature of language itself and of the principles of criticism. It was natural that the New Critics should re-examine Shakespeare's poetic language and his uses of poetic imagery. The illustration of this approach was mainly seen in the works of Caroline Spurgeon in Shakespeare's Imagery and what it Tells us (1935) and also in G. Wilson Knight's The Wheel of Fire (1930) and some other works. By many eminent scholars this approach is merely considered as a reaction to the earlier methods of character exaltation and also a refutation of the historical criticism of Shakespeare. This chapter
mainly examines these major trends and the basic issues involved. However, the work of research is a continuous process, but the enjoyment of Shakespeare's work can never be hampered, no matter how deep Shakespeare seems engulfed by these conflicting criticism and scholarship. The second chapter of this study has examined Hamlet as a specimen so that the contribution made in this regard by Bradley, Stoll and the New Critics can be evaluated. Hamlet is that play of Shakespeare that has been most written about, every great critic even of the stature of Voltaire and Dryden from the ancient times and T.S. Eliot and Spurgeon from the modern times have, written about Hamlet. Hamlet is that play of Shakespeare that still remains an enigma.

Bradley, it is certain had a definite purpose in writing out the character analysis of Hamlet and there is sure reflection of the 19th century Romantic criticism. The most important problem for him in the play was the delay. According to Bradley, Hamlet had failed to carry out his duty and that was a great lapse on his part. He presents many external difficulties that prevented Hamlet from taking revenge and then shrugs all of them away. Then later on Bradley becomes sure the delay was due to some interval problem that was in Hamlet's mind and he was surely afflicted by melancholy. All this causes Bradley to indulge in intense speculation and analysis. Proceeding on this vein Hamlet is projected as a person weak of will and in a daze. Every inconsistency that he finds in the entire play is explained according to this hypothesis. Bradley wants his readers to view Shakespeare according to the analysis that he presents. But this kind of anachronistic judgement is not acceptable to Stoll. He claims instead, Hamlet was not a weak hero and there, was no question of a delay in the play of Hamlet. Shakespeare in postponing the main action was just following tradition, that came from the Greeks, 'an epical tradition'.
Shakespeare was not only adhering to the popular demands of the theatre goers of his plays but also gratifying the “dramatic-requirements, of the ghost that by all means must appear at the beginning, and the tragic deed to be accomplished, as in all good revenge plays, ancient or modern at the end” (Stoll, Art and Artifice, p.91) Stoll tries to answer all of these critics who have presented Hamlet as a problem play. He insisted that great comedy is rooted in farce and great tragedy is rooted in melodrama. Stoll's greatness lies in the fact that he emphasises the element of clever designing in Hamlet and other great Shakespearean tragedies. Thus, according to Stoll's outlook, Hamlet is a great poetic play where the element of verisimilitude is deliberately neglected for the sake of effects that was peculiar to great heroic tragedy during Shakespeare's time.

Besides the interpretation of Bradley and Stoll there is a recent illustration of Hamlet, that reflects in the work of G.W. Knight's. His method is very different from the two mentioned already. Knight has a unique interest in the imagery and symbol at play in the world of Hamlet. As an interpreter of Hamlet, Knight does not show any concern regarding the delay in Hamlet neither is he interested in Hamlet being a play written in the Elizabethan background, he is mostly engaged with the nature of Hamlet's suffering'. To fully understand his brand of interpretation it is necessary to comprehend the poetics he has propounded regarding the nature of Shakespearean drama in his book, the Wheel of Fire, (1930). He projects a 'pale' faced Hamlet the very symbol of death and decay, he is the only disturbing factor placed in an otherwise healthy and prosperous background of the kingdom. Claudius is granted a clean image by Knight's and becomes an epitome of health and life for this interpreter of images. And in reverse Hamlet becomes the cause of all
that goes wrong in the other characters life. Thus according to Knight's, modern instinct, 'Hamlet is an element of evil in the state of Denmark'. The main theme according to Knight is that of death and a clash between good and evil, health and disease. Knight reverses the tragedy of Hamlet absolutely, if he had written this play, Hamlet would have been the villain and Claudius the victim.

The chapter third of this study is an attempt to redefine Bradley according to twenty first century perspective. Of course it is not possible to forget the massive critical assault that Bradley's 'Shakespearean tragedy was subjected to, but these twentieth century critics were in fact rejecting the long-established point of view that character should be the dominant interest of the Shakespeare criticism. However, Bradley's, 'Shakespearean Tragedy' has survived two major assaults and is still a very powerful book to reckon with. Further Bradley in his own orb could be said to be an original thinker. Bradley as a critic of Shakespeare has propounded a poetics regarding the substance of 'Shakespearean tragedy' which is yet to be replaced. Bradley not only marks the culmination of the romantic 19th century character analysis, he also suggested that the plays had unifying imagistic atmospheres, an idea that was further developed in the 20th century.

The fourth chapter examines Stoll's approach to Shakespeare's drama. It has been customary of his contemporaries and his critics to discard his doctrine and study of Shakespearian plays as a 'realist' reaction and Stoll as a opponent of impressionism in Shakespearean criticism. Because he has often insisted that Shakespeare should be interpreted in the Elizabethan context, he has been declared to be in the line of historical critics as different as Robert Bridges and L.L. Schucking. It was Stoll and Schucking who have together presented.
Abstract

Shakespeare as an Elizabethan Jacobean play Wright with a very difficult job to perform the entertainment of his audiences at the same time keeping within the confines of the tradition and conventions of his age. These two scholars had the courage to humanize Shakespeare. The myth that Bradley had said the last word regarding Shakespeare and his characters and it was a subject exhausted completely by him. And could no longer be exploited was hence dispelled for ever. Stoll & Schucking infact together have brought about the turning point in the criticism of Shakespeare and put him back on the stage. Then a new angle of studying Shakespearean plays were also discovered, i.e. the response of the theatre audience and their influence on the work of an artist. Stoll is known to have stressed that Shakespeare along with the other authors of his age should be studied according to the context of their age and then, the evolution of genre also needs to be considered so that the superiority of Shakespeare could be established but comparison of Shakespeare with the other playwrights of his culture and background was inevitable.

Another fact regarding Stoll is amazing that although he presents a new and revolutionary understanding towards Shakespeare, yet somehow he has not been significantly noticed and acclaimed. What could have gone wrong? This chapter attempts, not only to explain Stoll's doctrine but tries to find out the reason that prevented him from making his mark in the world of Shakespeare criticism. The chapter V of this research is the study of the erosion of this particular school of poetic thoughts that was the endeavour of Wilson Knight, L.C. Knight and Caroline Spurgeon, which has a definite place in the history of Shakespeare criticism. The upsurge of this crusade against the character analysers and the historical critics were intense and overpowering, this resulted in the complete rejection of all that was traditional and orthodox and gave place
to a new phase in the history of Shakespeare criticism that gave prominence to
the imagery and symbolism of Shakespeare's language. These 'New Critics' as
they were named, it is their tendency to abandon both the study of character
and plot. The plays are instead viewed in terms of the unity of image, metaphor
and tone. Caroline Spurgeon began the careful classification of Shakespeare's
imagery, although her attempts were later visualized as na"ive and morally
biased, but yet her work can never be undermined and is a landmark in
Shakespearean criticism. Some other 'New Critics' like G.W. Knight, L.C.
Knight have all been discussed and their poetics discussed briefly. Of course
this sort of criticism cannot claim to be fool proof, since in interpretative
criticism there is danger of the analysis becoming personal and biased.

In the conclusive chapter VI th., the analysis of all the chapters
mentioned above are been observed in detail. It is an endeavour of this research
to project that Shakespeare can't be studied by obliterating the past. The critic
also, were all writing according to the trends of their age and hence their faults
were a common error characteristic of the entire age. Bradley may have been
writing at the end of the century but he was following the tradition of the
romantic school of thoughts strictly, very similar to Morgann, Hazlitt,
Coleridge and Dowden. Hence if we view Bradley in this light, an
understanding dawns upon us and some of his inconsistencies gets diluted.
Regarding the discussion of Hamlet this research reaches a conclusion that no
matter how Hamlet is discussed and debated, Hamlet still remains a mystery
and that even an unsolved one. Actually it is the victory of the playwright that
even after so many centuries have passed, his plays still captivate and interest
his readers that is infact the recognition of a true genius which is conferred
upon: William Shakespeare.
Bradley’s book is still very powerful and we cannot do without him and his insight, even today character study still survives in some form or the other.

Stoll could not make a mark in the world of Shakespeare criticism due to two factors, he had tried to humanize Shakespeare and presented him as an artificer and secondly the upsurge of the poetic school or the New Criticism was so strong that Stoll’s doctrine could not survive. It is the credit of the New Critics to have decoded Shakespeare’s imagery and symbol as it was desperately needed that Shakespeare should be made accessible to the present time. Hence it is to the credit of these approaches to have given us three different Shakespeare. Bradley and his ancestors gave us a philosophical and a supreme character delineator. Stoll puts Shakespeare back to the theatre and made us conscious of not becoming anachronistic. Further he also compelled us to study the playwright from the angle of audience response and their demand on the dramatist. The New Criticism have brought Shakespeare out of the stage and have granted him of being a superb poet. Each of these approaches is valid and if studied in synthesis only, then can Shakespeare be understood completely. Instead of opposing and refuting each other they should be collaborating and cooperating with each other in order to preserve the real Shakespeare.
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This is to certify that the thesis *A Comparative Study of the Contribution of the New Critics and their Predecessors A.C. Bradley and E.E. Stoll* by Ms Ghazala Ahmerin Khanam is the original research work of the candidate and is suitable for submission to the examiners for the award of the Ph.D. degree.

(Dr Kausar Husain)
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Shazala Ahmerin Khanam
Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to say that it is almost impossible to study Shakespeare and his plays by obliterating the past. In order to evaluate the contribution of the ‘New Critics’, their predecessors, A. C. Bradley and E. E. Stoll have to be highlighted. This present work proposes to distinguish the contribution that is significant, in the field of Shakespeare criticism from that which is trivial. During the past century or so, the three major trends or approaches that superimposed the world of Shakespeare criticism, have been identified by scholars and historians as such: Bradley’s nineteenth century naturalistic approach with an obsession for character analysis; the contention of Stoll to restore Shakespeare to his Elizabethan background and the theatre, which was branded by the critics as a ‘realist reaction’, towards the earlier excessive character analysis and the ‘true to life’ approach; and finally, the upsurge of one of the major trends in understanding Shakespeare’s cosmic vision in the form of the ‘New Critics’. This was an absolutely new phase that emerged in the early 1930s and it aimed to end the traditional values in Shakespeare criticism.
This recent trend in Shakespeare criticism gave a new turn, from an interest in character and plot, to the study of images and symbols in Shakespeare's plays. This upsurge has also been regarded as reaction to the historical and theatrical scholarship. Shakespeare the dramatist had been lost so that Shakespeare the poet could live.

The present work is an endeavor to examine the unique characteristic contributions of each of these major tendencies and also to concentrate on their strengths and their weaknesses. It is intended in Chapter-I not precisely to present the commentary on the Shakespearean critical scene, but also to highlight those critics and their movements that have caused the turning points in the history of Shakespeare criticism. Further, the distinction has been made clear between the different schools of thought: the romantic criticism, which considers Shakespeare as divorced from his age and original theatre, then the school which concerns itself with the Elizabethan Shakespeare and with the conventions of the Elizabethan theatre, and the school of the new critics with the focus in Shakespeare's studies on image and symbolism. These scholars and scribes who have all written about Shakespeare, belong to different nation and have written at different times as well. But the stress in this chapter has been to outline the main
approaches and to mention individual contribution only if they have emerged as a factor to reckon with.

Most importantly, immense consequence has been attached to the need to trace the past history of Shakespeare's review because unless we look in retrospect the present cannot be projected.

Chapter-II of this study concerns itself with the comparative study of Hamlet. Some very exceptional writings from almost every significant critical approach have been assimilated, into the vast critical range of this play. Hence, out of all the plays that Shakespeare has written, Hamlet has been sorted out specifically. Hamlet has become a specimen here or rather a 'test case', in order to evaluate the depth and quality of the work of Bradley, Stoll and Wilson Knight. The problem of Hamlet has been made into an enigma by Bradley and the romantic critics, which Stoll has tried to answer. Hence Bradley's main contender in this regard is Stoll, whereas the New Critics have presented their own interpretation of Hamlet, through decoding the imagery and symbol used in the play. Bradley and Stoll's contention have been more intensely and earnestly probed due to the conceptual issues involved in their variegated doctrines and practices.
As the very appellation of chapter-III suggests, 'Reinterpreting Bradley', is an attempt to evaluate Bradley according to the twenty first century perspective and also an endeavor to repair some of the damage done to Bradley's, Shakespearean Tragedy. But when ever we discuss the present the past cannot be erased, hence a discussion of the wholesale rejection of Bradley that becomes a concern of most of the scholars after the 1930s will also be elucidated.

E.E. Stoll considered to be the main opponent of Bradley and branded as a historical critic is highlighted in Chapter-IV Stoll's specific contribution to the criticism of Shakespeare is illuminated and a definite endeavor has been made by the present study and research to justify Stoll's exceptional contribution and also to acquire a place for him as one of the eminent critics of Shakespeare. It is also one of the contentions of this work to present Stoll's real objective in all of his writings.

The Chapter-V of this study is an attempt to trace the rise of the poetic approach. Exactly as Stoll's writings were considered only a reaction to the 19th century naturalistic mode of interpretation similarly the New Critics were alleged to have emerged in response to the extreme display of character depiction by Coleridge and Bradley. It is the
undertaking of this work to present an analysis regarding all such issues. Undoubtedly, the advent of this particular approach had a solid reason to have emerged. Although some deliberation and manipulation might have been made by the proponents to displace the two other major approaches of Bradley and Stoll. Nevertheless this new criticism brought evolution and progress in its wake, and was not a mere divergence from orthodox criticism. The contribution of G. Wilson Knight, L.C. Knight and Caroline Spurgeon has been discussed briefly and the main points elaborated.

The last chapter of this work enumerates the conclusion in which the analysis that has been observed during the study of the above critical schools and their contributions that have been the subject of this work are summed up in brief.
CHAPTER – I
THE SHAKESPEAREAN SCENE

Ever since Shakespeare’s death, there have been a great variety of critical approaches to his work. In fact some of the richest harvest of criticism in our ‘age of criticism’ has been gathered in the field of Shakespeare commentary. Every century has contributed towards its range and depth and also its multiplicity of approaches and methods. If we are able to immerse ourselves in the complexity and sophistication of Shakespeare criticism, the entire intellectual and cultural spirit of the age can be ascertained.

When we begin studying Shakespeare criticism we are confronted by various critical voices and languages. From these three distinct trends, schools or movements can be gleaned. And according to S. Viswanathan, ‘a three fold classification of critics into historical, theatrical and poetic can be made’.

Many other methods of classification have been used by authors, reviewers and literary historians according to their conveniences. But the purpose of this chapter is not merely to comment on the Shakespearian scene but to highlight those critics who have made landmarks in the history of Shakespeare criticism.
This chapter is also concerned with the mode of classification that Allardyce Nicoll has interpreted. Nicoll distinguishes between the school of romantic criticism of which Coleridge is father, and which considers Shakespeare's work as divorced from their age and original theatre and the school which concerns itself with Elizabethan Shakespeares. He also divides critics into 'Bradleyites' and those concerned with the conventions of the Elizabethan stage. This thesis also intends to contemplate on the upsurge of interest in the imagery and symbolism of Shakespeare plays. After having plunged ourselves into the world of Shakespeare criticism, the question may arise, why read everything about Shakespeare that has been written three hundred years ago just to understand Shakespeare, why not just read Shakespeare's plays instead of understanding his critics, and presenting our point of view 'unaided and unencumbered by antiquity', about Shakespeare.

This point of view has also been taken into account by the new critics. This thesis also intends to trace their unique contribution in this context which highlights the plays, dramatic and aesthetic position. The review that has been made on Shakespeare's plays in the last three hundred (or more) years, was accomplished by different men at different times and it belongs to different nations as well. The change in the tone and mode of Shakespeare criticism also reflects the transition that occurred in the European civilization. Hence we
cannot just cannot afford to elevate one critic more at the cost of ignoring the others.

What we have to study is the whole pattern formed by Shakespeare criticism from his own time to ours. In tracing this pattern, certainly we must study some critics more closely than others, and we may for practical purposes select certain critics who serve to determine the main outline of the pattern, but it should be the whole pattern rather than the individual critic in which we interest ourselves.\(^6\)

This is of course the literary point of view that makes a study of Shakespeare criticism inevitable. There is a need to trace the past history of Shakespeare's review, because unless we look in retrospection, the present remains black. Further, the aspiration of this thesis lies in spotlighting the individual contribution of not only Bradley but to elevate E.E. Stoll's specific contribution from dejection and gloom. The study of these main approaches from eighteenth century onwards will certainly help clear the atmosphere for the emergence of what is commonly known as the 'realist' reaction against the excesses of the Romantic and Victorian criticism which had assumed that there was psychological consistency to the presentation of character in Shakespearean drama.\(^7\) The present undertaking of this topic is also to venture into the phenomenon that caused the rise of the poetic School to have emerged. Although they have completely suppressed history and even ignored the history of texts and theatrical scholarship. But the fact remains it was the earlier
The earliest critical references to Shakespeare were either 'simply admiring or anecdotal'. When the Columbia Encyclopedia was consulted on the same it informed:

During 17th and 18th century, Shakespeare was both admired and condemned. Since then, much of the adverse criticism has not been considered relevant although certain issues have continued to interest critics throughout the years.

The famous remark of Ben Jonson that included the comment 'Shakespeare wanted Arte,' sounded the theme of Shakespearean criticism for the rest of the century. So, Shakespeare was mostly censured by his seventeen century contemporaries for lacking learning and the discipline that was thought necessary to elevate a work of art, although proclaimed as a natural genius.

Opinion about Shakespeare up to 1700 is collected in Shakespeare Allusion-Book, as yet it has not been substituted and remains a very dexterous work. Through it, we can chart out the rise of Shakespeare's influence on the drama of his age. The Allusion Book may be of great use in discovering the
areas and aspects of the play that appealed most to Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors.  

Augustus Ralli relies entirely on this book for comments on Shakespeare by his contemporaries. Then he starts his chapter by remarking very matter of factly what an 'imperfect state' the criticism itself was. And criticism was only 'recognized as a separate art and a branch of literature', during the Renaissance, not until sixteenth century. Hence, even those reviews regarding Aristotle, Dante and Longinus were far and few. Therefore, those references made during Shakespeare's lifetime and even;

"...a century after, are interesting historically rather than intrinsically being either whimsical and irregular, or enslaved by the rules of an art as yet too uncertain of itself to be liberal."  

Shakespeare was yet to be really and justly appreciated, even though he had been defended by some and admired for having 'a mind reflecting ages past'. Ben Jonson as a friend pays a fine tribute to Shakespeare's writings in the form of a First Folio (1623), it begins by accepting Shakespeare as the 'Soule of the Age', rating him above such poets as Chaucer, Spenser, Beaumont; even exalting his position above 'Marlowe's mighty line', and comparing him to the greatness of Aeschylus. Finally, the critical tone seeps
into the praise followed by the unforgettable lines he had ‘small Latin and less Greek’, which finally sums up this remarkable genius of a playwright for all time to come. “He was not of an age but for all time”. This tribute is of immense significance since not only does it focus the universality of Shakespeare for all time to come but unintentionally it points out that though Jonson was a renowned scholar, book-learned and an expert in the art, (in the technical sense) but what he lacked, Shakespeare had in abundance that is ‘natural genius’, inspiration and a popular success. We can sum up the 17th century criticism of Shakespeare in the words borrowed by D. Nichol Smith:

‘...with all his faults Shakespeare was to Jonson the greatest of dramatists. This was the contemporary view, and it was never seriously challenged throughout the seventeenth century’.

During his own time Shakespeare was not very much written about, but acceptance and approval for his scholarship does no depend on the quantity but rather the quality of his work. Furthermore, the art of criticism developed quite late, there was no question of an annual or quarterly not even a Shakespeare Survey such as we have today or an occasional periodical or lectures.

Indeed this ‘natural genius’, owes a lot to his fellow actors John Heminge and Condell, who collected together thirty six of his plays and published them in the form of a First Folio in 1623. It was mere good fortune
otherwise Shakespeare could have been lost for ever, since it was considered more fashionable during the Jocobean period to amuse oneself with the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher and best of all Ben Jonsons. The lowest point in Shakespeare criticism or rather the nadir in his ratings was reached through the scathing attack of Rymer, who set the pattern of judging Shakespeare ruthlessly according to the adherents of the neo-classical principles of dramatic construction. As a result, though Shakespeare was a member in the ‘triumvirate of wit’ along with Jonson and Fletcher, he was badly overshadowed by these fashionable craftsmen due to all these adverse comments regarding him. George Saintsbury describes Thomas Rymer as “the worst critic who has ever been”. Rymer may have been a learned critic but he was not a success, when his own play ‘Edgar’ was staged. His objection was mainly directed towards the modern dramatist of his time for having broken the rules laid out by the Ancients. His study is mainly a comparison between the ancient (Sophocles and Euripides) and the moderns whom he finds lacking, since they did not mould their plays according to these past masters. D. Nichol Smith is remarkably reasonable about his ‘censures’:

‘He was a learned man, clever, and boisterously witty, but when he attacked Othello with ridicule he knew that it was his last weapon. He called it the Tragedy of the Handkerchief.’
The Shakespearean Scene

He has out-rightly made fun of Desdemona's sorry plight and mockingly conveys the main moral of the story, for wives to take care of their pieces of linen well, otherwise they may face a similar consequence. To quote him exactly:

'There is in this play, some burlesk, some humour, and ramble of comical wit, some shew, and some mimicry to divert the spectators but the tragical part is plainly none other than a Bloody Farce, without salt or savour.'

Interestingly Rymer is of the view that Shakespeare is fit only for writing comedies, and tragedy is out of his scope. He just could not imagine how Othello, a Venetian general, and Iago a soldier, can act out of character. For according to him neither in tragedy nor comedy such a mixture of contradictory nature is never found. It cannot be comprehended by Rymer how Othello a soldier, can be presented like a false, insinuating wreck of a person whereas the general is so vulnerable that out of a fit of jealousy he kills Desdemona. In the same vein, Rymer blames the audience of Shakespeare's plays, whom he points out were not learned but ignorant men like carpenters and cobblers. In order to please these semi-illiterate audience Shakespeare could not maintain the purity of the genre and this resulted in the debasement and abuse of tragedy. Rymer is scathingly direct and straight forward when he blames Shakespeare for not sparing the historical figure of Julius Caesar, but transforming and distorting its
foundation, and coating a noble Roman figure in the garb of a fool. This habit of Shakespeare’s mingling of the tragedy with the comedy was like a crime to Rymer. He had some preconceived notions about what a tragedy should be and how it should progress and if we study Ralli in some detail he is of the view that this man was an agnostic and his criticism can rightly be explained as ‘atheistic’. He was a believer of ‘external reality’ of the universe which could only be governed by a set of rules with no God and no heaven existing. The Moderns were in fact a sort of correction on their narrow mindedness because it is they who bestowed a place to the ‘human mind’ and ‘soul’. Hence Rymer’s views can neither be refuted nor his atheism blamed, since the aesthetic appreciation of poetry or the mysteries of life was out of his comprehension. Rymer himself has been attacked by Charles Gildon who calls him a ‘hypercritic’ and Professor Saintsbury rejects his worth as a critic.²⁰

Rymer’s adverse criticism did have some effect on a next generation of followers but when Dryden came into the picture Rymer’s perverse intellectualism was outsmarted.

Historians of Augustus Ralli’s repute and others have bequeathed John Dryden with the privilege of being the first critic of Shakespeare.
"His praise of Shakespeare, tempered by his own neoclassical predictions, offset the fanaticism of Rymer that had served as a pervasive influence in the first half of the 18th century."

The discussion, in Dryden’s ‘Essay of Dramatic Poesy’ (1660) in the form of dialogue writing appears to have presented a saner and discerning value of Shakespeare as an artist. Neander, one of the spokespersons takes up the cause of establishing the greatness of Jonson in contrast to all other writers, English or French. And Jonson’s Silent Women is commended as a perfect drama. But to establish this fact he is called upon to convey his ingenious belief or opinion. Neander does comply with participation in the discussion but he thinks it necessary to mention Shakespeare and Fletcher first. Jonson’s contemporary and ‘rivals in poesy’. This talk begins after Neander grants Shakespeare his right place and establishes his superiority above all. Neander as Dryden’s mouthpiece utters these notable lines which have resulted in launching Dryden as a prime critic of Shakespeare.

“To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it; you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I
should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling? into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him;

.....If I would compare him (Jonson) with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare."^22

This was the prevailing frame of mind that followed Shakespeare criticism to the early years of the 18th century, echoing the trend, established by Dryden in his essay, various prefaces and prologues. However, it is quite clear from this discussion that a certain censure or constriction was always attached to the glorification of Shakespeare's art. He was blamed for neglecting the construction of his plays, lapse was found in his 'wit' and his language was also at times disapproved of.

During that time much significance was attributed to dramatic art, mingling of tragic with comic scenes, and to the unity of time and place and action since our playwright practiced neither he was ruthlessly castigated. Ben Jonson's plays were said to be perfect, because he rigidly practiced these rules in his plays.
We can safely conclude after giving Dryden his due for demonstrating foresight, where appreciation of Shakespeare’s drama is concerned, although he was bound by the custom of his age. Still he agrees that comedy as well as tragedy (of the English) because of Shakespeare has surpassed that of the Ancients. Whatever flaws he finds in Shakespeare is due to the rigid notions of his time. Ralli is bemused to note that Dryden himself a poet, fails to understand the metaphorical language used by Shakespeare. This particular critic of Shakespeare himself has been reproved with similar charges, in the recent times.

His greatest contribution was the character of Shakespeare quoted at length from the Essay on Dramatic Poesy. It strikes like the crescent of the new moon on the night of contemporary criticism but the main body of radiant orb was long to remain in darkness.23

The Auguston critics of Shakespeare had forgotten that Shakespeare’s plays had been written to be staged. This startling revelation, was noted by this genius of a man. T.S. Eliot and accordingly conveyed:

As soon as we enter the eighteenth century we feel a change in the atmosphere of criticism and in reading criticism itself we are aware that Shakespeare is beginning to be more read than seen upon the stage!24
The entire focus or attention of these men of scholastic attitude was towards Shakespeares education same as the seventeenth century artists.

The Augustan Age was dominated by the neo-classical code of dramatic criticism. The interest of Augustan critics was centered above all on Shakespeares neglect of the Sacred 'unities of time, place and action, on his learning or lack of learning on the obscurity' of his language.  

Shakespeare's works having endured the idolatry as well as scathing remarks from his contemporaries, as well as his critics in the seventeen and eighteen century continues to fascinate his reader. One thing one must not forget as one delves deeper into the world of Shakespeare's criticism is that his plays are very rarely being staged the main purpose for which they were written. Hence, the appreciation of his work took the form of censures. These hard-core critics, who found fault in Shakespeare that he did not maintain the unity of time and place and action, were falling into a similar trap. This is to be emphasized vehemently and highlighted, that this is the very point where these neo-classical critics digressed from their objective. The defects in their study of Shakespeare as a true artist seem to be the following;

1. They were studying Shakespeare in a literary vacuum, that is without a historical perspective.
2. They judged Shakespeare according to the formula prescribed by the experts of classical drama. The most solemn charge was the absence of "poetical justice" in Shakespeare’s plays.

3. These rigid men of classical literature failed to acknowledge the superb talent of character, portrayal, which Shakespeare was endowed with.

Neo-classical critical code, which was derived from the sixteenth century Italian commentary on Aristotle was alien to Shakespeare’s work. Shakespeare could not be judged by external and formal criteria of dramatic work. The application of such criteria created a dilemma for the edifying neo-classical critic. For the offensive neo-classical critic such as Rymer there was no doubt or difficulty. He applied neo-classical criteria to Shakespeare, found him wanting and so out rightly rejected him. For the good critic on the other hand Shakespeare’s work posed a problem. They found him inadequate when they judged him by these neo-classical criteria. Instinctively however, they found that Shakespeare’s work was the product of genius. In Dryden’s case we find him undecided between Shakespeare and neo-classicism. Dryden, is great when he listens to the voice of his instincts and elevates Shakespeare when the need arises and judges him without prejudice of any kind.
In Samuel Johnson’s case we find that he rejected aspects of neo-
classical dogma in favour of Shakespeare. So, to sum up one can say that neo-
classical dogma should never have been applied to Shakespeare. Those 17th and
18th century critics who had the courage not to apply these archaic notions and
have judged Shakespeare’s worth inspite of it have been given the credentials of
balanced critic and their work estimated as valuable criticism.

But in the second half of the eighteenth century the rigid
neoclassical doctrines were subjected to attack from powerful
critics such as Samuel Johnson: Aristotle’s rules gradually began
to lose their authority, and a new spirit of freedom entered
Shakespeare criticism. Johnson’s attack on the ‘unities’ in his
Preface to Shakespeare (1765) was a turning point, and when the
observance of the rules ceased to be a live issue, criticism of
Shakespeare’s plots almost disappeared. The third quarter of the
eighteenth century is the true period of transition in Shakespeare
criticism. The great controversy over the extent of his learning
had ended, the rigid canons of neoclassical criticism had largely
been discredited, and the rise of the Romantic movement, with its
love of individuality, helped to bring about a far-reaching change
of emphasis in the critical discussion of the plays: Shakespeare’s
characters emerged as the principal objects of interest to critics. A
tradition was thus established which was to be the dominant one
until well into the twentieth century.26

Before reaching a conclusion it would be only proper to emphasis yet
again, these eighteenth century men of learning adopted and cherished this
picture of Shakespeare as an untutored genius who lived in a rude society and
wrote for mean undiscriminating audience; who according to their old
fashioned view committed many faults through ignorance of what Pope called ‘the rules of writing’ however, who by his extra-ordinary natural gifts excelled all other poets or equaled the best of them.\(^{27}\)

The most notable fact about this age may have been the harsh censure that Shakespeare had to undergo. But where praise for his genius was concerned, the voice of all the eighteen century critics united and became one. Shakespeare was judged un-comparable. They failed to understand why a great writers of Shakespeare’s caliber failed, to apply these dogmas which were most important to them. This was the trend of their age and some of them could not surpass this genuine bewilderment and hence were rendered helpless. Some even took up the task of shielding and providing excuses for Shakespeare and defending him because they were naturally confused; they could not visualize beyond the boundaries of their age.

Alexander Pope’s utterance in this context has become so significant that it cannot remain unmentioned:

To judge therefore of Shakespeare by Aristotle’s rules is like trying a man by the laws of one country, who acted under those of another.\(^{28}\)
Nicholas Rowe was another eighteenth century critic of Shakespeare, who has judged him sympathetically. He himself was a practicing and successful dramatist. It was his contribution that today we have a neat, tidied up edition of the text of the plays, adding scene divisions, lists of dramatis personae, indications of locality, and so on.

Rowe has been applauded for expressing a ‘new critical mode’ in the Preface to his edition (1709) of Shakespeare:

If one undertook to examine the greatest part of these (the tragedies) by those rules which are established by Aristotle, and taken from the model of the Grecian stage, it would be no very hard task to find a great many faults, but as Shakespeare lived under a kind of mere light of Nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of those written precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a law he knew nothing of.\(^{29}\)

This same idea was enhanced by Addison in one of his spectator essays, he explains that there is “more beauty in the work of a great genius who is ignorant of the rules of art than those of a little genius who knows and observes them”\(^{30}\).

The uniformity that is found in the criticism of these neo-classical critics is really amazing. Critic after critic charges Shakespeare for lacking in dramatic art, ‘with failing to observe the moral purpose of art in allowing the wicked to prosper and the just to perish’, and also for violating decorum in language. Not
only in England but also in France Shakespeare’s violation of the rules was discussed upon and speculated.

In the second half of the 18th century Samuel Johnson was the propagator of a new spirit in Shakespeare criticism free from the binding chains of the unities. Johnson always had strictures regarding Shakespeare’s art. For instance, the charges against Shakespeare’s moral propriety was made by Samuel Johnson and extended by George Bernard Shaw in the 20th century. Johnson wholly agreed with the early criticism of the 17th and 18th century that Shakespeare as a stage dramatist should have worked with ‘artistic restraint’ and only defended him on the question of classical rules. On this issue of the unity of time place he argued very sensibly that no one considers the stage play to be real life. Hence this very issue is rendered baseless.

These men with their keen perception brought about an end to this era of judging Shakespeare according to norms he never knew about. His flight of fancy could not be shackled. Gradually as we proceed towards the end of the 18th century, it becomes obvious that the obstinacy in the doctrines of these heavy weight champions of the Augustan period causes their ultimate doom, which was self imposed in a way.
A new era in the study of Shakespeare's work was ushered, the model of Aristotle's perfection had lost its glitter and gleam. The rise of the Romantic movement brought about a change in the classical environment. The various controversies had paled into insignificance. Interest was shifted from the criticism of Shakespeare's plot to his characters.

.....Romantic movement with its love of personal individuality, helped to bring about a far-reaching change of emphasis in critical discussion of the plays: Shakespeare's characters emerged as the principal objects of interest to critics. A tradition was thus established which was to be the dominant one until well into the twentieth century.31

This century was the greatest exhibition of Shakespeare idolatry, he was pictured 'as the supreme creator of characters'. These critics went so far as to presume that character creation was one essential gift that the dramatist possessed. And hence character study became a prime subject of discussion and analysis for these critics. The seeds of this interest in Shakespeare's characters can be seen to have germinated in the last quarter of the 18th century. When interest developed in some of his main characters such as Falstaff, Iago, Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Richard III. This interest gave birth to curiosity that transformed to respect and gradually turned into awe. Shakespeare had reached the height of critical appreciation that continued to grow, of course this popularity of Shakespeare was confined merely to the unique power of
The Romantic criticism which was started as a reaction against,

"the reservations about Shakespeare of 18th century neoclassicism. The Romantic in England, France and Germany succeeded in shifting the intellectual climate of opinion about Shakespeare from something that had ranged from erratic enthusiasm in England and Germany to contempt in France, to something closer to wild adulation. But from 1815 in Germany and 1820 in England, by which times Shakespeare had become universally accepted by critics, criticism ceased to be an active or important part of contemporary literary history, it became eulogium adoring, uncurious, sonorous, and above all, redundant of the earlier decades of Coleridge and Schlegel. Not until George Bernard Shaw's iconoclastic essays appeared at the end of the century was there any abatement of adoration."32

The neo-classical attitude had met its match in the defensive stand of Mrs. Montagu and others. Even the writings of Lord Kames in 1762, accepts some deficiency 'in the mechanical part' of Shakespeare's plays, but Kames lavishes him with all praise in character delineation, nobody can surpass Shakespeare here not even 'the ancients and modern'. Mrs. Montagu deserves a better hearing since it is her initiative also, that Shakespeare is not misrepresented due to the strictures of Voltaire. In 1769 she points out in her transcription, 'In delineating character, he must be allowed far to surpass all dramatic writers'.33
Interestingly this new vision of presenting Shakespeare can also be witnessed in the work of Thomas Whately, who for the first time, felt it necessary to study Shakespeare’s character as the main subject because he felt sure they were endowed with ‘a peculiar excellence’ that belonged only to Shakespeare. He felt it vehemently that instead of roving ones observation in common and useless pursuit of intellectualism. Shakespeare’s character’s should become worthy of that notice, not only that but they must be immortalized. Throughout the end of eighteen century these critics of Shakespeare, known and obscure, had a common indulgence, that is obsession with characters.

Maurice Morgan, not to be left behind studied the character of Falstaff very profoundly in his illuminating Essay on the Dramatic character of Sir John Falstaff. This essay can be cited as a typical case of romantic discussion, perhaps first of its kind. Morgan seems intent on proving that, Falstaff, that fat knight, who appears cowardly and offensive to his readers is not so essentially. Kenneth Muir has rightly pointed out in his article “Changing Interpretations of Shakespeare,” that though Morgan,

‘treats him (Falstaff) as a real person rather than as a character in a play, his essay displays a subtle study of the text and contains some profound remarks on Shakespeare’s methods’.
Muir also clarifies that this aspect of studying character's exclusively, had existed long before these critics received a breakthrough. It appears essays were written to discuss Polonius and Hamlet, and their origin could be traced back to the theatre in the year 1735. In those years when Morgan's highlights of Falstaff's character was being discussed and speculated. However it is perceived that it was not just in defense of Falstaff’s cowardice although on the surface it may appear so. It appeals as a profound study of Shakespeare’s dramatic skill and craftsmanship. Even a historian of Ralli’s stature can not shrug him off, he acknowledges the contribution of Morgan and gives ample space to his valuable hypothesis.

Morgan while comparing Shakespeare’s character to that of the other writers feels that his characters are different and unique. They have a 'roundness and integrity' that grants a flexibility to their disposition and gives them variety and independence. He further discusses that these character seen in parts on the stage can be seen in the whole if they are smoothened out. Morgan believes that Shakespeare, in animating his character must have felt those 'varied situation' they face in plays. Morgan proceeds a step further and declares Shakespeare’s dramatic personage as ‘whole and original’ and those of other playwrights as mere copies, in other words second hand. Shakespeare is not only a poet of nature, but an exquisite artist. This credit goes to Morgan
entirely for having conferred the title of Supreme delineator, crediting him with mastery in dramatic perception.37

With the advent of Romanticism, the art of criticism had for sure become an advantage during this age as it had progressed, and the critics seemed to have attained an expertise that was not visible before. It is said about Coleridge that his writing is ‘fragmentary’ yet, he is endowed with the stature of being the topmost critic of Shakespeare among the Romantics.

As presented by Augustus Ralli, Coleridge is credited for being:

"The first and greatest of the romantic critics, he has transformed his subject. He is the moon of Shakespearean criticism, so far accompanied by only one satellite-Maurice Morgan. The greatest of the others Dryden, Pope, Johnson are but shooting stars across the darkness. If we would condense his message it is this, that life is a mystery, that the greatest mystery of all is the human soul, and that Shakespeare has done more to make darkness visible than any being who has walked with us on this planet: and that he worked his miracle with his imagination which is an originating and not a decorative faculty."38

Coleridge’s main contribution towards Shakespearian criticism was a consistent demand towards accepting every work of art according to its own organic law: His Biographia Literaria (1817) is a literary autobiography, he dedicates only a chapter here to the study of Shakespeare’s art, the rest of his work is in the form of lecture notes and records of table talk. It is important to
note here that although he begins by explaining poetry, yet actually he emerges as an expert in character depiction. He also follows in the footstep of the other critics of the last thirty years of eighteenth century. And it is this aspect of his work particularly, that leaves a strong and deep impact on the 19th century. Scholars especially Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) which carries out the expectation of the Coleridge tradition.\textsuperscript{39}

Can anyone forget his account of Hamlet’s character, he himself has confessed that ‘I have a smack of Hamlet myself if I may say so’.\textsuperscript{40} Bradley also adopted his ‘over-reflective’ manner of intellectualism while nurturing his characters. The greatest defect as pointed out by the realist school of critics, was that he completely failed to grasp the fact that Shakespeare’s play was written to be enacted on the stage and had nothing to do with real life. Alfred Harbage has paid a tribute to Coleridge in the form of an introduction and adopted a defensive posture in his conclusion. This posture he adopts because he does not agree with the adverse ‘reaction’ towards either Coleridge or Bradley, as they belong to the same tradition.\textsuperscript{41}

Coleridge is a true critic of art, his theme beauty, and his subject human nature. His is one way of talking about Shakespeare, not the only good way, but, in my opinion, the best way. Its possibilities are as inexhaustible as human nature itself, and it can save us from staleness.\textsuperscript{42}
Coleridge has often been compared with the German critic Schlegel and it is said that the English critic was affected by his brilliant writing of that time. But Coleridge has denied such a possibility and instead names Lessing for having inspired him. But yet a similarity does exist in their points of view. Harbage also takes up this contention in support of his protégé that if the likelihood of influence were to crop up at all, Morgan’s criticism was fashioned more to his style than Schlegel’s. For a negative and positive affectation Johnson was seen as a common ‘whipping boy’ for both the German and English critic.

During that time, when it was the dawn of the Romantic period, Samuel Taylor Coleridge loomed above all other connoisseurs of art. It was his hey day till the emergence of Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy 1904. Some of Coleridge’s contemporaries were also, interested in Shakespeare, but this involvement was only to serve themselves. Hence, poets such as Wordsworth, Byron and Keats have nothing significant to contribute towards Shakespeare. It is Coleridge, Lamb and Hazlitt who have promoted this trend of Romantic criticism in Shakespeare.

In reply to Johnson’s censure of Shakespeare’s moral and verbal grossness Coleridge exhibits Shakespeare’s language as being ‘poetic and
integral' and not just descriptive. He has de-emphasized the unity of time and place and instead sees the plays as having unity of feeling. This is why perhaps, Alfred Harbage gives credit to Coleridge for having to some extent being responsible for 'the programme of the school of historical criticism', even though this happened in the 20th century. Harbage extends his boundary a little further and declares.

He also,....forecast the so-called 'new criticism'- in his assumption of complete integration in the artistic ‘construct’; his textual scrutinies, his conviction of the significance of puns and word-play, and his concern with ‘imagery’.

For Harbage, Coleridge is the emperor of all that he surveys. Before Coleridge can be summed up, it should be noted that his criticism of Shakespeare was based on the following insight:

First of all, he emphasized the philosophical nature of Shakespeare’s drama. Shakespeare appealed to Coleridge not merely as an imitator but also as an original thinker. He accentuated upon the organic nature of Shakespeare’s plays and not the mechanical as done by the neo-classical men of learning. He upholds this doctrine that Shakespeare’s plays are the product of imagination. And Imagination for him plays various roles in the formation of Shakespeare as an artist. It is a unifying agent and creates symbols. Coleridge therefore excels all other Romantic critics, when he suggest that for the judgment of
Shakespeare one should not depend on external criteria but rather inner reflection. Therefore, he rejects atomistic and adopts organic approach.  

This presentation of Coleridge, was a sure reflection of the age he lived in. The current literary form of his time was based on subjective poetry that reflected or gave expression to one’s inner feelings. Hence Coleridge considered Shakespeare’s irregularities’ as expression of very deep feelings and thoughts. Shakespeare has been universally accepted as a discerning psychologist and a philosopher with depth but our Romantic critic can not leave things there. He depicts Shakespeare as an artist above all and his skill or craftsmanship is not ‘mechanical’; no, not even ‘true to life’ but it is ‘unconscious’ or ‘organic’ and not maneuvered. Coleridge, as a critic of this universal genius, has to play his role very seriously and in his enthusiasm and awe of this great dramatist, he even adopts the role of an interpreter. Hamlet is not a stage character, he has to be personified, it is assumed that Shakespeare speaks through him just like the fashion prevalent among the poets of that age. Shakespeare’s sonnets were supposed to have ‘unlocked’ his heart to his readers, this interpretation came from Wordsworth who has traced the development of his intellectual capability, through a long poem.
It has been noted from time to time that there were certain German admirers of Shakespeare who were diligently working on the other side of the border. But they were in the pursuit of a common enthusiasm. Although the scope of this thesis is limited to the Englishmen. But they have inevitably made themselves heard, they have crept into the world of Shakespeare criticism. To quote from the Columbia Encyclopedia:

The German critics Gotthold Lessing and Augustus Wilhelm Von Schlegel saw Shakespeare as a romantic, different in type from the classical poets, but on equal footing. Schlegel first elucidated the structural unity of Shakespeare's plays, a concept of unity that is developed much more completely by the English poet and critic Samuel Coleridge. While Schlegel and Coleridge were establishing Shakespeare's plays as artistic, organic unities, such 19th century critics as the German George Gervinus and the Irishman Edward Dowden were trying to see positive moral tendencies in the plays.48

William Hazlitt, also an English critic of the 19th century has carried out the tradition of emphasizing character study in Shakespeare. This custom, was started by Samuel Johnson. But it is the Romantics who developed and cultivated this art of analyzing and dissecting characters. In Hazlitt's point of view he accounted:

....each Shakespearean character to be unique, but found a unity through analogy and gradation of characterization. While A.C. Bradley marks the culmination of romantic, 19th century character study, he also suggested that the plays had unifying imagistic
atmosphere, an idea that was further developed in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{49}

While Kenneth Muir has classed Hazlitt with the best of Shakespeare critics. Ralli positions him as 'the third of the great critics. William Hazlitt in his books Characters of Shakespeare's plays (1817) conveys actually what he feels about the characters in Shakespeare and according to a critic of the Romantic era Mr. Jeffrey, feels that, Hazlitt does not explain what he knows about Shakespeare or his writing but likes to project his own feelings about them—and why he feels so. Yet Hazlitt is commendable because it is he who for the first time tried to give us a full account of nearly all of Shakespeare's plays and character. His discussion on Macbeth and Twelfth Night is worth reading. He has also emphasized the enjoyment and love of Shakespeare's play in the form of poetry.\textsuperscript{50}

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century there was much excellent criticism on Shakespeare. The two writers who are particularly important during this period are William Hazlitt and Thomas De Quincey. In his essay: 'On the knocking at the Gate in Macbeth', (1823) he has chosen just one moment, in one play to illustrate Shakespeare’s genius, which has given him celebrity status. This essay is a fine example of Romantic criticism, worth comparing to Lamb and Coleridge. De Quincey through this single essay, has
presented his spiritual journey through Shakespearean poetry. His writing is a sure tribute to Shakespeare’s art.

This enlighting journey through Shakespeare’s critical world and especially when some of his important Romantic critics, are being discussed, this highlight will remain incomplete if Edward Dowden’s, contribution is not mentioned. Hence he needs to be mentioned emphatically since his book Shakespeare: His Mind and Art (1875) has carried its popularity right into the 20th century. It was Dowden’s conception entirely to divide Shakespeare’s “art life” into four periods: the years of experiment; the period when “he was gaining a sure grasp of the positive facts of life.” This phase of Shakespeare’s life according to Dowden reflects itself in his Henry IV plays and later in Much Ado About Nothing, As you like It, and Twelfth Night; then the period of the great tragedies; and the last, or the tranquil period; when Shakespeare, after some years of turmoil, reached serenity. Henceforth Dowden by projecting Shakespeare’s mental development tried to show that his plays written in different phase of his life showed the emotional transition in Shakespeare’s own life. Dowden’s work itself is being projected as a good specimen of Victorian criticism at its best, by the other critics. However, Dowden tends to interpret Shakespeare’s enhancement as an artist in a cool and calculated attempt,
forgetting that the external influence could have also played a role in his evolution. To quote his exact words from his analysis of *As You Like It*:

Shakespeare, when he wrote this idyllic play was himself in his forest of Arden. He had ended one great ambition—the historical plays—and not yet commenced his tragedies. It was a resting place. He sends his imagination into woods to find repose...

After the trumpet-tones of *Henry V*. comes the sweet pastoral strain, so bright, so tender. Must it not be all in keeping? Shakespeare was not trying to control his melancholy. When he needed to do that, Shakespeare confronted his melancholy very passionately, and looked it full in the face. Here he needed refreshment, a sunlight tempered by forest-boughs, a breeze upon his forehead, a stream murmuring in his ears.\(^\text{52}\)

Even today Dowden's work is capable of inciting interest. Dowden's belief that Shakespeare has revealed his thought and feelings in his work is not shared by Sidney Lee. In his book 'Life'-Lee does not find any similarity between Shakespeare the artist and Shakespeare as a person. He was of the opinion that Shakespeare besides being a playwright was primarily a bread earner for his daughters. Hence, the success that he achieved at the theatre meant more to him then his 'literary attainments'.\(^\text{53}\)

Lytton Strachey in his well known essay *Shakespeare's Final Period* (1903) has made fun of Dowden for having presented the literary journey of Shakespeare in such childish words 'in the depths' and 'on the heights'.
Actually he wants to prove the Victorian critic wrong by his argument that in Shakespeare's later years his mood was not grim, not even serene but it was more due to boredom and disgust and his spirits when they soared created this 'visions of loneliness' and due to the change that Dowden assumes. Strachey's penetrating, brilliant essay may have had a shattering effect but Dowden's contribution towards an understanding of Shakespeare cannot be underrated. Kenneth Muir in his Shakespeare Survey has stated that perhaps:

"Dowden was certainly a sentimentalist, but it is nevertheless arguable that he was near to the truth."54

The major work of these Victorian critics in a way has been to establish Shakespeare's chronology. Another important fact about this period is that it produced no major critic of the stature of Coleridge. Another aspect of Shakespeare that interested them immensely was his morality. These critics believed fervently in Shakespeare as an instructor.

A.C. Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) is the completion to the criticism of the 19th century. He may have come after Hazlitt and Morgan but his work was the best of the Romantic school of critics. In fact in Muir's words, "Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy was the culmination of nineteenth century criticism."55
Since this thesis concerns itself with the impact that Bradley made on the world of Shakespearean criticism, this study on Bradley will typify his definite approach and exemplify his strength and his weakness.

It must not be forgotten that it was initially Coleridge who set a trend for character analysis and then Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy finished off this tradition with a flourish and he was definitely the last of the major critic of the nineteenth century. Shakespearean Tragedy had been and still is a very impressive book. And its writer Professor A.C. Bradley is remembered as the greatest Shakespearean critic. The following lines presents the Professor and projects his personality as a critic:

He combines wide philosophic outlook with grasp of detail, and synthetic power with analytic. In treating a single character he never forgets its relation to the impression produced by the whole play. His mind is powerful enough to cope with the entire world which Shakespeare has hung in chains over chaos, and it is fundamentally poetic. His analysis is effective in so far as it is helped by memories and associations stirred up by the poetry of Shakespeare. He is never merely philosophic, like some of the critics we have previously considered. There are occasions when imagination partly retires and yields place to a more purely scientific method,...

Bradley’s criticism will be discussed at some length in the third chapter of this dissertation and a summary will be presented about his ideas and the
points he has made and his particular contribution towards the understanding of Shakespeare will be expounded.

But it is important and worthwhile not to forget that Bradley belonged to a certain tradition, with definite background, he was not out of time and space. Hence, his main interest was not just explaining. "The substance of Shakespearean Tragedy" or endeavoring to answer the question: "what is Shakespearean Tragedy"? But the dimension with which he works has a definite profound purpose.

It was to the richness and profundity of Shakespeare’s characters that Bradley above all responded: the elaborate springs of their conduct and the elaborate and brilliant plays of their consciousness. Here he is at his best, often both penetrating and exhilarating; and this interest also helps to place Bradley in his own age or rather, at the end of an age, in the period of the 19th century novel with its elaborate and often magnificent development of the individual character.

The significance of Shakespearean Tragedy further gets amplified, when one takes into account that this book is a sure example of impressionism in Shakespearean criticism. E.E. Stoll was a declared opponent and he vehemently confronted the predominant school of character analysis, illustrated by the criticism of A.C. Bradley and argued for an examination of the plays in the context of the period. Hence, it is aimed here to study Bradley and Stoll in the
Shakespearean context very deeply and profoundly, so that both these critics and their works could be reviewed, separately and studied comparatively.

His work is of a limited scope: a book on Shakespearean Tragedy (1904), which discusses Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and King Lear, essays on ‘The Rejection of Falstaff’ (1902) and Anthony and Cleopatra (1906), and a lecture on Coriolanus (1912).

Still Bradley has been applauded by many scholars as being the last and the best of the Romantic school of critics.

Even today the book ‘Shakespearean Tragedy’ remains incomparable. It is a very compact, handy book, and no doubt very intelligently written. The book’s opening chapter itself is very revealing. It creates an impression of opening new avenues or vistas in the study of Shakespeare’s Tragedies. All this will be discussed at length in the chapter devoted to Bradley; i.e., the third chapter.

Bradley, does appear to be tracing a concept of tragedy, but running parallel with his contention of what a Shakespearean Tragedy has to be; there is another motive or interest, a hidden intention of tracing a concept of tragedy that agrees very well with his interpretation of the four major tragedies where the main characters are concerned.58
The 'realistic' or the historical school of critics were not the only reaction, which was initiated against Bradley. This was further propelled by the 'poetic' critics, critics like L.C. Knight and F.R. Leavis, this brick batting continued to be hurled at Bradley till the sixties. Bradley's reputation as a mere psychological critic, no longer is a threat today since his reputation as a worthy critic of Shakespeare has been established, having been tested by the changing interpretation of Shakespeare's criticism. It still remains a powerful and profound book to reckon with.\textsuperscript{59}

This study of Shakespearean criticism and its major critics, aims to reveal, that these critics would not have survived without the existence of another. If Johnson, and the neo-classical critics were the 'whipping boy' of Coleridge and other critics, Bradley in the 19\textsuperscript{th}, 20\textsuperscript{th} century became an object of ridicule for the champions of the 'realist' drama, the major objection coming from Stoll and Schucking. The 'poetic' critics have not spared Bradley either. L.C. Knight in his essay 'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth'? (1933) has condemned Bradley and his followers strongly. Yet these same critics who have charged. Bradley for such an offence have frequently, indulged themselves with the perusal of character study. Wilson Knight argues against this system of character depiction in his preface to the \textit{Wheel of Fire}. But when it comes to his own essay he himself is writing about Lucio as if he is a boy next door.
"His wit is often illuminating, often amusing, sometimes rather disgusting. He is never wicked, sometimes almost lovable, but terribly dangerous."  

However, it is not as if these critics were rejecting Bradley on an individual and a personal level. It was a concerted move and a rejection of the tradition itself that Bradley was supporting through his Shakespearean Tragedy. These critics wanted to over throw the long established habit of the 'character-chasers'.

These opponent critics of the 20th century definitely must have gauged the dangers of such a speculative approach. Because in the true sense of the word this was not interpretation. But they were to blame for the over interpretation which was one very obvious kind of indulgence that aroused many objections.

Bradley’s predecessors The critics who were Bradley’s senior like Morgan and Coleridge did not heed the warning of these critics and even most of Bradley’s successors had fallen into the trap. If we follow the history of Shakespeare criticism keenly it becomes obvious how, this sort of Impressionistic criticism was paving the path for some very notorious kind of contribution to Shakespeare criticism. Interest in characters incited by Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy is responsible for breeding some very degrading kind
of literature illustrated in Mary Cowden Clark’s ‘Girlhood of Shakespeare’s Heroines.’

Stoll’s main objection was regarding the conditions and the conventions of the Elizabethan stage, which Bradley completely forgets. It was indeed Stoll’s keen observation, when he pointed out that Bradley found in discrepancies in Shakespeare’s plays that he terms as faults.’ Stoll in all his writings has upheld this contention that the defects that these critics have interpreted as ‘problem’ in the play and characters is no more than legitimate conventions of poetic drama.

Even Kenneth Muir who tried, with all his might to defend Bradley in his Fifty years of Shakespearean criticism.

‘...it may be said fairly enough that he was sometimes led to consider the character as real people rather than as imaginary characters in a drama.”

Although when in 1904, this book was first published, it was received with tremendous applause and it definitely made an enormous impact. Because during that time people did not know any better. Bradley did not encounter any stiff competition. When we look back in retrospective affect he can now be acclaimed as a giant among pygmies.
Hence his work was hailed as 'the wisest and truest interpretation of the plays that had ever appeared.' During that time it became the fashionable craze of all other critics to follow in his step. But after the advent of historical scholarship in Shakespeare's studies, the critics were now better equipped to understand the works of Shakespeare. Hence the following insufficiency was found in Bradley's work. Although the flaws found in Shakespearean Tragedy was common to his time and age.

1. Bradley writes like Coleridge in a historical vacuum.

2. He over-psychologies Shakespeare. He makes Shakespearean characters psychologically more coherent then they actually are.

3. He totally ignores the theatrical and dramatic condition of Elizabethan drama. At times his approach becomes anachronistic.

4. Taking a hint from Coleridge Bradley has philosophised 'Shakespearean Tragedy'.

Nevertheless the purpose of this research is to reinterpret Bradley according to the twenty first century and not merely to point out his inadequacy as a critic of Shakespeare. While highlighting Bradley, it is also the contention of this work to stress that Shakespeare cannot be studied in oblivion of the past.
Since Edgar Elmer Stoll began writing from 1907, it is mostly assumed that he was writing only in reaction towards Bradley whose Shakespearean Tragedy was published in 1904. But in fact it is Stoll who made us remember that besides being a universal genius, a poet, a delineator of character, a naturalist, he was above all a performing artist and a playwright. Shakespeare also like any other men needed to earn his bread and butter. Since his plays were written to be staged, he often had to dispense with ‘realism’ and make do with artifice, craftsmanship etc. Stoll was from the very beginning concerned about the critics forgetting that the characters in Shakespeare’s plays were primarily dramatic personae and not real people. Stoll has done Shakespeare criticism a commendable service. Of course the task he undertook of restoring Shakespeare study to his time and tradition was Herculean. But he diligently worked towards this objective and the result was a long series of books. And to say it in Kenneth Muir’s words ‘...and if they (the books of Stoll) have not always been convincing their impacts has been salutary’. In the fourth chapter his work will be illuminated and the useful function he has performed articulated. Yet Stoll opts to remain unsung and un-applauded by his fellow colleague, all this shall be discussed.

Stoll may have left a valuable insight behind him of studying Shakespeare in his ‘real world’. But criticism has since progressed a lot and
there are new avenues that are being explored. Stoll’s work is now criticized as being incomplete and insufficient since he could not trace the genius of Shakespeare’s art that made him a more successful playwright than his contemporaries. In the chapter devoted to Stoll all these matters shall be discussed. These questions will also be dealt with what prevented Stoll from becoming as well known as Bradley. Why although, he does lend a keen ear to the poetry of Shakespeare’s verses, it is not perceived by the other scholars of Shakespeare’s criticism. He has definitely contributed towards the study of symbolism and imagery. Since there is a point of view that the historical scholarship may have been one of the factors responsible for the rise of the New Criticism.

Stoll’s failure to make a mark in the history of Shakespeare criticism in the 20th century may have been because he was overwhelmed by the sudden upsurge of the poetic school of thought.

From here one enters into a distinctly new phase in the history of Shakespearean criticism, a phase that undoubtedly has rejected Bradley’s approach and welcomes instead the naturalistic approach with a booming interest in the imagery and symbolism of Shakespearean plays.
This totally new dimension in the study of Shakespeare's works embodies forth in the year 1930.

R.A. Foakes in his brilliant essay 'Suggestions for a New Approach to Shakespeare's Imagery' informs us, "In spite of a variety of methods and aims this view that a play should be regarded primarily as a poem has been the governing principle of nearly all writings on Shakespeare's imagery." 65

The first three decades of twentieth century is reported to have explored the theatrical conditions of Shakespearean criticism to its hearts content. Next another set of critics dwelled deep into the language and style of Shakespearean plays and sonnets. This investigation into Shakespeare's language cleared the way for deeper explorations of the imagery and symbolism not only for aesthetic reason but 'historic terms'.

Although Kenneth Muir gives credit to Walter Whiter for pioneering. Poetic movement or the New Criticism through his work 'A specimen of a commentary'; 66 but this did not arouse any interest in the world of criticism.

M.C. Bradbrook also discusses this approach under the title; Symbolism, Imagery and Ambivalence. However, Bradbrooks writing conveys that although in 1794 'Walter Whiter had anticipated this need to interpret the similes and metaphors of Shakespeare's works but,...' was foreshadowed by Coleridge in
some of the most famous chapters of Biographia Literaria, but not
developed. Perhaps these scholars were not competent enough to accomplish
this work of interpretation. It seems that critics tended to follow the prevalent
trend to be on the safe side.

All at once in the 1930, as if there was a prior agreement, works relating
to this aspect of style started getting printed. Una Ellis-Fermors in her
pamphlet, some Recent Research in Shakespeare’s Imagery mentions many
other originators of this approach. She is important and needs mention because
she earnestly tried to present a combination of the work of scholars such as
Spurgeon, Knight and Clemen.

Most importantly, this approach came to be recognized as the ‘New
criticism’ and its adherents are know as the ‘New critics’. A number of critics
ranging from Muir to Bethall, O.J. Compbell’s, ‘Shakespeare and the “new”
critics, W.T. Hastings, ‘The new critics of Shakespeare’ have all contributed
towards the understanding of this new approach. The name of R.A. Foakes
cannot be left behind, his article illustrates the very conceptual understanding of
this criticism. “Suggestions for a New Approach to Shakespeare’s Imagery.”

The champions of this movement were the following as presented in
Bradbrook’s survey:
"The work of Caroline Spurgeon beginning with a couple of essays in 1930 and 1931, culminated in her book Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us (1935). It was preceded by the writings of Colin Still, F.C. Kolbe and Elizabeth Holmes, and contemporary with those of Wilson Knight and Wolfgang Clemen.\(^6\)

A detailed study of their method, the application of poetic imagery to Shakespeare's language, the limitation of their style, and the individual contribution of these 'New Critics'. Even the background that compelled them to select this absolutely new method will be discussed in the chapter no. V. Most importantly, prominence has not been given to any one critic in this discussion since it is believed that they all together consist of this novel approach and hence remain indispensable.

According to the logical and reasoning temperament of the current scientific era it never accepts without raising doubts, hence critics, have been vociferous in questioning the validity of this method of studying imagery and symbolism.

Such critics who have achieved great acclaim in analyzing the details of Shakespeare's Imagery, shall be highlighted. The contribution of Miss Spurgeon, L.C. Knight, Wilson Knight, Cleanth Brooks and to some extent
Wolfang Clemen have caused ripples in the world of Shakespeare’s criticism, hence, their illuminating work shall be highlighted here.

This movement above all saw Shakespeare as a poet. That Shakespeare had been a playwright and an actor as well, was of no consequence to these image hunters. This is the reason why reviewers observe this approach as a reaction to the Historical school of thought, who have laid excessive emphasis on the study of Elizabethan Jacobean tradition and also the theatrical situation of Shakespeare’s age and time.

Many other factors were also responsible for the poetic school to have made its appearance. It can be said to have flourished under the patronage of Eliot and Yeats. The all pervading, influential critical theories propounded by Eliot, had a definite impact on the study of dramatic imagery as a new development. There were some poets like T.E. Hulme who were under the impact of Mallarme and the symbolist movement that had come from France. So much so that it was given the form of a book by Herbert Reads, which was much further enhanced by Robert Graves. The most intense impact could be felt on the powerful work of I.A. Richards. It needs to be mentioned that this movement was totally independent and did not depend on Shakespeare for its existence. Even T.S. Eliot’s writing was for general use, he may have taken
Shakespeare as an example here and there. But the impact of his writing on the 17th century’s style of verse was felt on Shakespeare’s criticism. Even Richards when he wrote his Principles of Literary Criticism in 1925, it was the playwright from Elizabethan time whose writings was selected and quoted as an example when he wanted to illustrate a model. F.R. Leavis undertook to write about the ‘texture of language essential to poetry’ he would seek confirmation from Shakespeare’s verses when ever he had to endorse a point of view, since he knew that this genius of a man had stood the test of time.

Another man responsible for this change from character analysis to poetic study: has declared with great emphasis in ‘How many children had Lady Macheth?’ (1933): that Shakespeare could be understood only after the study of rhythm and imagery is applied to Shakespeare.

The first quarter of the Twentieth century had given us a dramatist Shakespeare, the credit goes entirely to the toils and tribulation of Stoll, Schuking and others like Dover Wilson and Granville Barker. It was the unique achievement of the critics who came after the thirty’s, under the epithet of ‘New criticism’ to have presented Shakespeare as a ‘dramatic poet’.

In their eagerness, these writers tried to explore and exploit situations that never was before. In their hands Shakespeare’s characters became obscure
because the realm of realism had been crossed. They belonged to no one and no where, their very purpose became metaphorical. A very apt illustration of the imagery investigated in Shakespeare’s character can be found in Mikhail M. Morozov’s presentation.71

This thesis confines itself to tracing the impact of the New critics of the 1930 onwards. The demand for improvement in the understanding of Shakespeare does not end here. This search for Shakespeare’s play as a dramatic poem gives birth to more challenging and modern ways of examining Shakespeare’s works. As we commence further into the twentieth century; the study of Shakespeare’s imagery and style starts losing its appeal and the need for a more ‘comprehensive and interpretative work appears to be the first priority.’ The time is ripe for a volume which should stand with Chambers on the stage, with Pollard and McKerrow and Grey on the texts.”72

The interest in Shakespeare’s use of symbolic language has extended its tentacles to a more novel avenue of approaches. Among them, the most noted are the psychological, anthropological, mythological and Jungian metaphysics, and the religious aspect which considers the Christian point of view.73

The Freudian psychology has given the psychologist of the recent times some food for thought. The critics of Shakespeare have now been provided with
ample reason to explain Shakespeare’s character’ with borrowed new tools and terminology. The worthy sample of such an approach can be gleaned from Ernest Jones, Hamlet and Oedipus.74 The delay in Hamlet’s action to carry out his duty as a revenge to his father’s murder, is seen by Dr. Jones as an ‘Oedipus complex.’ Hamlet because of all these confusion is presented as a living person by him and the real life, psychological laws and real life behaviour is applied to a dramatic personae in order to justify his stance as a psychological critic.

The Formalistic approach went under the banner of New Criticism the advent of this approach has already been discussed and more space shall be provided as the thesis progresses further. This formalist approach was not exclusively applied to the study of Shakespeare criticism, only but the impact was felt on all the genre and was not the achievement of an individual only but was a general movement of the 1920’s.

The Russian formalists for the first time in the 1920s gave the doctrine of formalism. They felt that poetry had to be studied as a special kind of language and a lot of concentration focused on its use of metaphor, metonymy, rhyme, and alteration. This legacy of the Russian formalists was brought to the United States by some emigrants of this school of thought, some of them like Rene Welleck and Roman Jakobson brought this profound influence to the
States which gave birth to the existence of the New Criticism during the 1940s and 1950s. Its repercussion was felt not only on Shakespeare’s work but all literary criticism.

Indeed all these transformation from one place to another, and the replacement of literary genres is mind boggling? There was a time when the history of criticism was a part of literature and Shakespeare, the supreme artist. But today at every step one has to know what a certain critic has said about a particular work and how he also was refuted, the theme and style, the theory that he projects has to be understood. There are critics today who freely think it is not their job just to interpret a work of art of a certain artist but they have gone ‘beyond interpretation’. They leave a feeling of helplessness in the students mind and the readers estimate. The critics seem to have grown in stature so much so that their theories and reviews have dwarfed the real work of the artist.

The 1970s saw the emergence of the outburst of the theory of Deconstruction. This has resulted in many other theories and methodologies cropping up and making their presence felt in the criticism of Shakespeare. Derrida the propagator of this idea can be explained by M.H. Abrams: Deconstruction as applied in the criticism of literature designates a theory and
practice of reading which claims to ‘subvert’ or ‘undermine’ the assumption that the system of language provides adequate grounds to determine the meanings of a text.”

The climax in this state of deconstruction is reached which is described as ‘Aporia,’ a term derived from Greek, which has best been described by Shakespeare in Hamlet’s soliloquy ‘to be or not to be,’ by the followers of Deconstruction theory. An irresolvable logical difficulty that becomes a reference for this ‘Aporia’ of Derrida. A definite departure from the rules of logic that is applied when interpreting a text. According to this theory a critic is free to choose his direction, it’s an affirmative state with multiple choice. The theory of Deconstruction is an eye opener. Its scope is very vast. It is a startling revelation, that the aporia creates a new aporia in a never ending process of creation.

The advent of structuralism and post structuralism has changed even our ways of reading. I.A. Richards and many others like Northrop Frye, Terrence Hawkes and Roland Barthes have revolutionized our very ways of even reading a page or a passage. ‘Structuralism, Deconstruction, Gender-Theory, New Historicism, Reader-Response Criticism and the Speech Act theory- these are the subjects taught and studied, discussed and debated and not the plays and
poems of the great creative artist. Hence, we can sum up that excessive use of any theory or approach is not justified and one should strike a balance.

No matter which school of thought the critics belonged to, they have all turned to Shakespeare's work when in need of specific example in order to explain their shapeless and obscure ideas. Harry Levin informs us just how even the 'literary gospel' of our time Anatomy of Criticism is compelled to make such a statement in order to present a value-judgement. 'Shakespeare, we say, was one of a group of English dramatists working around 1600 and also one of the great poets of the world.'

Mr. Levin takes offence and thinks this statement to be some kind of a sarcasm upon Shakespeare's greatness. In spite of what Mr. Frye may personally think about Shakespeare, the fact remains that this practicing 'structuralist' was drawing illustration from Shakespeare freely than from any other writers. And Mr. Harry Levin points out, (in his zeal to defend Shakespeare's primacy) that Shakespeare gets mentioned on 209 pages by Mr. Northrop Frye. Shakespeare's reputation increases by the growing years. It does not matter how harsh or crude critics can be, they have always used him to polish their own insight and left him bereft. But Shakespeare has come out with flying colours and the proof lies in the ever bulging editions of bibliographies
monographs, articles, translations, productions and the scholarly works of professors and students which are getting multiplied day by day.

The perusal of the Shakespearian survey No.51 should definitely make us aware of the change in the atmosphere of Shakespearean criticism. Shakespeare is no longer an Elizabethan Jacobean playwright or even an Englishman. He has transcended all barriers. He has become international: ‘...that is to say, that Shakespeare binds nations together, but that each national culture transmutes what it receives and enhances that totality in which it shares.”

Shakespeare no longer can be found only in the pages of critics, but his plays are more and more being performed in the theatres. He can be watched on the screen, and in the film world too. John Russell Brown, a prolific writer of the present time, designates Shakespeare with the name of ‘International currency’. Mr. Brown very simply tells us that Shakespeare’s universality is never going to end. Since this author who lived four hundred years ago is still being performed in the theatres more than any other playwright and that too, all around the world.

The most respected theatre directors turn repeatedly to Shakespeare’s scripts as if nothing modern has so fired their imagination. Giorgio Strehler Ariane Mnouchkine, Peter Brook, Peterstein, Suzeuki Tadashi, Robert Lepage: all these, each from a
different country, have mined Shakespeare repeatedly for productions that are startling in effect, contentiously modern, and, often, sensuously beautiful as well.

If, the poetic school of critics were to be consulted regarding this continuous popularity of Shakespeare, they will definitely say that the merit lies in the poetry that he wrote. The linguist may claim, the language that Shakespeare used, that is the example of how the superb English language has worked wonders for him. But other poets and playwrights have used this language but they have not crossed the boundaries of time, place and culture.

What Shakespeare had written for one of his characters can be applied to him too:

“All the world’s a stage….”

The process of defining and redefining Shakespeare’s work has become quite a profitable industry for the Europeans to perpetuate their brand of Literary preponderance and domination.
NOTES: CHAPTER- 1


2. For example ed. L.F. Dean has divided Critics into 'the Shakespeare-as-a-poet' one and 'the Shakespeare-as-a-dramatist' ones. Anne Ridle prefers to call them 'the theatrical and the Linguistic.'


4. Kenneth Muir in his article, 'Fifty Years of Shakespearean Criticism' *Shakespeare Survey*, 4 (1951). Uses categories such as 'Bradley and Bradleyitis', *Approaches to Shakespeare*, etc.


6. Ibid., p. 289.

7. Shakespeare’s Encyclopaedia, p. 156.

8. The *Columbia Encyclopaedia*, Search result from WWW google Sixth Edition © 2001, Colombia University Press.


Ralli himself has freely made use of the Shakespeare's Allusion Book. Which was the only reliable source available.


17. All these information's have been collected from various Encyclopaedia's such as Encyclopaedia Of Colombia. History of Shakespeare's criticism etc.; Shakespeare's Encyclopaedia, George Saintsbury's Criticism of Rymer, this discussion is from Shakespeare Encyclopaedia, Ibid. p. 155.


19. Ibid, Tragedies of the last Age 1678 and Short view of Tragedy, 1692-3.

20. D. Nichol Smith, Ibid. See also Ralli Vol. I.


27. A New Companion to Shakespeare's Studies. Ibid., P. 40.


30. See A. Ralli's *A History of Shakespearean Criticism*, Vol. I. He has very dexterously followed the trail of Shakespeare's critical opinion not only in England but France and Germany as well.

31. The *Shakespearean Scene*; Ibid, p. 2.


34. Ibid.

35. See *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, 1777, for a better understanding of Morgann's Stance cited in D. Nichol Smith, Ibid.


37. In the pages of P. Murray one feels, Morgan has been given an accurate assessment. He mentions Morgann's essay on Falstaff as '...in many ways representative of the whole tradition of character analysis, on which it had a strong 'influence' significantly enough Bradley has also declared that there was 'no better piece of Shakespeare criticism in the world'. (p.6).


39. See *Shakespeare Criticism* pp. 213, 220, 269.


41. This 'reaction' that Harbage has mentioned in his introduction on Coleridge is regarding Stoll and Schucking of whom he discusses in the same vein.


43. Ibid.

44. *Shakespearean Encyclopaedia*, p. 156.
45. Coleridge on Shakespeare, Ibid., p. 28.

46. Ibid.

47. See Ed. Terence Hawke, Coleridge on Shakespeare also see T.M. Raysor’s edition (1930) it is also in estimable.


49. Ibid.


51. In the World of Continental Criticism it is reported that Brandes development could be linked to that of Dowden. Since he also studies Shakespeare’s, progress in art according to the changes in his life. Ibid. p. 82-83.

52. Dowden Edward, Shakespeare: A Critical study of His Mind and Art. Bradley as a critic of Shakespeare attains significance since Bradley has admitted in his Shakespearean Tragedy that he is entirely indebted to Dowden and very much influenced by him.


54. Ibid, p. 2.

55. Ibid, p. 3.


58. See Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy; (London: Macmillon 1985).

59. Art and Artifice, 1933 along with Stoll in all of his writings, G.W. Knights in his Wheel of Fire (1930) and also L.C. Knight in his most famous essay ‘How many Children had Lady Macbeth’ (1933) have all assailed Bradley for his interest in character analysis.
60. Wilson Knight, op. lit., p. 91, L.C. Knight op. cit., p. 68.


64. Shakespeare Survey 4 (1951) Ibid. p. 12.


66. This book was published in 1794. It carried an exploration of similes and metaphors. But perhaps because of the title, it went unnoticed.


69. Cited from the Preface, G.W. Knights; The Wheel of Fire, 1930; See also The Imperial Theme 1931; The Shakespeare Tempest, 1932, Shakespeare Bilder (1936) by Clemen have all had an impact in this new change that swept Shakespeare’s criticism into prominence.

70. L.C. Knight’s, this influential essay of his has been incorporated in his book Exploration reprinted in 1946.


73. For the Religious aspect of Shakespeare’s criticism see P. Murray Ibid., p. 86-126.


79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.
CHAPTER – II

A COMPARATIVE CRITICISM OF HAMLET BARDLEY, STOLL AND W. KNIGHT

Hamlet is that play of Shakespeare that stands apart from all other tragedies, for Hamlet is not like the others. May be he had been projected as an ideal hero one without the tragic flaw. Even today Hamlet is an enigma. A breath taking variety of questions have been asked and also answered. These enigmas concerning Hamlet has become the subject for battles among the literary critics of all genres. Yet no one can deny that we all have a tinge of Hamlet in us.

All great critics even of the stature of Voltaire, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Goethe, Schlegel, Coleridge, Bradley, Stoll, T.S. Eliot, Dover Wilson, Spurgeon and both G.W. Knight and L.C. Knight have contributed to enriching the interpretation of this excellent and exquisite work of art. Hamlets criticism, needless to say, is the quintessence of some of the most accomplished critical writings in the European world.

"The range of this criticism is vast, for almost every viable critical approach or method or school has its major representative in the history of Hamlet criticism."

Therefore the students, the teachers and intellectuals of English literature, this proposed study of the criticism of Hamlet serves in obtaining a double purpose, not only does it enrich and enhance our enjoyment and comprehension of the play but also accomplishes the deed of keeping the interest in this work of art and its creator, alive and active.
Further, I wish to make it clear from the very beginning that it is not the aim of this dissertation to probe into such controversies and questions that are a matter of discussion and dissention among the men of learning from the late eighteen century till the present time. However, the matters of discord will gradually be disclosed as one proceeds further into the discussion. Some of the controversies are the following:

Is Hamlet a problem play?

Is it a Tragedy?

To indulge in such analysis and calculation shall result in deviating from the path that has been chosen in this particular chapter. And in the words of an anonymous author in the Listener. “Every fresh critic who sets out to define the intentions of the author of Hamlet ends up in his own particular dead-ends in queer-street.”

A great deal of research and investigation has already been accomplished on this single play of Shakespeare and yet one can never ascertain where the study of Hamlet can lead us because the uncertainties are considerable. Therefore it is not my design to just present a narration or the result of the findings based on the speculation of the plays. In fact my endeavor here shall not even be a clear cut scientific study but rather the focus shall be to present an elucidation of the basic issue that has resulted in a contention. The belief, practice, supposition and the dissent of Bradley, Stoll and G.W. Knight as a new critic shall be highlighted.

Needless to mention that it is necessary to compare and contrast Stoll with Bradley and the New Critics and with many others of his colleagues and
opponents. This evaluative study shall further yield a better grasp of Bradleys, Stolls and Wilson Knights, commitment to their particular doctrine of Shakespeare's study.

As from the very beginning from chapter-I of this work, this fact has been recurrently emphasized by scholars that a work of art no matter to which field it belongs, just cannot exist in a void of nothingness, it has to have a solid basis, this factual point of view cannot be denied. So this present study of the criticism of Hamlet, hopes to place it in the proper perspective rather then just presenting a detailed commentary.

The purpose of this chapter is not to present a survey of the critical appreciation of Hamlet but the focus will be on rather a comparative study of the critics mentioned above i.e. Bradley, Stoll and the New Critics.

If Coleridge's insight is reflected in Bradley then Stoll can be grouped with some other critics who have not wanted Shakespeare to be displaced from his theme and conventions and his surroundings. These critics who have been found to be often grouped together or mentioned as historical critics are L.L. Schuckung and E.E. Stoll, Theodore Spencer and Lily Campbell.

Wilson Knight and L.C. Knight; C. Spurgeon, William Empson, T.s. Eliot and F.R.Leavis are together known as, pioneers and guiding influence of the new criticism in Shakespeare. Their progressive idea, study of image, symbolism would be an evolution in the field of Shakespeare criticism.

Bradley's lectures in his book, 'Shakespearean Tragedy' are mainly based on the Shakespearian heroes and the qualities that make them 'great'. But in the criticism of Hamlet Bradley is most concerned about the delay in
Hamlet’s action which he interprets as defects that have made him appear a weakling.

Besides his penetrating discussion of the character,

“... He was preoccupied with another inquiry: he wanted to know how the events of the tragedies were controlled, why one ‘force’ prevailed over another. Did Shakespeare make the hero responsible for his own fate, either consciously or unconsciously? Did he contrive a ‘poetic justice’ which distributed rewards appropriate to each deed, both good and evil?”

When we open the page on which Bradley’s Lecture on ‘Hamlet’ is written, the very first few lines are a sure indicator that Bradley has propounded his own hypothesis regarding Shakespeare’s tragic world. So as a critic of Hamlet, one feels he fully intends to prove his hypothesis correct. Hence one feels, Hamlet is just serving as a specimen so that Bradley can prove himself right.

“conception of Hamlet’s character could be, proved true, would be to show that it, and it alone, explains all the relevant facts presented by the text of the drama. To attempt such a demonstration here would obviously be impossible, even if I felt certain of the interpretation of all the facts.”

We proceed a little further and discover Bradley’s conception of Hamlet’s character is indeed the very epitome of 19th century romantic criticism.

As soon as Bradley begins lecturing about ‘Hamlet’ on from, the First Act itself, he surely and deftly comes to the point without beating about the
bush after he has finished propounding his poetics regarding Shakespeare’s tragedies.

... when he had just received his charge from the spirit of his father; and his condition was vividly depicted in the fact that, within an hour of receiving this charge, he had relapsed into that weariness of life or longing for death which is the immediate cause of his later inaction.5

The most important problem according to Bradley, that besets Hamlet in the play is the delay. (The delay or ‘inaction’ of Hamlet in avenging his father’s murder has been for the nineteenth and twentieth century, a matter of great concern and even discord). Hence, it becomes a compulsion to take up this theory of postponement with all seriousness. We will also be taking into account what Stoll has to say in defense regarding Hamlet’s delay and then how this appeals to the New Critics. Beyond doubt this failure on the part of the Prince was a major dilemma in Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy.

The Professor begins his discussion of Hamlet’s tragedy by taking a number of vital points for granted and one very obvious one according to E.E. Stoll is this delay caused by Hamlet. First of all, he presents various theories that could have been responsible for Hamlet’s delay. Not only does he study them extensively but also categorizes them into different theories like external difficulties and internal difficulties and later on shrugs all of them away since according to him they fail to satisfy relevant data of the play.

Some external difficulties that have been noted by Bradley are
“The King was surrounded not merely by courtiers but by a Swiss body-guard: how was Hamlet to get at him?”

As further revealed by Bradley, Hamlet did not get a chance even once to fulfill his revenge when the king was in deep prayer. But then analyses Bradley, this sort of revenge would have prevented Hamlet from bringing the king to ‘Public Justice’. Because also Hamlet may have had the moral scruples of killing a man during prayer.

But no unsophisticated mind, fresh from the reading of Hamlet will accept it,....

This outburst is because of the failure of these theories based on the external difficulties, that Hamlet may have faced according to Bradley’s musings. These external reasons applied to Hamlet’s inaction, fail to stand the test of truth, if the text itself is consulted. Bradley also takes into account, that not even once does Hamlet mention these external hurdles, it has always been made clear that Hamlet wants to obey the Ghost in spite of all weakness on Hamlet’s part. As one of his soliloquies convey:

“Sith I have cause and will and strength and means to do ‘t’. (iv, iv,45).

Bradley realizes, after he rigorously examines this factor which dawns upon him much later. Hence his emphatic assertion, regarding this fact that external difficulties did not exist and neither had Hamlet voiced such a hurdle. Thus report further lends support to Stoll’s own belief that this prolongation was deftly and effectively managed by the artist himself, in order to make the climax appear meaningful and significant.
When this external theory fades into insignificance before his penetrating analysis he probes deeper and deeper and assumes, "that Hamlet’s main difficulty almost the whole of his difficulty was internal."  

Before producing his opinion regarding the problem of delay in Hamlet, Bradley goes through a process of intense reflection and interjections and ultimately reaches a conclusion of his own.

".... The direct cause was a state of mind quite abnormal and induced by special circumstances—a state of profound melancholy,"

Thus Bradley is utterly and truly convinced that the cause of Hamlet’s inaction is, melancholy, having taken over Hamlet the proof of it is his temperament given to brooding, instability and obsession with the mood of the moment; this tendency or mood was because of the shock that his mothers sudden marriage after his fathers death occurred. Therefore the excuse of the delay, (as Bradley wants us to comprehend) So, Hamlets mind is in a daze and he cannot accomplish the task laid upon him by the ghost.

Proceeding on this argument Bradley relates this hypothesis to the action of the entire plot. Hence from the time, the play opens, Bradley sees Hamlet in the grip of melancholy that becomes a habit with him and therefore Hamlets feeling is “one of disgust at life and everything in it, himself, included..... such a state of feeling is inevitably adverse to any kind of decided action.”

Hamlet’s very doubt regarding the authenticity of the ghost at the end of the second soliloquy culminated due to this ‘Menlancholy Theory’.
Bradley is sure, this is no real doubt but “an unconscious fiction” another excuse so that Hamlet can delay and further postpone the revenge. Even the famous soliloquy:

“To be or not to be” is explained as an utterance of weariness of life and a proof of melancholy. Bradley thinks, the performance of the play scene to test the guilt of the King of Denmark and removal of Hamlet’s doubt regarding the apparition that he encounters, Hamlet’s sparing of the King at prayers and many of Hamlet’s soliloquy. Bradley interprets them as an unconscious excuse for the delay since. Hamlet, he says has no compelling desire to kill the king because of his infected mind and hence the utterance from the Prince:

“Now might I do it pat, now he is praying: And now I will do it; and so he goes to heaven: and so am I revenged”.11

Bradley projects this as a sure excuse and proof of ‘symptoms of melancholy’ seeping into the very core of Hamlet’s mind so much so that not only does he neglect the duty he has to perform but he even forgets to remember the reason for this unreasonable intense sloth.

“Why do I linger?”

This explanation becomes more implicit to Bradley:

“The Hamlet of the Fifth Act shows a kind of sad or indifferent self abandonment, as if he secretly despaired of forcing himself to action, and were ready to leave his duty to some other power than his own.”12

Bradley has tried his best to explain away every loophole that he thinks are defects or incompatibility on Shakespeare’s part. All along his study of this
major tragedy of Shakespeare's Hamlet, he appears to be forming questions to ready made answers.

Why does Hamlet delay?
Why does he spare the King at prayer?
Does he put on the antic disposition?
Why does he behave as he does?\textsuperscript{13}

These questions that often crop up in Bradley's analysis get reasonable solutions, which are of course based on the experience of the professor study of human behavior. He wishes his readers to view Shakespeare through his very own insight and according to Bradley's time and situation and comprehension. That is why, Stoll has often accused Bradley of being anachronistic.

Bradley often forgets to remember that Hamlet is not a living human being but only an Elizabethan Jacobean character. Hence for, "Bradley, criticism functions as explanation, where the explanation purports to be true and testable."\textsuperscript{14}

Bradley does not stop at this moment, so obsessed he appears with the problems that assail Hamlet that he must probe deeper, because of this task he has set upon himself till now remains incomplete. After having finished defining Hamlet's delay, he comes forward with his opinion on Ophelia, Gertrude and even the Ghost and so many more questions have now been raised again.

To present a few examples:

'Is Ophelia honest?'
Is Gertrude an adulterous?

And eventually the description of these minor characters makes it easier for Bradley to reveal that in the play of Hamlet its hero is the only tragic figure.

All the persons in Hamlet except the hero are minor characters, who fail to rise to the tragic level.\(^{15}\)

As a critic of Shakespeare, Bradley not only elucidates and rationalizes the characters but also develops 'aesthetic implications' and propounds his own theory of the substance of Shakespearean Tragedy. For Bradley, the most significant here is the central character around whom every other character pales into insignificance. He illuminates Hamlet with the help of the predictions he has formed in his lecture on Shakespearean Tragedy and also deals with the other major tragedies in this same vein. It is a 'clear case of criticism merging with poetics.'

However, the very validity of Bradley's conception of the character, of Hamlet has been questioned and rejected. Critics have examined and reached the decision that Bradley's criticism of Hamlet, studies only one aspect and remains therefore incomplete. Too many questions may have been asked but there are many gaping loopholes that project an incomplete and an unfinished examination and exploration.

After having presented the undaunting outlook of Bradley's writing on Hamlet. It becomes inevitable that Stoll's objective study in reply to Bradley's lecture should also be presented in a befitting manner. To the constant assertion of Bradley that Hamlet delays his action of revenge. Stoll agrees whole heartedly with Bradley but comments that Hamlet has to delay his action, in
order to provide complete entertainment to his audience. Shakespeare postpones the grand finale to the end but keeps on whetting the curiosity of his audience by creating suspense through skill and ‘artifice’ and also through the use of local conventions.

Stoll out rightly rejects Bradley contention that Hamlet’s delay had anything to do with him being a ‘weak hero’ that Shakespeare wanted to project on the stage or some ‘psychological inadequacy’ in him which is Bradley’s words have been termed as ‘tragic flaw’. Stoll further illuminates that Shakespeare, in postponing the main action was just following tradition that came from the Greeks, ‘an epical tradition’. Shakespeare was not only adhering to the popular demands of the theatre goers of his plays but also gratifying the “dramatic-requirements, the ghost by all means must appear at the beginning, and the tragic deed

Be accomplished, as in all good revenge plays, ancient or modern, at the end.”

Before the deed was executed like all other revenge play of his time the playwright also engaged his revenger:

“...secretly, with intrigue and melancholy meditation....., and publicly with a pretence of madness...”

Although Stoll illustrates where Hieronimou’s in the Spanish Tragedy pretended madness was concerned it, “was attributed to the King being difficult of access; and the feigned madness was represented as a means to reach him.”
Shakespeare was not in the habit of following minutest detail, observes Stoll, although he did keep to the Seneca tradition. Rather than trying to explain every matter or motive ‘he had recourse to maneuvering’.

Stoll being a very competent, learned scholar of the Elizabethan Jacobean drama, confidently conveys his outlook. Shakespeare, being aware of his spectators’ reaction used this device of phony lunacy or ‘antic disposition’ as Bradley would like it, to be termed. Stoll emphasizes this act as being only a device or trick which also offers a dramatic contrast heightening the effect of melodrama. No matter how impossible the situation was, Shakespeare was aware that his audience was tuned on this very line, hence both the onlookers and Shakespeare being familiar with the situation it was skillfully converted into intrigue. “These being the prevalent conventions maneuvered by Shakespeare and his fellow dramatist.

... the baffling of the spies, the doubting of the ghost and the theatrical performance to satisfy it, the sparing of the King at his devotion, the killing of him (as intended) behind the arras and the reproachful conference with his mother, the trip to England” 18

The dramatist cunningly and subtly designing all these traditional tools of a revenge play never once forgetting Kyd’s ‘Hamlet’ and he also lets Hamlet, keep his secret of a ‘revengeful purpose’ from the queen, his friend and also to some extent from Horatio, who is the only person in whom he confides eventually. Stoll also explains, in keeping the revenge motive secret, Shakespeare was following the Senecan tradition. This is how, Stoll manifests, that Shakespeare succeeds in expanding “the suspense and mystery, imparted to the hero dignity, delicacy, and pathos, and threw the whole burden of motivation, or explanation, upon his self-reproaches.” 19
Stoll again and again discredits those critics who fail to understand that Shakespeare also had his limitations; he was not writing for the critic or scholars but for his company and audience. And since revenge and heroic plays such as the old Hamlet and The Spanish Tragedy were only a few years old he could not even if he wanted to change the plot of this new Hamlet completely.

"And still less do the critics realize that in keeping the story and character fairly intact lay the Elizabethan dramatists advantage."

Besides the prolongation, the pretended insanity is another difficulty that has baffled the impressionistic critic and led them to believe, it to be only a case of 'double consciousness' or a 'safety-valve' perhaps. Stoll vehemently disagrees with such procedures of interpretation employed by today's critics; in order to understand the writers of sixteenth seventeenth century, according to their own time and conditions rather he feels they are unjust and harsh towards Shakespeare:

The lively lunacy which Hamlet now assumes is indispensable to the plot, not only because of its popularity with the audience, but because scarcely otherwise could the necessarily round about activity be motived. In Kyd, as in Belleforest before him, the hero, till near the end, had, save the contrivances like the mouse trap, nothing else to occupy him as he played his waiting, defensive game. That it is not, any more than the undertaking just mentioned, a subterfuge, a refuge in activity instead of the act itself, appears from the way it is indicated at the close of the scene just discussed, in which the Ghost breaks silence. If it were such the procrastinator should, as Professor Lewis says, only drift into it, fall back upon it. Subterfuges on the stage must look like subterfuges
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pretexts like pretexts to a spectator at the theatre; they must do so more than to a novel-reader.\textsuperscript{21}

The audience of Shakespeare’s time were people who visited the theatre regularly and were very well accustomed to these ‘subterfuge’ as today’s psychological critics call it. Stoll’s study of these matters, indeed is amazing, he says, the audience knew the hero was going to put on his ‘antic disposition.’ Since they were aware of such a scene coming up in the play, they enjoyed the situation even more, since now the avenger had full liberty to express himself. And particularly this ‘mad’ Hamlet was a great favorite and a well-known figure on the stage.

Even the reproaches that are seen by Bradley and his followers as proof of Hamlet’s mental sickness are interpreted by Stoll as an ‘artful postponement’ of the final catastrophe by Shakespeare;

Therefore, like Kyd and Seneca though more skillfully Shakespeare motives this postponement of the catastrophe by the hero’s self-reproaches, not in the sense of grounding it in character, but of explaining it and bridging it over; by these reminders he makes the, audience feel that the main business in hand is, though retarded is not lost to view.\textsuperscript{22}

Not only in ‘Hamlet the Man’ but Art and Artifice and in his monograph on Hamlet, Stoll vehemently puts forward this same argument and confidently argues that both writer and audience were conscious of the customary happening in a revenge tragedy. Stoll also clarifies, that self reproaches or lamentations did not mean that Hamlet was lowering his prestige as a hero, in fact, Stoll remarks, there is no indication given from the other characters that Hamlet is at fault. In reality only the habitual custom was being followed by
Shakespeare as had been done before him by the ancient and Renaissance characters, exhortations in the form of soliloquy.

The point that our revolutionary critic drives at is so new and revealing that it has often repulsed scholars to accept the very idea, that the greatest of playwright of all nations and all ages to come would thrive at making impression and not only that but even conniving and scheming his plots in order to promote and create an aura of reality around his world of theatre.

Stoll proceeds in this manner with all seriousness to pursue this highly controversial issue. Whether the doubting of the Ghost on the part of Hamlet was honest or just another excuse for hesitation as Bradley sees it. But for Stoll, this delaying tactics, is not because of the avengers desire, not to act but rather the evasion of the dramatist, to postpone it to the end.

Hence Stoll is defending Hamlet regarding the delay. Stoll sees Hamlet’s doubt as a genuine one and does not agree with the romantics who obliterate the existence of the dramatist. If at all there is flaw the fault lies with the plot and the feigning is on the part of the playwright and not at all a blemish on the hero’s side, argues Stoll most strongly and logically:

“To save the story, the dramatist lets the hero heap upon himself reproaches for his inaction; to save the character, he counteracts the effect of these by his own words, those of others, and the whole impression of his conduct." 23

The Sparing of the king at prayer and the test to find out whether the Ghost is honest or only a devil, has been examined by Stoll on the basis of the
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‘Orthodox Protestant Opinion of the day’. Neither of these actions on the part of the hero seem as defect or weakness to Stoll.

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying, And now I will do’t.

There is no iota of doubt that Hamlet does not kill the King at prayer. Stoll’s critical and perceiving eyes are again put to work. But then this is the only opportunity that Hamlet gets to come so close to the King in the whole of the play and the only instance that he loses as well. And Stoll has put forward this explanation repeatedly in his other works too. That the sparing of the king during prayer is not because of indecision or mental paralysis as the critics of modern age would conveniently interpret.

“He spares the king, indeed, but because he would kill more than the body of him who had ‘taken his father grossly, full of bread, with all his crimes broad blown, as flush as may’: an excellent and appropriate reason, not only in Elizabethan but other Renaissance tragedy, as even in Homer.”

Stoll has been constantly harping on this same subject, because may be he thinks that through repetitions he can convince the Shakespearean scholars, the authenticity of his research on this topic.

In fact it is Stoll’s contention also to prove that all along from the time the Ghost had directed Hamlet in the first Act; Hamlet wanted above all to kill the king but not during prayer as then his spirit might ascend to heaven according to Christian scriptures, he wanted to kill in cold blood, for the purpose of revenge, like Claudius the present King of Denmark had killed his own father. This action was, specifies Stoll, again in line
“with the principles of the vendetta in tragedy and novella at the Renaissance, English and continental, in Senecan tragedy; and even in the Iliad, as Hector Wreaks himself on the body (and thus on the departed spirit) of Patrocles, and Achilles on that of Hector, mutilating it and refusing it burial.\textsuperscript{125}

What Stoll wants us to comprehend is that by doubting the Ghost, Hamlet is only reflecting the Elizabethan faith, that instead of being his spirit, the Ghost could be a devil as well. And when he spares the king during prayer he further strengthens Stoll’s hypothesis that he is the avenger and not an emotional wreck, weak of will and a psychopathic case. He spares the king out of sheer malevolence and cruelty, to fulfill the primitive saying, to quote Stoll ‘an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth’ etc.

Stoll’s discussion of Hamlet is not only informative but also comparative. He has tried to answer as many critics as possible who he thinks are misinterpreting Shakespeare. Bradley’s natural queries get a lot of explanation from Stoll although never directly. ‘...the man is at prayer only a critic would here cry out for Claudius blood, and a critic, too, who forgets, or a psychologist who does not know the dramatic requirements of repetition.’\textsuperscript{26}

Taking the textual evidence into consideration Stoll questions that if at all Hamlet is eluding the issue why should the dramatist be so secretive about it. And indeed, for two centuries after the play was written, no body raised this problem regarding Hamlet’s incompleteness.

“On the stage, even more than in life, pretences and excuses should look like evasions, as indeed, for two centuries Hamlet’s (if such they be) did not and if the supreme dramatists are in this
matter is, with our critics, a success, with his audience, of which alone he was thinking, it was a failure!"\textsuperscript{27}

Hamlet’s going off to England is seen by Hamlet’s fault finders as the hero having no effective desire to kill the king and hence running away from the scene where he could carry out the wishes of his father’s spirit. Stoll, at this juncture in his Art and Artifice, gets disgusted with the bluntness or rather lack of these critics vision. Hamlet’s expedition was with a purpose, if we read the text carefully. Most Romantic and psychological critic will have us believe that Hamlet was suffering from illusion and this journey only took place in his mind and therefore it was a kind of spiritual journey that Hamlet’s melancholy exposes him to, they include this as a further confirmation of his infirmity. Stoll is extremely disgruntled with such critics because it is very episode which leads Hamlet to discover the treachery of the plan to end his life and he is able to replace the King’s letter that would have otherwise ended his life and now instead the King’s agents are to be killed, the daring sea fight, his presence of mind and his clever release from captivity. Through this valid argument Stoll fairly succeeds in convincing that this young man neither lacked courage nor the will to act.

In a similar vein Stoll asserts,

"...all this serves no purpose whatever but that of exhibiting the instant and almost unscrupulous resolution of Hamlets character in time of practical need. But for all that he has got by it Shakespeare might too evidently have spared his pains; and for all this voice as of one crying in the wilderness, etc."\textsuperscript{28}

In full authority of his subject, Stoll is quite definite that all these episodes, the doubt regarding the Ghost, the sparing of the king at Prayer
and even the trip to England were being knowingly masterminded by Shakespeare on the Elizabethan stage, the purpose was nothing else but,

"...an artful postponement of the catastrophe" that even Homer had practiced on the stage. In this context Stoll sees a similarity with not only the Greeks but even the ancient epics. Just to make the principal character appear more interesting and full of life, their reputation is kept free of all damages and remains taintless to the end in the Iliad. Hence similar devices were also practiced by other dramatists and have been put to still better use by Shakespeare.

It is indeed amazing that Stoll as a critic of Shakespeare, not only delights in discussing, confronting, relating, describing, testing, discerning and disputing but he gradually arrives at a stage of discovering the meaningful rhythm pattern used in Shakespeare. This detection set the stage for a new kind of Shakespeare criticism and ushered it into a era of poetic interpretation. In fact, Stoll's greatest contribution towards Shakespeare's criticism is how conventions work together with the poetry as a harmonious whole.

Thus Stoll as a critic of Shakespeare does not think it appropriate to merely depend on speculation and conjectures, but also on reason and the knowledge of conventions and an ear for poetry. In one soliloquy, early in the play Hamlet utters "O what a rogue" most critic grasp the literal meaning of these words and think Hamlet is reproaching himself. But Stoll contradicts such an interpretation and rather depends on the tone, which does not at all express "irresolution or shiftiness, apathy or frailty." There is a similarity of purpose that appeals to him in both these utterances:
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“O what a rogue”

“I will tent him to the quick if he but blench.”

“I know my course.”

Hence rather than shirk the task laid before him Hamlet looks forward towards its accomplishment and is not scared of such hurdles as the mouse trap. Stoll simply cannot agree with the psychological interpreters, whether they are Swinburne or Coleridge. Kind of rhythm pattern used by these critics to express the mood of Hamlet, fails to convince Stoll that the character of the Danish Prince is full of uncertainty or infirmity. Further, rationalizes Stoll, even Othello cannot be blamed of being jealous or unreasonable by nature before his mind is deliberately poisoned by Iago. Then it is not as if this languor or lethargy of Hamlet remained stagnant throughout the play. He did make an attempt to kill the king when he thought he was spying upon him behind the curtain, only it turned out to be Polonius instead. According to Stoll how can Hamlet be blamed of passivity, since he did make an attempt to avenge the murder of his father. Bradley’s theory fails here since if Hamlet was so sick and melancholic, how could the lethargy vanish so suddenly.

Picking up the sequel of the argument, Stoll continues in the same temper, and comments that if the deed was to be executed at the end of the play, it was hardly Hamlet’s fault even the audience knew this and did not see anything unnatural in his action, nor did they expect him to act otherwise. He was like any other hero of the revenge tragedy including Achilles.

“It is both the traditional form and the natural procedure; obviously, the deed done, the tragedy is over.”
Regarding the Melancholy problem that appears very important to Bradley, Stoll clearly answers him:

"In him self the hero is not melancholy in the technical Elizabethan sense, whether by nature or (before the second Act) in the play."

I have of late- but wherefore I know not-lost all my mirth...

Because of this pensive remark made by Hamlet, the critics of even Dover Wilson’s repute and stature are utterly and completely confused and confounded and are ready to vouch that these self-reproaches are exculpation’s and nothing else and a further proof of Hamlet’s.

"sense of frustration, of infirmity of purpose of character inhibited from meeting the demands of destiny of the futility of life in general and action in particular. . . ."

They simply fail to distinguish this feigned role of madness from the real self of the Prince. Stoll really wonders how Hamlet can be suffering from—‘a state of profound melancholy’ in the extreme form described by Bradley, even if the audience knew about this particular variety of the disease, it would have been a strong dramatic method to have let Hamlet speculate each time he saw a Ghost that whether his weakness was being taken for a ride by the devil or not, further this would probably compel him to declare he ‘does not know’ when it comes to his procrastination. Something that is most strange in the entire play is that Hamlet while so badly infected by this disease, not even a single character in the play is aware of it, except for Horatio his close friend, and that also quite
at a late stage, neither his mother not even the agents who have been posted by the king to spy upon him.

The only flaw that has been attributed to Hamlet as an ideal hero is in the part when he delays. Critics of all genre cling to this part in detail. But some like Stoll thinks Hamlet has no flaw because he is a typical hero of the Elizabethan tragedy of revenge. By the definition of tragedy, there should exist a flaw in the character of the main hero, who is a great personality and is involved in a strife or combat that ends catastrophically. Shakespeare surpassing the tradition in this play particularly making his hero, appear infirm and impotent and yet being so secretive about it. Because this was not Elizabethan concept of tragedies. Really this is something beyond Stoll’s comprehension and analysis. His understanding of such problems, his keenness and his logical arguments are so overwhelming that you just cannot help agreeing with him and the deeper you move into these analysis a growing awareness, towards the authenticity of his finding gives an insight into the entire problem that assails Hamlet.

Stoll’s analysis further, illuminates that if Shakespeare was enlarging and enriching the conventions of prevaricated madness as prevalent in Kyd’s lunacy, this does not indicate that it was due to the involvement of psychology but rather because it was the latest craze for the revenger to pretend madness. His experience of a successful playwright convinced him to bank upon such a situation, since it was popular. There, was no mystery regarding this character as today’s critic want to romanticize. Shakespeare was plainly projecting Hamlet both as the madman and the revenger or malcontent, fused into one. Further Shakespeare did not enhance this cover of pretended madness for his
hero till the Illrd and IVth Acts since after some time it would cease to appeal as an intrigue to the audience and also because repetition in the scene may bore the audience.

Hence this introduction after the example of Marston, with only a stage version of the Elizabethan 'humour' of melancholy. Shakespeare saw in this sort of a projection for his hero a wider scope, for his revenger disguised both as a madman and a malcontent could express himself with full liberty.\(^33\)

"...merged in one, there was for the Cruder Elizabethan theatre, a sufficient, though external, motivation not only craft to match craft, and murder to match murder, but feigned madness or melancholy to, warrant, picturesque audacity and impudence.\(^34\)

Stoll views Shakespeare as not only following tradition but as a creator, breathing life into these wooden characters, besides raising their emotional and moral level. To create his characters this origination does not need the help of psychology or even science, according to his perception the master strokesman, like other great dramatists, epic poets and novelists, makes use of his skill and art with fine touches of strokes and expressions.

"Motives logical or even psychological consistency, are not prerequisites to characterization."\(^35\)

Although he did bestow a dual personality or rather role to his hero, taking immense care with the original plot and the actual happenings in the story--- he could not alter the actual plot since he could neither annoy the audience, nor take for granted the companies expectations. And as known by all, Shakespeare was the best of all imitater, he was an expert at borrowing and
transforming old plays and stories and yet preserving their originality. The most essential thing in the presentation of Hamlet, according to Stoll is the Prince's individuality that Shakespeare makes more 'superior to his conduct'. If we are to study the Drama of Hamlet carefully this is what we can glean about Hamlet from the mouth of the other characters also.

Thus he is active and reflective, merry and melancholy, indecent and noble, impudent and courteous cruel and tender, both suspicious and crafty and also (as Claudius himself has noted 'most generous and free from all contriving'.

This is surely the making of great drama. Drawing a comparison between Othello and Hamlet, Stoll implies that both these heroes although they are in strife can be plainly recognized for their unique individuality and not personality. Stoll feels strongly that Shakespeare in the form of Hamlet was merely presenting a character with a personality and not a structure to operate upon and present a clinical study, that gave an accurate, systematic reading of its inner feelings. Hence, it is unfair on the part of interpreters to search for a 'scientific consistency' in the character of Hamlet when the author's purpose in presenting the drama was external, poetic and traumatic.

Yet, there is not an iota of doubt that the highly charged yet sensitive young man, the leading figure of Shakespeare's play (if we are for a moment to extract him away from the story,) is the most popular among Shakespeare's other heroes even Lear, Othello, Macbeth and Antony. Because that tinge of Hamlet is there in all of us.

No matter how scathing and unjust the present day critics are in judging Stoll, they cannot deny that Stoll accepts Shakespeare's superiority where
character drawing is concerned, the article on 'Hamlet the Man' is a sure evidence of such a belief.

He accepts regarding Hamlet, 'what makes him more popular than Shakespeare's other heroes is partly his mere story that of both pathos and heroism, of the world against him and him against the world—but mostly his personal charm his flexibility and familiarity his complexity of nature and simplicity of manner, his sincerity of feeling if not always of demeanor, his humor and his wit.'

This is where lies the originality and the greatness of Shakespeare in not just imitating life but developing and enlarging the custom and tradition and transforming it into a fascinating work of art, and that's how the 'germ in Kyd and Marston comes to full flower in Shakespeare'.

Having dispensed with psychology, Stoll takes into consideration Hamlet's eccentricities with words: his questions and repetitions. He gives full credit to Professor Bradley for having been the first Shakespearian critic to have noticed this idiosyncrasy.

Here are some very obvious examples:

Thrift, thrift, Horatio.

Indeed, indeed, Sir's, but this troubles me.

Come deal justly with me: come, come.

Worm wood, worm wood!
Although Bradley finds these repetition '...intensely characteristic' of Hamlet, but sadly enough he does not read much significance into this habit. Stoll is also able to glean the matter with his critical eyes, about why Hamlet is so depressed all the time. After his dear father’s funeral, the late King of Denmark, naturally a kind of gloom had descended upon Hamlet. His mother’s hasty marriage to Claudious also must have ashamed him but the information conveyed to him from Horatio and his friends about the apparition that resembled the dead king, transforms his very speech, over powering him with excitement, thrill and eager expectation. And according to Stoll’s judgment, ‘The Prince’s questions and repetitions are signs of his restless mental activity’. Further informs Stoll, apparently from an attentive study of Shakespeare’s characters as different as Rosalind; Cleopatra, Falstaff, and Shallow, Othello and Brabantio, Lear and Kent and even Gloster, that they were all in the habit of uttering repetitions. Even the other dramatists have often used this sort of rhetorical device. Hence, Hamlet’s questions, and his repetitions of words have definite reason, according to Stoll’s understanding, they express the concealed emotions of curiosity, excitement even wonder and breathlessness. The scholars who are obsessed with projecting Hamlet as a psychological study and are constantly in the habit of making a point of everything and anything, seem to wear out Stoll’s patience. For he wonders how they cannot afford to at least concede to a son’s excitement at the news of his father’s return from the grave and stop interpreting every action of Hamlet as his mental or psychological malady.

Stoll emphasizes the importance of relying on the stress and rhythm pattern of Shakespeare’s verses as well, because if we listen carefully it tells half the tale. Here are some instances:
Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral baked meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables

Indeed, indeed, Sirs but this troubles me-

Very like, very like. Slay’d it long?

As is customary of the impressionistic critic, perusal of these verses shall surely result in their hasty conclusion that all these repetitions are because Hamlet is a neurotic, with an unbalanced nervous system, or that he is surely and definitely afflicted with the intense disease of melancholy and hence these stammering and stuttering on his part and even the two sides to his moods, now happy now sad, add further reflection on their speculations.

In order to retort correctly to the musings of such critics, Stoll presents textual evidences, for example, the Queen’s Speech about Hamlet’s outbreak of emotion at the funeral scene:

‘This is mere madness’.

Hence to analyze Hamlet’s assumed madness as a disease is a grave mistake and in contradiction to the Queen’s remark.

“Shakespeare’s romantic tragedy, like all other great popular tragedy, presents human nature not a doctrine of human nature; heroes, not weaklings, or psychopathic case; and, above all, men as we know them, not curiosities of the contemporary or even the Elizabethan psychology or physiology. In himself Hamlet is no more a prey to melancholy than he is (as though by other recent scholars) to the deadly sin of
sloth; or than Lear, to that of wrath; or Othello, to jealousy."

Any way, observes Stoll, those characters that were victims of these humors during Elizabethan age were presented as characters in comedy and not in tragedies like we find in many of Jonson’s comedies for example, Episone and others.

Particular speeches of Hamlet have been under constant investigation which has contaminated the air of criticism with its bad breath of discord, dispute and disagreement. Stoll has discussed some of these important lines in detail and explained whether they are self-reproaches, interrogations, reflections or just dramatic exhortation.

Stoll introduces us to ‘the unmistakable, unforgettable voice of Hamlet,’ from the second scene itself; his first speech which carries a lot of emphasis or resolved to perform his duty towards his father the King and hence the Kingdom Denmark.

‘A little more than kin and less than kind,’

The sarcasm, irony and bitterness in his tone cannot be denied and then when he is alone once more, he gives full vent to, ‘his outburst of grief disillusionment, and disgust:

‘O that this too, too solid flesh would melt....’

Stoll tirelessly defends these utterances of Hamlet as being characteristic of his personality for example he says:
Whether in manner or matter, the whole speech is characteristic. His melancholy, reaches beyond the death of his father and the frailty of his mother, and embraces life itself. But there is no languor or paralysis, no weakness or indifference; such as most critics have discovered. There are, instead, exclamations and execrations, impatient interruptions and parentheses; and the reiteration is energetic and insistent.  

‘Fie on’t! Oh fie, fie! Tis an unweeded garden.’

The same pronouncement of bitter energy and resolution is found in these famous lines by the American Stagerite, confounding the supposition of critics; Hamlet admonishing his mother is proof enough of his alert mind.

Let me not thing on’t---

Frailty, they name is women!---

A litte month, or e’er those Shoe’s were old,

With which she followed my poor fathers body,

Like Niobe, all tears—why she, even she—

O God, a beast, that wants discourse of reason, would have mourn’d longer—married with mine uncle.

And in alike manner in all of Hamlet’s soliloquies Stoll indicates, ‘this pointed or jagged, though deep and quivering, energy of style and rhythm’ prevails throughout.

In the soliloquy at the end of the second Act, Hamlet does mention ‘his weakness and melancholy’ and before that he scolds himself for being so naïve
where plans for taking vengeance are concerned, he runs through all the insults which provoked a resolute man to mortal combat:

"...... the spirit that I have seen may be the Devil, and the Devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape. Yea and perhaps out of my weakness and my melancholy, as he is very potent with such spirits, abuses me to damn me..."

Stoll remains firm in determining that such passing casual remarks cannot determine Hamlet's character, nor can the literal sense of the words be exploited in order to justify Hamlet's misgivings. Even if it would have been true that Hamlet is a victim of Elizabethan melancholy or even a specimen of some 'humour', even then it would have been insufficient to pronounce 'humour' as the centre and motive of his character.' As it is we eventually find for our selves as the play commences, that in fact the Ghost has nothing to do with the hero's melancholy. This is the natural course in all Elizabethan drama (e.g in The White Devil, III iii,) and Stoll is sure that Burton's doctrine has a hand in this speculation of whether the Ghost is the devil's work or not.41

To Stoll the critics appear to be bent upon seeing Hamlet as a feeble, weak hero and hence giving undue importance to every minor conjecture of Hamlet, even when he draws a comparison between his father and uncle and says they are as different as he from 'Hercules', these critics are ready to quote this instance as Hamlet's confession of physical weakness.

Really Stoll is utterly disgusted and asks; who expects 'young Hamlet to be like Hercules?' Garnering up the theories of a former argument Stoll continues with the same alacrity quoting numerous samples of examples from the text itself particularly from Hamlet's words and action. He wonders how
Hamlet can still appeal to these scholars as 'a hesitant weakling'. It seems these critics deny and forget Hamlet's jocularity in the face of danger.

What drugs, what charms, what conjurations and what mighty magic—

I do not set my life at a pin's fee

Unhand me, gentlemen;

By heaven, I'll make a Ghost of him that lets me (Stops me).

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.

I say away!..... go on, I'll follow thee---

Do all these speeches appear to come from a mentally sick person, physically inept. And what about his presence of mind, as reflected in the following lines:

"When he kills the man behind the arras, boards the pirate wrestles with Laertes in the grave, fights him, kills the King himself in presence of them all, and though mortally wounded, wrests the cup from out of Horatio's hand."

Stoll now wonders, what explanation would the impressionistic critic provide for these events. Do all of these events also occur in Hamlet's mind only?

During his discussion of Hamlet's use of colloquial language another vital information that Stoll imparts is that, when Hamlet uses such expletives after the play within the play or rather after the theatrical experiment a change of definitely marked that shows his intention to hurry to test the King's guilt.
The modern reader may think that Hamlet has changed in some ways. But for the Elizabethan-Jacobean playgoers nothing unusual has happened, he remains the same man since these audiences have the advantage of not only seeing the play performed, but were more knowledgeable where comprehension and grasp over the verse was concerned. S. Vishwanathan has enlightened us during his analysis of the original audience of Shakespeare how critics like William Archer, I.A. Richards and L.C. Knight's have put a lot of emphasis on:

"... The keenness of the Elizabethan ear and sensibility, due to age-long habits of listening to stories and sermons, and so attesting the persistence of the tradition of oral communication..."^43

Stoll sees no defect in Hamlet's speeches, 'Hamlet's expressions is perfectly consistent.' And the above study by vis. adds further strength to Stoll's assertions.

Such utterances as the following:-

'O Villain, Villain, smiling, damn'd villain", or the soliloquy at the end of Act II 'O, What a rogue' are utterances in utter frustration and disgust because as it is obvious he cannot carry out his, plan in spite of his determination. These expletives are nothing else but bitter execrations, all this delay is making him wring his hands with impatience and caged energy, he remains the most misunderstood man as far as Stoll is concerned. These extreme form of expression often used by the Prince can also be 'the fantastic and extravagant style of thought' often employed by Shakespeare that produced Dryden's displeasure, resulting, in his calling Shakespeare's style 'bombastic,' Giving full vent to his affirmation Stoll insists that the only,
"psychology that is offered by Shakespeare and was expected—speech fitted to mood and occasion." 44

The soliloquy, 'O what a rogue', is taken as sure proof of Hamlet's inadequacy, and 'self-deception' he calls himself 'villain' even 'rogue' and rascal and 'ass' even Richard and Iago have called themselves the same, but Stoll declares, these titles do not fit Hamlet nor do they suit him. Hence it should be brushed aside as has been done by the hero himself. According to Stoll all this nothing but helpless rage because of the long constraint and hence all this accumulated energy explodes in self-abuse. Moreover, Stoll is satisfied with Hamlet's 'clear-seeing judgment. Although the deed has still not been accomplished by Hamlet the soliloquy,

"To be or not to be" which is followed by:

T' is now the very witching time of might, and

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying,

And now I'll do't...".

These are no more reproaches but only anxiety for the task that must be finished. There is a touch of sadness, even meditation and reflectiveness in

'To be or not to be' and not weakness of will or design to escape from problems or his set task.

In the last soliloquy, 'How all occasions do inform against me,' is after he kills the man behind the arras, who unfortunately turns out to be not the king whom he suspects but Polonious. He even carefully selects the occasion and
kills him, ‘at the proper unholy moment’ only to find that the trouble he had taken was in vein and he is at a loss no doubt

but only for a while and then he strengthening his resolve once more:

“O, from this time forth, my thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth.

Hamlet does not appear as ‘indecisive or slow’—to even Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. They guard Hamlet on his trip to England and when he returns he leaves no stone unturned to keep his resolution, there is no hesitation or even expressions of regret. As Stoll reminds us no opportunity is lost by Hamlet except one in the entire play and for that he had sufficient reason for not killing the man at prayer. Not merely the reasons of the vendetta but as Stoll observes that even ‘Mr Bradley notices a reason, un-mentioned though potent with the audience—that the man is at prayer’. A man being killed when he is praying to God this would have been too much for any to accept. And then Stoll in utter desperation cries out “only a critic would here cry out for Claudius’s blood; and a critic too, who forgets, or a psychologist who does not know, the dramatic requirement of repetition.” (Ibid. p.18)

Now that multiple arguments and counter arguments, discussions and disagreement have been covered, a clear concept about different principles emerges before us, when this soliloquy, ‘O what a rogue, if examined in this light accordingly it dawns before us startlingly how little this has to do with Hamlet as a character, procrastinating and instead fulfils the ‘dramatic requirement’ of the situation.
Hamlet after seeing the Ghost and doubting its honesty is ready to test the guilt of the king through staging the play within the play; Murder of Gonzago. Shakespeare effectively uses this opportunity to unravel what lies in Hamlet’s thoughts and thus is able to enlighten the audience. Stoll bitterly continues to assail the understanding of these critics who are deliberately distorting the real Shakespeare.

But Alas! What a lapse on Shakespeare’s part. While thinking about informing his audience; did not also fit in these critics and psychologists into his scheme of plans and by not doing thence he put himself for even at their disposal;


‘O good Horatio, I’ll take the Ghosts word for a thousand, pound. Did’st perceive?

No doubt, Hamlet does not believe the Ghost in the beginning but if it was the doubt of a cynic, or a sceptic only; according to the allegation of Coleridge and Schlegel, why did he take the trouble of providing proof whether the Ghost was just and illusion of his troubled mind and he may not have shared his secret with his friend Horatio either and yet remain ‘unabashed’. Even if the words of the Ghost were proved to be true he should have not believed it if he was a sceptic, he could have provided some other excuse. But no instead ‘he cries, in solid, rough and ready, fashion, not a doubters or a dreamers,…”

Stoll stands firm in his belief that if resolution was given a voice it would speak in the same tone that Hamlet did; (Ibid; P.25).

It will be short; the interim is mine.
If he but blench, I know my course.

O from this time forth my thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth.

Thus Stoll, after presenting multiple illustrations from the text confirms that, there is no significance in Hamlet's self-reproaches nor is there any failure on Hamlet's part to carry out his resolution. Hamlet should be understood with sympathy and not doubt. He has perfect faith in himself not once does he say 'do you not believe me?' His tone and accent is clear in the line he has to speak in the drama, and very firmly too. Its only the circumstances and the 'dramatic requirements' that slow down his resolution, emphasizes our tirelessly interpreter from the university of Minnesota.

As soon as the last Act comes to a closure, Stoll notices that even critics like Bradley in spite of all their differences with Shakespeare's art, reconcile here and are found to be 'happily abandoning psychology' and willing to concede to Hamlet in his last hour 'all the glorious power and all the nobility and sweetness of his nature.'

However Stoll, with his probing eyes and clear understanding fathoms much more. It is his contribution that today we have a Hamlet in the form of a hero, otherwise the Romantics in their eagerness and enthusiasm had transformed the very nature of Hamlet and made of him a sick and neurotic man. Stoll's version of Hamlet is not only reflective but also cool and collected that a man weak of will cannot be. And now we realize this man is not only full of reckless valour but he is able to satisfy the audiences dreams of a hero full of magnanimity and free of the 'homicidal calculation and Scheming', he has no plan to carry out his revenge for his fathers murder. Because, Stoll says, he is
free of guile and craftiness and this is how Shakespeare is able to focus the attention and sympathy of the audience towards Hamlet.

Stoll further analyses that may be this lack of planning on the hero’s part, who is about to accomplish a great deed, may seem to the readers of Shakespeare’s play, that Hamlet is not serious about avenging his father’s murder and that he is taking too much time, because they have all the time to wonder and ponder while they are reading. But the audience, before whom this play is being staged, will differ they will not notice such a lapse, here as they are watching the play being performed before their eyes, they are not given the chance by the dramatist, as one after the other action keeps changing, it seems like suspense or thrill that is even created in today’s movies, and thus the lapse, goes unnoticed even if it is there.

Actually the playwright himself is cautious about making a revenge story materialize into a cold blooded murder, where the villain will become the ‘victim’ and the hero will loose all sympathy. “For is it not a sorry business to scheme to catch a man and kill him? Setting traps, and by deceit and cajolery luring your victim into them, is not a hero’s role”51

Hence, except for minor harmless plans like the ‘feigned madness’ and preventing the king from sending him to England Hamlet never seriously discussed his plans regarding what he is going to do. Not even when he kills the man behind the arras it is on the spur of the moment. We find him heedlessly going to the fencing match. Although he has had a premonition yet he brushes that aside gallantly. And since he is so scheming, critics even of Bradley’s repute and position think him to be irresolute and waiting to die when his duty is still undone. Giving a final touch to all of his former arguments Stoll affirms,
to the readers and to the playgoers Hamlet has a different appeal since there is a
difference between art and reality.

Shakespeare here again at the end has not been
portraying the impotence of Hamlet’s character, but has
been handling a dramatic material, hedged about with
difficulties, with consummate tact. He is presenting not
so much-in all its consistency-a character as a highly
emotional situation.”

Stoll admits that this kind of story of blood and murder and a son
avenging his father’s murder, does not reflect the life of Shakespeare’s time but
only their taste in the drama. Hence Shakespeare was compelled to take this
defensive attitude towards his hero, since he was not presenting a psychological
study of Hamlet’s character but only a highly charged emotional situation.
Presentation of old story in a new environment was not an easy task for the
dramatist, he took the help of supernatural power and cunningly employed this
delaying device and built it up into a mystery so that his hero did not have to
take the blame of all that takes place upon himself. As Stoll points out many
times, this delay that occurs due to the manipulations of the playwright, Hamlet
had to bear the blame for inactivity from the modern critic, whereas the
seventeenth century and eighteenth century critics became one with Hamlet
when he spared the king during prayer but killed him ‘when he is fit and
seasoned for his passage.’ Hence for these playgoers Hamlet remained

“that piece which appears to have affected English
hearts, and has perhaps been oftenest acted of, any
which have come upon our stage.”

Lastly, Stoll stands his ground firmly, and convincingly speaks out’ why
should Shakespeare let the trumpet sound for a man who is afflicted with a
disease and who is a near coward when he has not done so even 'for Macbeth or Othello, who were warriors, not for Lear, who was a king.' What was the need for Shakespeare to go out of his way to:

   'Let the trumpets blare, the drums rattle, and the cannon
   thunder' and for this 'energetic' command of Fortinbras, Go bid the soldiers Shoot,'\(^5^4\)

Stoll questions all those critics, who see Hamlet as a 'frail and shrinking spirit', as to what was the need for the writer of so many great plays to indulge in hypocrisy. Stoll advocates this point in his Art and Artifice:

   As a stage-manager and (of all things) as a meterist, Shakespeare misses the point of his own play still more than as a dramatist, or than his ill instructed raisonneur, Horatio! But the line—the salute—like the very Hamlet it was meant for, have long since quitted the stage!'\(^5^5\)

Stoll is right in insisting that great comedy is rooted in farce and great tragedy is rooted in melodrama. Stoll's greatness lies in the fact that he emphasizes the element of 'artifice' that is the element of clever designing in Hamlet and other great Shakespearean tragedies. Another important contribution made by Stoll to the criticism of Hamlet and to Shakespeare criticism in general is that he de-emphasizes the element of psychological coherence in characterization of Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare's characters are not psychologically coherent because Shakespeare was not writing the ordinary naturalistic prose drama of the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century.
Hamlet is a great poetic play where the element of verisimilitude is deliberately neglected for the sake of the effects peculiar to great heroic tragedy.

Besides Bradley’s and Stoll’s criticism of Hamlet, there is a contemporary approach, which provides this survey with a new outlook of decoding Hamlet and thus ushering it into the modern era. This contemporary method concerns itself with the imagery and the symbols used by Shakespeare in his plays. There are other very important essays on this issue of Hamlet’s but due to the unending range only the significant have been selected that of G.W. Knight. Knight has an exceptional interest and understanding of the imagery at play in Hamlet. His method and range is very different from Bradley and Stoll. He begins his book, ‘The Wheel of Fire’ (1930) by introducing, the readers to the ‘Principles of Shakespeare’s Interpretation’. He also emphasises his preference to mark ‘criticism’ and ‘interpretation’ as two different process of defining Shakespeare’s work. Knight’s poetics has been discussed at length in the V chapter of this thesis. The study of his poetics is essential since he has definitely applied it to the interpretation of Hamlet.

As a critic of Hamlet, W. Knight’s is mostly engrossed in the apt explanation of the play, like Bradley he does not probe Hamlet’s flaws. Nor does he bother himself with Shakespeare’s background of an Elizabethan playwright. His scope is entirely different from Stoll’s, he engages himself with the ‘nature of Hamlet’s suffering’. And according to his statement:

My purpose will therefore be first limited strictly to a discussion, not of the play as a whole, nor even of Hamlet’s mind as a whole, but of this central reality of pain, which, though it be necessarily related, either as
effect or cause, to the events of the plot and to the other characters, is itself ultimate, and should be the primary object of our search.

Knight's makes it very explicit that we cannot reach a understanding of Hamlet without a proper insight into the exact theory of the nature of Shakespearean drama. Knight has delivered a particular poetics of Shakespearean drama that agrees very well with his interpretation of Hamlet. The study of 'Character' and 'plot' is erroneous in Knight's poetics because it leads one to the serious disregard of 'Shakespeare's poetic symbolism'. In his discussion of the Principles in his very first chapters, he views each play as:

"a set of correspondences which relate to each other independently of the time-sequence which is the story; (e.g.)...the death-theme in Hamlet...This I have sometimes called the play's atmosphere".

The main theme of the play as observed by G. Wilson Knight is the clash between good and evil, health and disease, life and death. But however prime importance is paid to the theme of death, which (claims, Knights) occurs repeatedly and determines all the aspect of the play, characters and plot: "Death is indeed the theme of this play, for Hamlet's disease is mental and spiritual death."

If at all Knight takes interest in the background, it is, not in the Elizabethan context but he projects a 'pale' faced Hamlet conscious of decay in his palace. He is placed against a scenery:

"of healthy and robust life, good-nature, humour, romantic strength, and welfare....He is the ambassador of death walking amid life."
Hamlet is presented as a disturbing element in an otherwise peaceful universe of the play. The only hurdle is Hamlet himself to a healthy, wealthy and prosperous condition of the Kingdom, "... a living death in the midst of life".  

Claudius is presented with a clean image by Knight's, he is not drawn as wholly evil—far from it. In fact he symbolizes life and health for this interpreter of images. He runs his government efficiently. Deals with his courtiers very diplomatically and tactfully, shows concern for his wife and even sometimes towards Hamlet. Knight blames the chain of causality that links him with his crime. Hamlet is projected as the cause of all that goes wrong in Claudius's life. There is a complete reversal of Hamlet's character in G.W. Knights interpretation. Hamlet becomes a blood thirsty person, seeking murder while Claudius is 'the fine flower of a human soul in anguish', Knight even bestows greatness upon him after the prayer scene in the play when Hamlet hesitates to avenge his father's murderer because the murder was praying.

If one turn back to the analysis of Bradley on this same scene one finds his interpretation more plausible. Where as Knight appears to have been dwarfed by Bradley's vision:

"When he (Claudius) is praying for pardon, he is all the while perfectly determined to keep his crown; and he knows it.

....when the King is praying for pardon for his first murder he has just made his final arrangements for a second, the murder of Hamlet. But he does not allude to that fact in his prayer. If Hamlet had really wished to kill him at a moment that had no relish of salvation in it, he had no need to wait."
Hamlet is compared to Claudius and the stigma of inhuman is attached to him:

He is a superman among men. And he is a superman because he has walked and held converse with death, and his consciousness works in terms of death and the negation of cynicism. He has seen the truth, not alone of Denmark, but of inhumanity, of the universe: and the truth is evil. Thus Hamlet is an element of evil in the state of Denmark.\(^{68}\)

Thus Hamlet in the pages of Knight's is assailed by "the poison of negation, nothingness, threatening a world of positive assertion".\(^{69}\)

The main theme, according to Knight's is that of death, this image of death engulfs the play throughout. Exactly like Bradley's Hamlet was assailed by the disease of melancholy, Knights Hamlets is sick in the soul. From the very beginning of the play, Hmalet has no resolve, we exhibit a spiritual degeneration in Knights Hamlet and are reminded of T.S. Eliots poem Gerontion, where the old man has lost all sense of purpose, like a patient etherized on the operation table.

Knights the progenitor of modern time attitude, does give a reason for this total loss of Hamlet, the death of his father and his mother's re-marriage.

"His hope of recovery to the normal state of healthy mental life depended largely on his ability to forget his father, to forgive his mother. Claudius advised him well."\(^{70}\)

Always this extra kind gesture towards Claudius is indicated in Knights interpretation. In contrast to his sick soul is presented the demand of the ghost for action and revenge. Hamlets inaction and condemnation is complete whenever Ophelia, his lady love fails him, the hero becomes the incarnation of
cynicism and bitterness. His rebuking of the frivolous queen is interpreted as cruelty to his mother and the play within the play to make the culprit King guilty of his crime viewed as exultation and torment and the sparing of the King during prayer is portrayed again as further proof of Hamlets "demonic pleasure" in the thought of preserving his life for a more damning death. Knight is terribly against any sympathy that is extended towards Hamlet. He is compared with logo due to the pleasure he finds inflicting cruelty on others. "Horrible" 'demon' ‘devilish’ these are the words that becomes the fate of this ideal hero, as viewed by Knights.

Knights further proceeds that Hamlet's vacillation is only in regard to the idea of revenge but the final request, the execution is swiftly carried out., Knights interprets that Hamlet does obey the ghost, 'not wisely but only too well'. In Knights 'Wheel of Fire' Hamlet symbolizes the principle of the negation of life pitted against the world of affirmation.

Knights in his 'Wheel of Fire' has first expostulated his doctrine and in his interpretation of Hamlet evidently he tries to evidently utilized what he has proposed. How can one accept this reading of a play is a kind of antithesis itself. His very picture of the Hamlet universe is projected as healthy and strong except for Hamlet, who is a sick man even his mind neurotic, on the verge of madness. When Francis Fergusion has presents a reverse picture, in his book, The Idea of the Theater (1949). As per his elucidation Hamlet is a "myth and ritual" drama, his analysis is also faced on a new outlook which does not agree with T.S. Eliot's interpretation of Hamlet too.

Knight is able to convert the Tragedy of Hamlet into a farce because in Shakespeare's play it is Claudius who is the villain and Hamlet the victim. But
there is total anarchy in the Universe of Hamlet as shown by Knight’s. When compared to Knight’s, Bradley’s Hamlet is much more acceptable. Hamlet representing not negative attitude to life but the vastness and enigma of a soul as great as Hamlet’s, in struggle against evil.

Knights in his eagerness to convert all that is traditional in the analysis of Hamlets does not concentrate on the vital point of the play that also requires interpretation and it appears that deliberately Knight wants to maintain his impression of a new critic, hence to the prove his hypothesis correct he approves the thematic spiritual reality of this play as more important rather than the character or plot.
References:

4. Ibid. p.4.
5. Ibid, p.103.
7. Ibid, p.75.
8. Ibid, p.76.
10. Ibid, p. 10.
11. Ibid, p.11.
13. See Shakespearean Tragedy, p. 70-86.
15. Ibid, p.159.
17. Ibid.
19. Ibid, p.94.
22. Ibid, p.3.
23. Stoll’s, Shakespeare’s Studies, op.cit., p. 132.
27. *Art and Artifice* p. 102.
28. Ibid. p. 102-103.
29. Ibid. p. 106.
33. Stoll also sees a similarity between both Malevole and Hamlet 'as Cynical meditations and satirical mocker's in his rejoinders of his 'Review of English studies January 1935 he amplifies this point of view.
34. 34. *Hamlet the Man*, Ibid, p. 4.
35. Ibid, p.5.
38. Stoll in his writings has also mentioned that he is sure that the broading melancholy that is a part of Hamnlet’s Character has nothing to do what ever with the ‘Elizabethan humour’ but was instead developed along the line of Marston and a detailed comparison between Hamlet and the Malcontent has been drawn with illustration in many of Stoll’s article especially (Modern Philosofy Jan. 1906, pp. 289-301).
41. See *Hamlet the Man*, p. 13.
43. S. Viswanathan Ibid. p.9.
45. The quotations from the Tragedy of Hamlet have all been extracted from Stolls, Hamlet the Man, pp. 15-20. Hamlet (1919), pp. 52-4; Art and Artifice Chapter-V.

46. Hamlet the Man Ibid, p. 18 both the quotation in the passage are from here.


49. Ibid, p. 25.

50. Ibid, p. 27.


52. Hamlet Ibid, pp. 41-42.


54. Ibid, p. 115.


57. Ibid. p. 17.

58. This Lecture of Knights: 'Tolsoy's Attack on Shakespeare' (1934) has been included in The Wheel of fire, pp. 270-297.

59. Ibid, p. 3.

60. This theme is discussed by Knights in his essay, "The rose of Mary", The Imperial Theme (London, 1931) His analysis of Hamlet is only an extension from what he perceives in The Wheel of fire.


62. Ibid, p. 32.

63. Ibid, p. 40.

64. Ibid, p. 33.

65. Ibid, p. 35.

66. Ibid, p. 36.

CHAPTER – III
REINTERPRETING BRADLEY

Today in the year two thousand and two, Bradley’s *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) still enjoys a celebrity status. Bradley has survived two major assaults the first one introduced by the ‘realists’ as they were named and the other one carried out by the ‘New Critics’.

For generations in the past, it has been acclaimed by reputed critics as the truest the most profound book ever written on Shakespeare.¹ And in reality, even today we cannot ignore Bradley’s ten very carefully written Lectures. To quote John Russell Brown, ‘…an essential landmark in the endless terrain of Shakespearean criticism and Scholarship.”²

It would benefit us to remember the factors that escalated this massive offensive against Bradley. These important critics of the twentieth century Wilson Knight in his *Wheel of Fire*, L.C. Knight in his famous essay, *How many Children had Lady Macbeth and Lily B. Cambell in Shakespeare’s Tragic Heroes*, in opposing Bradley were actually rejecting the prevalent interest of character analysis, that had become almost an obsession with the victorians.³

The progenitors of character study highlighted only one side of Shakespeare’s work. It was alleged by the assailants of these victorians that they could not comprehend the nature of Shakespeare’s drama. They treated Shakespeare as if he was Ibson, and never paid heed that the character were not true to life. The initial doctrine of Dryden and then of Johnson had become gospel truths for them to be followed blindly. That all ‘characters are essentially true to nature and to life.”⁴ And most important they had completely divorced
Shakespeare from his background and the use of conventions in his plays were never considered. His plays appeared to have become novels in their tenure and his characters were no longer stage fit but men and women with real feelings and problems and this legitimized the use of psychology. These victorian critics also did not attach any special significance to the use of poetic language. They have excelled in the glorification and idolation of Shakespeare’s word but thought poetry and drama were to be studied as two different entities.

Bradley makes us feel, he has definitely pondered and lived with Shakespeare’s plays for quite a long time. His style of writing is conversational, it is the students he wants to address and hence it is in the form of lectures. His presentation is very subjective, it is not that he lacked the knowledge of the ancient art, history, philosophy or the stage craft. He just does not want his attention to stray from the text. He pours his entire heart and mind into the characters of Shakespeare’s plays. He explores minutely and probes very deep and actually transcend into the realm of philosophy.

Bradley in his own vicinity could be said to be an original thinker. He was daring enough to adventure into a new avenue that had never been explored. He put his belief regarding Shakespeare into words. He set about it in a very organized manner. First of all he propounded a hypothesis regarding, ‘The substance of Shakespearean Tragedy’.

As a critic of Shakespearean tragedy he presents the following characteristic of the protagonist for our enlightenment:

It is the story of one person, the hero, from a high status of life. “It is, in fact, essentially, a tale of suffering and calamity conducting to death.” (Shakespearean Tragedy, P.7) This extreme suffering and calamity is exceptional and also sudden, they
present a foil to the previous happy and glorious life lived by the hero."7

Thus Bradley’s explanation of Shakespearean tragedy is very similar to the medieval conception of tragedy being a reversal of complete fortunately during complete of wealth and destiny. This tragic sense does not stop here but the protagonists downfall affects the well being of the entire Kingdom or state that he belongs to.

And when he falls suddenly from the heights of earthly greatness to the dust, his fall produces a sense of contrast, of the powerlessness of man, and of the omnipotence—perhaps the caprice—of Fortune or Fate, which no tale of private life can possibly rival.8

Bradley further enlightens that tragedy befalls men of high rank because of their own deeds. “The center of the tragedy, therefore, may be said with equal truth to lie in action issuing from character, or in character issuing in action.”9 Each character has some ‘flaw’ or the other, he may be sick in the mind, or rather too ambitious, the supernatural and chance also has a role to play in misleading the hero.

In Bradley’s, Shakespearean Tragedy the heres are not perfect but they are exceptional human beings. And when in the end the tragedy befalls such a great human being there is an utter sense of loss and of ‘waste’. This compels Bradley to exclaim: ‘what a piece of work is man’, we cry; ‘so much more beautiful and so much more terrible than we knew!”10

Bradley proceeds further and describes the universe of Shakespeare, its moral order, its source of good and evil and reaches a conclusion that it is not
properly described by Shakespeare and neither is the law and order just and benevolent that is why, when the good person suffers it is utter 'waste' all that was lofty, noble and exalted. He could also be called a pioneer because it was he who for the first time responded to the poetry of Shakespeare's verse and paved the way for the imagist and the new thinker to explore an absolutely new method of studying Shakespeare. Although the critics of the symbolic movement see them selves as diametrically opposed to the nineteenth century character criticism. But Viswanathan argues, they have all the more reason to be thankful:

"The rise of the poetic approach has more to do with these developments than with a revolt against Bradley."^{12}

John Russell Brown applauds Bradley because as a critic of Shakespeare, his method is very modern, he always proceeds by questioning and doubt followed by multiple answers. He also plays the role of an explorer, his thirst for learning and achievement never seems to be quenched, he is always advancing and improving. Bradley as an interpreter was not only at pains to figure out Shakespeare's text and his meaning but also was very conscious of the needs of his reader.

Bradley was enamored by the classical thinkers and writers of the ancient time.^{13} While discussing the 'substance of tragedy' Aristotle is fleetingly acknowledged with reverence yet he seemed to be more under the influence of Socrates. In the beginning he seems to have adopted Hegel's point of view but gradually leaves him far behind, although Hegel was well known during Bradley's time.
In his later Academy Lecture on ‘Shakespeare the Man; “…he addressed himself with singular skill and caution to the task of mediating between the flamboyant confidence of the Brandes and Harris type of interpreter, and the negations of the School of Lee.” Perhaps, these were the reasons for Bradley to have been regarded as an authority on Shakespeare, in his own days. And even after ten years had passed D. Nichol Smith wrote and edited an introduction, (which he included in three centuries (1623-1840) of Shakespeare criticism,) in which he presents Bradley as a ‘traditionalist’.

Mr Bradley’s penetrative analysis of the four chief tragedies is the last great representative of nineteenth-century criticism, and nothing better in its kind need be expected. It continues the traditions inaugurated by Whitely and Morgann, and established by Coleridge and Hazlitt.

Although Mr John Russell Brown in his introduction, attached, to Shakespearean Tragedy, interprets Bradley’s discourse, ‘in the form of an active dispute’ but this is not acceptable. It was written as lecturer and even Bradley acknowledges this fact, dedicating it to his students.

“These Lectures are based on a selection from materials used in teaching at Liverpool, Glasgow, and Oxford; and I have for the most part preserved the Lecture form.”

Gary Taylor informs us that in 1900 Bradley was elected professor of Poetry at Oxford. These Lectures that have been merged in Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) and Oxford Lectures on Poetry (1909) were delivered during his occupancy for five years. Both his works got printed after Queen Victoria had departed for her heavenly abode. They represent the critical tendency of the last two decades of nineteenth century.
Bradley’s Lectures on Shakespeare were the most highly developed and influential specimens of the Victorian epoch of literary scholarship.¹⁷

These discourse of Bradley’s were intentionally planned to appear like Lectures, very similar to Dowden’s method and currently popular during that time. The initial purpose of these addresses were to very gently introduce a novice or a green horn into the realm of Shakespeare’s criticism, a discipline that was thought to be understood only by the dons of Literature. Hence if viewed against this background, Bradley becomes, much more accessible and approachable.

When compared to his predecessor Coleridge or even Keats, with their excellent and sudden moments of memorable and brilliant illumination of Shakespeare, that glitter and gleam may be absent from Bradley because as Mr Taylor conveys:

“Bradley uses the lower, steadier voltages of an electric bulb. What dazzles may cause momentary confusion; too memorable a phrase may distract us with its own elegance, luring us into speculations of our own when we should be attending to the Lecturer’s next paragraph. Bradley inducts us into routine.”¹⁸

These so far are favourable evaluation of Bradley but there are other very hostile ones too. Precisely three years after Bradley’s book was published Sir Walter Raleigh, made this stricture regarding the way characters were dealt by him: “The critics must needs be wiser than Shakespeare, and must finish his sketches for him, telling us more about his characters than even he knew.”¹⁹

Lily B. Campbell has written her estimate of Bradley forty years after he was published; it is her intention to recapitulate his significance in the light of what she has learned from the discovery of the formula of new criticism which
does not accept the value of any object, without exposing it to vigorous evaluation.\textsuperscript{20}

As a result of all her intense examination of Bradley’s particular version of Shakespearean Tragedy, she finds him afflicted with preconceived notion that was the trend of the era he lived in. In other words he could not transcend the tradition that existed in the Victorian age. Hence Bradley’s interpretations of Shakespeare did not take his Elizabethan setting into account. In fact Campbell feels, occasionally he took interest in petty matters and could not grasp

‘The significance of evidence important to the tracing of the moral pattern in the plays, to which task he had set himself.’\textsuperscript{21}

Passage after passage of Shakespearean Tragedy is scrutinized meticulously judged and rejected ruthlessly. She does not hesitate to word her objections, the very issue that Bradley focuses attention on, is called misleading. She does find Bradley, following in the footsteps of his originators and hence is unable to explain Shakespeare on the Elizabethan terms. But she does concede that A.C. Bradley’s interpretation was:

‘Partly psychological and partly metaphysical, was to serve as a new landmark and a new point of departure in Shakespearean criticism--- one may almost say in Literary criticism.’\textsuperscript{22}

In his own days when, Shakespearean Tragedy was published it was received with so much eagerness and interest not only that but the book made a powerful impact. It is said that this ‘mighty book’ took ‘Shakespearean criticism again into the realm of the universal and the significant.’\textsuperscript{23}
Most importantly, so powerful was the impact made by Bradley that he became the mouth piece of Shakespeare. Even in 1989 there are scholars like Gary Taylor who consider Bradley a model among Shakespearean critics. Even critics like Herford does not accept the historical version of Shakespeare because it does not reconcile with Bradley’s insight or interpretation:

The current doctrine hardening into dogma, that Shakespeare, like lesser men, can be interpreted only through the historic conditions in which he wrote, meant by the board, Bradley’s instrument of interpretation was the intensive insight of a trained, alert, and kindled imagination.  

Such critics who favored Bradley opted for the aesthetic tradition, they refuted the claim of historical critics because according to them they chained the genius of a person like Shakespeare and restricted and confined him to a certain time and place.

Katharine Cooke did the same job as L.B. Campbell of studying Bradley once more in the year 1972, the only difference was in their attitude. Cooke was an avowed admirer of Bradley and she out rightly defends him by asking who among the critics of Shakespeare has not some time or the other been lured to get attracted to Shakespeare’s characters. And since the opponent critics are themselves guilty of such fanciful indulgence they are trying to save face by ‘castigating’ Bradley. Another reason that Cooke suggests, ‘character-criticism is a vein exhausted by Bradley and hence looked upon with disfavour because it is no longer exploitable.’

Even, Bradley’s opponents who have scathingly attacked him for ‘character analysis have practiced this approach and found solace in such an indulgence though in a different manner. F.R. Leavis, L.C. Knight and later on
Empson have all responded to this indulgence. Bradley's method of character analysis may have become old fashioned but it has been replaced by some other 'valid views.' The nineteenth century character criticism still very much invogue but in a modified manner, according to the present day utility.

Another aspect that Bradley has completely ransacked is the obsession of greatness in Shakespeare and also the magnitude of his major character. He has made discloser in his book that he 'worshipped' Shakespeare this reflects itself, in the intensity of his feeling and in his writing. In the very beginning of his discourse on 'the substance of Shakespearean Tragedy, he bestows all praise to the 'tragic hero' of Shakespeare that he ....

'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. Hence, in the first place, a Shakespearean tragedy is never, like some miscalled tragedies, depressing. No one ever closes the book with the feeling that man is a poor mean creature. He may be wretched and he may be awful, but he is not small.

In his entire book Bradley is preoccupied with this mania of grandeur, where this Elizabethan author is concerned. When the tragic heros of Shakespeare suffer, the ‘calamity’ obviously becomes ‘exceptional’ because it inflicts a ‘conspicuous person’. The man who suffers ‘stood in high degree’, unknowingly he is beset by complete reversal of wealth and prosperity.

Tragedy in Shakespeare, observes Bradley, befalls only men of eminence like ‘kings’, ‘princes’ and leaders of states like Coriolanus, Brutus and Antony. The ache of separation of anxiety and regret are equal in royalty and
rustic, but the 'dignity' and 'greatness' of the royal person exceeds that of a rustic.\textsuperscript{31}

The condition of suffering of this noteworthy person has a reflection over the entire 'nation or empire'. The description of the 'mightiest of tragedies' and the powerfulness that emanates. Really Bradley does his best to place Shakespeare and his tragic plays on the pedestal for all time to come. The constant use of such words like 'greatness', the many faces of 'power' 'intelligence', 'life', 'glory' 'grand', 'beautiful', 'heroic', 'colossal' are identification of the all powerful Shakespeare that Bradley has made of him. Lear's description when he has lost all to his daughters except 'the soul in its bare greatness', this is all very awe inspiring. Shakespeare in Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy has been transformed into a master strokesman who has written about fantastic, ideal persons who are endowed with so much grandeur that the very universe seems to shrink in their sublime presence.

Stoll was of the opinion that the dramatist during Elizabethan time gave preference to dramatic situation and theme and their characters were never consistent, moreover the conventions had a very significant role to play. The flaws that were noted by Bradley and put up for analysis were only dramatic inconsistencies that never even attract notice during a stage performance. He does not want his attention to stray from the text. He pours his entire heart and mind into the characters of Shakespeare's plays. He explores minutely and probes very deep and actually transcends into the realm of philosophy.

Stoll and Bradley differ in their presentation of Shakespeare. For the American critic is very down to earth. He sees in Shakespeare a craftsman, a clever artisan, who had a job to perform that of pleasing his audience. That he
achieved the effect of staging and entertaining his audience through the contrast he conjures between the hero and his action. Othello is shown as a noble general and yet he is engulfed by jealousy so that he murders his innocent wife. Again the nobility of Macbeth is contrasted with the heinous crime he commits. It has been pointed out by Stoll that the inconsistencies that these nineteenth century critics talk about was not felt by the audience, when the plays were staged because then one’s whole attention is drawn by the characters and no one gets the time to think about such loopholes.

Bradley’s definition of greatness that he finds in Shakespeare, is sublime and spiritual whereas Stoll views in Shakespeare the greatness of a dramatic poet who achieves success on the stage through manipulation and evasions, even artifices.

Whereas the ‘New critics’ use imagery not to expose the greatness of Shakespeare nor the eminence of the character for investigative purpose to reveal the change or progress in a character; it is through the knowledge of symbolism that the drastic change in the behaviour of the protagonists is pinpointed and individualization of the character is revealed. Hence if we take into account, Bradley’s discussion of loftiness and the colossal image that he presents of Shakespeare and his characters in the major tragedy Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear and Othello. In this age and time of equality, fraternity and liberty its appears too childish and fictitious. That Shakespeare’s men and women have to be considered above all human beings and even superceding the nation because they belonged to a high ranking family. May be Bradley believed in the divinity of Kings and Queens, since he belonged to the Victorian era.
Perhaps, Bradley has succeeded, in surviving even today in the age of science and technology only because of the power of his lucid writing. Because such a belief as he nurtures of a pious and just hero, having the strength and might to transform this world into an ideal one. Such an obsession with greatness would be laughed at because nobody believes in such fiction. But still he presents a particular version of Shakespeare, that is totally at variance with all other critics. Bradley has maintained that individuality of approach that has helped him in surviving even in today’s, fast life.

If Bradley is estimated according to the readers response, he never tries to impose upon his readers, his own judgment or even advice. He appeals to us as being sincere and truthful. He is given to questioning himself again and again always doubting before accepting and even at times frankly admitting his incapability to understand. He is so confident of his authority on Shakespeare, that he felt that critics who did not adore Shakespeare or did not share his view were untrue to Shakespeare.

He shows his preference for an ‘unscholarly lover’ of Shakespeare rather than a critic who is a Shakespearian scholar. He encourages the perusal of an enthusiastic mind, who could imagine himself as an actor and try to learn all the parts but this recreation should only concern the mind and the recitation of verse and should have nothing to do with the gestures and movements on the stage. Hence in his opinion, ‘... a drama, is the right way to read the dramatist Shakespeare; and the prime requisite here is therefore a vivid and intent imagination.’\(^{33}\) This is the reason why, critics have thought it right and proper to censure Bradley for his presumptions. His Shakespearean Tragedy has been highlighted as ‘...a great monument to the closet Shakespeare’\(^{34}\)
As we know, Bradley in his book has shown preference to the study of Shakespeare's major characters. Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Macbeth systematically. In doing so perhaps he was following the tradition that Coleridge had started; 'I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so'. There is a lot of similarity between Bradley's depiction of characters to the 'over-reflective intellectualism' already prescribed by Coleridge. Shakespeare in Coleridge's pages becomes his mouthpiece and reflects the romantic ideals of the author himself even for his convenience extracted from Shakespeare's to be studied independently. This habit of Coleridge went mis-used by the of lesser critic. Coleridge himself was guilty of this offence he forgot that, plays were written to be staged.

Bradley was desirous of studying each play from the actors point of view but never like a director to whom the characters are just creations and no more. After having propounded his theory about Shakespearian tragedy he goes on to analyse each and every play at his own leisure and focuses his attention mainly on the characters. The stage creations of Shakespeare were personified by Bradley and mostly he remains engrossed in discussing their problems or their greatness as if those were the only reason Shakespeare depicted them. This conventional method that Bradley has adopted to present the Shakespearian characters is still under surveillance.

Interest in character compelled Bradley to explore the universe that exists in Shakespeare's plays and his philosophy of life. All this constant scrutiny of the text benefits the readers. For Bradley promotes himself from the position of an interpreter to that of a teachers and he shows as how to probe deep, below the surface and gather all kinds of evidences, external and internal. Regarding characters Bradley elucidates:
Shakespeare has concentrated attention on the obscurer regions of man’s being, on phenomena which make it seem that he is in the power of secret forces lurking below, and independent of his consciousness and will.\(^{36}\)

As a critic of Shakespeare, Bradley has always been approved by his fellow critics but it is his habit of going into unnecessary detail that is most irritating and that has been objected to. During the time Bradley’s book was published it was reviewed by a scholar and critic Mr J.C. Collins who expounds his opinion in The West Minster Gazette;

...... Professor Bradley treats us to special dissertations on such subjects as ‘Did Lady Macbeth really faint?’ Did Emilia suspect Iago?’ ‘Had Lady Macbeth any children?’\(^{37}\)

One must keep within limits, this is what may have been suggested by these critics. All this inquiry is unnatural and it does not in any way enhance our appreciation of Shakespeare’s play.

When Stoll’s writing is considered it is full of comparisons; you have the ancients and Greek, the moderns and the contemporary compared all the time. He has all the facts and figures on his finger tips. He is indeed a very well read person. He firmly believes that we must not forget the roots of an artist, and literary art has a lot of influence on his work.

Among the new critics, L.C. Knight’s was one of the first to object and show his distaste towards the intense enthusiasm in character depiction. This amusing title in the form of question was asked by Bradley himself which was adopted by L.C. Knight in his essay in 1932. ‘How many children had Lady Macbeth?’. But much later in the year 1959 in a lecture, ‘The question of character in Shakespeare’, Mr Knight did grant some concession to Bradley
that he had made the presence of Shakespeare, an inevitable reality in our lives. His criticism no longer has that earlier sting, only a desire that Bradley could have interpreted the play as a whole and could have held a broader outlook not just characters or tragedies.

Bradley's treatment of Shakespearean characters appears as if he was writing biography, and it did not appeal to most reasonable critics. Even L.C. Knight's assault was on the same vein, although much later. No matter how inevitable it was to know whether Lady Macbeth had been a mother and given suck to a child. Even if we do get the answer how old Hamlet was and why Lady Macbeth had fainted it really does not contribute towards the impact that a Shakespearian play has made on our mind. We must not forget that they are only stage characters and beyond that they do not exist.

Another very great reaction was towards Bradley's ignoring the literary scholarship of Shakespeare which started making its presence felt during this time. This attack was carried out by the realist school of critics as different as E.E. Stoll, L. Schucking and Robert Bridges. The only thing common was their criticism of Bradley, his psychological interpretation and lack of understanding towards the audience and the stagecraft of the Elizabethan time.

Among all the critics, it is felt most keenly, that Stoll was the only genuine scholar whose object was to restore Shakespeare to his settings. Hence his stricture on Bradley for studying Shakespeare in a historical vacuum was legitimate. In book after book, Stoll has vociferously proved through valid evidence that, great drama is rooted in melodrama. And on the stage the artist cannot just cannot present situations or character which are lifelike, he can only do so by creating an illusion. The artist thrives on creating a good impression.
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The artist cannot be arbitrary in this context, the company for whom he is writing has to survive and also the audience’s appreciation has to be seriously taken into account.

Bradley was converted into an easy target whom everybody loved to assail. But if we follow the history of Shakespearean criticism after a few years at the end of the twentieth century; it becomes apparent he had many followers. Gary Taylor studying him once again in 1989, is of the opinion that since ‘his meaning is so easy to follow’ hence he was frequently copied and even criticized.

Among the emulators of Bradley Mary Cowden Clarks, *Girlhood of Shakespeare’s Heroines* can be quoted as illustration, which can be rated as second hand literature. This is the reverse turn of all of Bradley’s imagination and musings on matters of no consequence, like what would have happened if Cordelia exchanged places with Desdemona.

If one focus our attention on the critics who came after Bradley, we find that with reference to Bradley, there were some reaction or the other, either critical or favourable. The following books that were published during that time was on the pattern that Bradley had established, that is character Analysis; Agnes Mure Mackenzie’s, *The Women in Shakespeare’s plays* (1924) and John Palmer’s *Political characters in Shakespeare* (1945) and *Comic Characters in Shakespeare* (1945-6).

But it is H.B. Chartlon who excelled in his book *Shakespearian Tragedy* (1948) which was:
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".... Avowedly written as a kind of supplement to Bradley's book on the same subject, with needless modesty Charlton speaks of himself as 'a mere scholar' who can only hope by an examination of sources and a study of the 'cosmic framework' of each play to add a little to the truth about Shakespeare which is contained in its purest form in the pages of Bradley.\(^{38}\)

J.L. Styan's has carried out a review in 1977 on the theatre practice and Elizabethan conventions and tradition prevalent during that time. He labels, Bradley's criticism as old fashioned and out moded. His effort of 're-creating' Shakespeare's scenes concealed' more than it has revealed. He agrees with Kenneth Muir that Shakespearean Tragedy was 'a great monument to the closet Shakespeare'.\(^{39}\)

Harley Granville-Barker in Styan's opinion was declared the greatest supporter of this current theatre based criticism, and is said to have been the greatest fan of Bradley because according to him Bradley studied the plays as plays only.

Hence on this topic of massive escalation towards Bradley, we can sum up that this author was a challenging adversary that his dissenters were rather proud of combating, they thought Bradley worthy of such attention. Bradley had a well known reputation to have been read by all, hence all this familiarity. This can surely be set up as an example a back handed compliment.

In order to trace the influence of Bradley on the new approach, in understanding Shakespeare's work we have to shift our attention towards those great forerunners especially Coleridge as he was revived during that very time of poetic thought. These progenitors of the modern movement have rejected all other approaches except, that, Shakespeare's plays are poetic creations. The plot and characterization has second hand significance for such critics and they
are desirous of interpreting Shakespeare’s plays through the poetry, images and ‘symbolic forces.’

This new approach can be said to be an extension of the tradition represented by Coleridge, Hazlitt and Bradley, in finding in Shakespeare a philosopher rather than a man of the theatre. Knight saw in Shakespeare above all a poet and Bradley has transformed him into a novelist. These character analyser’s of Shakespeare wanted to find the author in his character and according to Wilson Knight this kind of interpretation gave rise to adverse criticism.\(^{40}\)

But these very critics who have de-emphasized the study of characters, and even opposed it vehemently seem to indulge themselves in a similar way. In the preface to, The Wheel of fire Wilson Knight presents a case against the school of character analysis and also the realist group. But he does not seem to practice what he preaches. Even L.C. Knight in his essay on Hamlet (1940) writes about ‘Hamlet’ as if he was a known person living next door. He simply forgot that for the same reason he had vehemently condemned Bradley and even made fun of him for showing a curiosity regarding Lady Macbeth’s children. Their method of interpreting Shakespeare was very similar to Bradley’s though a bit modified. These poetic critic may imagine themselves to be inaugurating an absolutely new approach the truth is that they were using their knowledge of imagery and symbol to reveal the developments and the changes in Shakespeare’s characters only.\(^{41}\)

It would be wrong to think of Bradley an only as interpreter of character, his contribution can be assessed in other directions as well. Wolfgang Clemen’s has acknowledged Bradley’s service in this regard, that he was one of the first
to decipher the ‘metaphors and images’ of Shakespeare’s plays. Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy is given a place along with the work of Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare’s Imagery (1935) and also G. W. Knight’s, The Wheel of Fire (1930). He describes the contribution of these critics of whom Bradley was thirty years older in a similar manner.42

Even in the present century, Bradley’s name does crop up under some pretext or the other, he is still a factor to reckon with. No matter, in what ever manner they praise or blame Bradley, his name is never dropped from the critical scene. Kenneth Muir a distinguished and established critic of Shakespeare, (when got to) editing the main text for the Arden Shakespeare, is found him seeking Bradley’s assistance very frequently, although he is a very well read person, having the knowledge of all that the critics have been writing on Shakespeare from the last twenty years, but it is to the outworn pages of Bradley that, he refers to most often.

When Maynard Mack’s, The Jacobean Shakespeare: Some Observations on the Construction of the Tragedies had been published in 1960 the writer modestly describes his wish of writing a book with ‘a modest supplement to A.C. Bradley’s pioneering analysis, of the construction of Shakespearian Tragedy.’ He also concede’s Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy to be ‘still the best account we have of the outward shape’ of Shakespeare’s plays.44

The originality of character- criticism that existed during the Victorian era may have lost its glitter and gleam, but if we scan carefully it is still flourishing in some form or the other in the modern criticism of today. There are scholars like Charlton who are declared devotees of Bradley, who imitate his love for characterization but of course with a lot of amendment. Their
approach towards a character is external and objective and not psychological like Bradley’s.

Another modification of Character analysis can be found in J.I.M. Stewart’s, Character and Motive in Shakespeare.\(^{45}\) To achieve through his book a modern critical aspect he has made use of Freudian psychology and Frazerian anthropology. The book is also adorned with the importance given to the poetry during this time, by the New critics. Even Gary Taylor a very current author acclaimed as ‘the leading practitioner of the new histrionics by the English Literary History’ and ‘a superstar among the younger generation of textual critics’ by The Times Literary Supplement has thought it fit to present Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy as a work of ‘philosophical scholarship.’ He is further of the opinion that:

Like literature itself, the study of literature evolves; as biological evolution culminated in man, so critical evolution culminated in philosophy.\(^{46}\)

To provide strength to his statement he quotes from Dowden’s introductory lecture, that in a student of English Literature expansion takes place and that he passes three stages in his life, ‘from the biographical and the historical to the philosophical study of Literature.’\(^{47}\) When Bradley is viewed in this light the weak points in his book could be explained.

To sum up, Bradley’s, his book may not be a complete guide on Shakespeare which it is impossible to expect any single book to be. He may not have done full justice to Shakespeare as a stage writer of the Elizabethan time, but very few books can be said to have had a proximity as Bradley is said to, with a mind as great as Shakespeare. Bradley’s master piece in the form of Shakespearean Tragedy is a necessary requirement a true companion to
Shakespeare’s plays, and we just cannot do without it. It was written ninety eight years ago and it still does the job of enhancing our knowledge and granting a sense of general well being that Bradley is there and now we can enter into the Shakespearean world.

The superb comprehension of the book keeps us engaged. The frequent reading of the book opens new vistas of meaning. Before the final summing up, it would be suggested to read Bradley with the heart and not the mind, during leisure, when we have the time ‘to stand and stare’.


References:


3. See Kenneth Muir; Ibid, p.3; P. Murray; Ibid., pp.1-10. The factors that brought about the wholesale rejection of 19 century mode of Character analysis has also been discussed in a broader perspective in the first chapter of this work.


6. Ibid., p.7.

7. Ibid., p.10.

8. Ibid., p.5.


10. Ibid., p.16.

11. See Ibid., p.18 far a detailed explanation of Bradley’s concept of Shakespeare’s universe.


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15. Shakespeare Criticism, Ibid., p.xxi.


18. Ibid.


22. Ibid., p.V.

23. Ibid.


27. Shakespearean Tragedy, Ibid., p.15.

28. Ibid., p.3.

29. Ibid., p.4.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p.5.


33. See the preface in Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy Ibid.
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36. Shakespearean Tragedy, Ibid., p.XVII.

37. The Westminster Gazette (28 January, 1905)

38. Shakespearean Survey 4, 1951, p.4.

39. Cited from Bradley’s, Shakespearean Tragedy, Ibid., p.XXI.


41. What many of us do not know, this gay remark ‘How may children had Lady Macbeth’ was the contribution of F.R. Leavis adopted from Bradley’s book itself and used by L.C. Knight’s.

42. Wolfang Clemen’s, The Development of Shakespeare’s Imagery 1951.

43. Cited from Bradleys, Shakespearean Tragedy Ibid., p.XXII.


46. Gary Taylor, Ibid., p.223.

47. Ibid.
CHAPTER IV
STOLL’S APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE’S DRAMA

Elmer Edgar Stoll (1874-1959) was an American scholar and critic and also for many years a professor of English at the University of Minnesota. He has been vastly acclaimed as an academician, critic and interpreter and above all for being a master in the art of polemics. It is my intended purpose here to trace Stoll’s development as a very significant critic of Shakespeare. But some how he was not able to make his mark and went away unsung and unnoticed. In this chapter his specific understanding of Shakespeare has been presented. In the conclusive chapter, an endeavour has been made to analyse the reason he was not acclaimed. It has been the prevalent tendency of Stoll’s contemporaries and his censurers, not only to project his contributions as historical but also to link his name with that of L.L. Schucking since both of these critics expressed their disagreement with Bradleys method of dispensing with the characters in Shakespeare’s major tragedies. They were seen as the representative of a historical school of Shakespeare but with a difference. If one cast a backward glance towards the history of Shakespearian criticism, even critic as Dryden, Pope and (even) Dr. Johnson had the inclination to compare Shakespeare to his age and Viewers.¹

What is meant here was that the usage of historical data in the criticism of Shakespeare was not a new discovery. These past masters had already practiced it, but there is a ‘particular version of it that is new, which has been the unique contribution of these two critics Stoll and Schucking.

Morris Weitz, shows his preference in the inclusion of these other critics also, the historical approach that has been attempted by these particulars critics,
as Variegated as, J.M. Robertson, E.E. Stoll, L.L. Schucking, Theodore, Spencer and even to some extent Lily Campbell is comparatively fresh and also untouched. It is enlightening to note that to Morris Weitz, G. Wilson Knight and his group has been identified as 'anti-historical', A.C. Bradley, the representative of the criticism of character analysis appears 'un-historical' and J. Dover Wilson is said to use history aesthetically.

These men of vision are different because they insist on the urgency “to see Shakespeare in the context of the life and literature of his age, and opposed themselves against what they regarded as the subjectivism of their colleagues”. There is no denying the fact that if Stoll’s name is linked with that of Schucking it was for a definite reason, a sense of purpose that did not go unnoticed. Stoll and Schucking's approach has been unified, when they, in their own individual manner have opposed, the sort of impressionistic criticism that was represented by Bradley in his Shakespearean Tragedy. They both desired that the plays of Shakespeare should be judged in the context of the period. For as has already been indicated in Chapter-III of this thesis in detail, that since Bradley had become so engulfed with characters analysis, in the major plays of Shakespeare that he left a glaring defect in his interpretation having forgotten that to study Shakespeare’s character, the writer himself cannot be displaced from his own background and setting of the plays Bradley also seems to ignore that Shakespeare above all was a practicing playwright and that his plays had been written to be staged and not read like a novel. Also the role of the audience and its impact on the writer was not considered at all by Bradley. Hence followed, the violent realist or historical reaction, against the extravagance. The excess that was practiced by the romantic critics in the form of character analysis has
already been highlighted in the first chapter of this thesis and all the major critics have been discussed in this context.

Just because Levin L. Schucking was a German Scholar his writing and understanding of Shakespeare is not to be taken for granted. His extensive interest in Shakespeare and his work speaks volumes for this Scholar of Elizabethan conventions. He has written about Shakespeare from the Elizabethan and historical point of view that is what brings him so close to Stoll above all his study concerning the theatre and the audience had introduced a new way of studying not just Shakespeare but all the dramatist in general.

And hence his approach towards Shakespeare has been rated as being historical approach in its purest and simplest form.3

Stanley Wells, in his essay: Shakespeare criticism since Bradley, sees much that is similar in Schucking and Stoll. First of all they were against the over enthusiastic admiration of Shakespeare that the Romantic and the Victorian critics were in the habit of expressing. Both of these authors were very much influenced by Robert Bridges writings especially “his accusation that Shakespeare produced his effects by deliberately pandering to the supposed stupidity and moral bluntness of Elizabethan audiences…”4

Mr Wells further enlightens us regarding Schucking’s work that makes interesting reading; “Schucking, in the book referred to, develops the thesis that Shakespeare’s art form is in fact a mixture of the most highly developed with quite primitive elements, like Bridges he finds that Shakespeare neglects consistency and logic, and seek and the immediate effect at the, expense of the overall design. Also like, Bridges, he regards such characteristic and as flaws in Shakespear’s art, and does not, as some later critics have done, attempt to justify them in terms of a higher appropriateness. He agrees in fact with Ben Jonson, that ‘Shakespeare wanted art’.
Adopting common sense explanations where they are available, he tends to reduce everything to its lowest terms; but his book is a good corrective to over subjective attitude. 5

Even P. Murray while tracing the Shakespearian scene of the twentieth century perspectives argues in the same vein and sees a similar effect in the work of these critics of different origin, one American and the other German but sadly enough P. Murray does not bestow the same understanding regarding the nature of their work as has been exhibited by S. Viswanathan. Mr Murray even, traces a similarity between Stoll and Shucking with that of Tolstoy and Bridges. Murray has frankly admitted that both these critics appeal to him as historical in this approach just because of their constant insistence towards interpreting Shakespeare according to the Elizabethan times, hence in Murray’s opinion these critics were preventing Shakespeare’s from becoming universal and reaching out beyond time and space. And this is because Murray holds as if Stoll and Schucking had chained Shakespeare to his own time, age and even convention that has resulted in his confinement. It appears distasteful and even offensive to Mr. Murray that Shakespeare should be studied according to Elizabethan tradition which was “crude” and ‘primitive’ and which made adequate and plausible characterization all but impossible. 6

Murray emulates Bradley when he argues about the real significance of Shakespeare’s character and wants to accept them as true to nature and to life. He would rather follow in the footsteps of the generations of critics who have been beset by the characters in Shakespeare’s drama and for whom characters have been the only criterion of judging Shakespeare’s greatness of art.

Hence he is not ready to either accept or believe, Schucking’s thesis, that Shakespeare often made use of ‘primitive’ devices in the depiction of
characters. Just to make the plays appear more exciting and dramatic he would often alter the depiction of characters half-way and that is why perhaps the characters appear inconsistent and un-unified. If one glance backwards, one will remember Rhymer’s reaction to the characters in Othello, though he could not give a definite reason for the irregularity in Othello and even Iago’s nature. But Schucking cites illustrations and keenly observes that Iago who is presented as a wicked character, and who openly admit in the play that he is perverse and takes pride in his perversion. When in reality, if at all Shakespeare was presenting a character true to life, like the critic of romantic era claims Shakespeare should have disguised the wickedness of his nature. Schucking points at this great lapse on the playwright part that is very objective and very startling too and the reverse of ‘psychological realism’. Not only the minor characters but even the major one have a split personality, and are a bundle of unexpected contradiction. Cleopatra from the beginning of the historical play is presented as a woman of easy virtue, in fact no better than a courtesan but in the later scene she is altered completely and no trace of her initial characterization is found. This side of her character presents a pensive, reflective, selfless and noble woman. And Schucking finds no answer for this change, not even psychological coherence.

While discussing Schucking’s contribution towards the understanding of Shakespeare. It would be worthwhile to contrast Schucking’s outlook with that of Stoll, so that the cord of systematic thoughts may not be disrupted and most important, it was here that these two critics united in their outlook although with a difference, most significant they were always spoken by men of taste as belonging to the same approach and they were classed as historical by most.
Nevertheless, if they are to be studied profoundly and observed minutely, their alternate voices should be distinguished separately so that their outlook and understanding can be classified.

Both Stoll and Schucking appear to attach too much importance to the inconsistency and loopholes that occur during Shakespeare's presentation of characters and most of the time they are engrossed in the explanation sometimes negative and at other time positive and hence their work appear to most critics of even Kenneth Muir's eminence or for that matter to P. Murray as being just a reaction against Bradley and his followers. They are depicted as having no other purpose or even interest than following the favourite pasttime of finding pleasure in making Bradley 'a whipping boy'

Hence decorating them with such epithets as 'hard-boiled realists' and shrugging away their original contribution towards Shakespeare's criticism as being just a 'reaction' against Bradley became a common place attitude of their fellow contemporary and intellectuals.

But evaluating them on this basis is actually inflicting a serious injury on their extraordinary achievement.

What is involved is a quite different ulterior conception of Shakespearian drama seen as governed by a set of primitive conventions. This conception, which lays stress on the non-naturalistic conventional basis of Shakespeare's drama, concerns not just character but all the major elements."

Furthermore considering the study of both these critics in the same vein is all very well but while doing this one must also perceive that in the matter of interpretation and insight both were different from each other as Schucking most concentrated upon:
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"...the role of primitive stage conventions and emphasizes their force and meaning: their effect on our understanding of the play".

In this regard Schucking's approach can be said to be sociological as well as historical since throughout his book called, *The sociology of Literary Taste* (1944), he remains very conscious and alert regarding the wishes and expectations of the original audience.

Both Stoll and Schucking explain inconsistencies in terms of conventions'. Even though the use of dramatic conventions by Shakespeare to exhilarate and enhance the effect of drama on the audience is viewed by the German scholar as defects in Shakespeare's Plays. He is often troubled by these lapse that he could not explain away, since perhaps his understanding was not mature enough to grasp what Shakespeare was conveying through the use of convention. Also his bent of mind was towards. Naturalism, he is prejudiced enough to blame Shakespeare for the simplicity of his art. However,, this point of view is some what rectified in his later writings. His most popular and valuable individual contribution is the revelation of the device called 'soliloquy' as a technique and convention of 'direct self-explanation'. His work projects his till towards naturalism.

The significant contribution of these two critics towards Shakespeare's use of 'primitive' devices to achieve 'dramatic effect' have been very intelligently and beneficially handled by such critics as M.C. Bradbrook and S.L. Bethell, in order to present the craftsmanship of Shakespeare as he really meant it to be.

To say the least the impact of the countering attack led by these two critics on their own just cannot be undermined. It was they who made the world
aware of Shakespeare as a Elizabethan-Jacobean, playwright although no doubt a universal genius, but with a difficult duty to perform—the pleasing of his audience and keeping with the tradition of his time and place. It was they who broke this looming myth that in A.C. Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) ‘the last word’ about Shakespeare had been written and nothing more could be said. This habit of interpreting ‘art for life’ was also repudiated and the turning point came when the study of the ‘conditions and conventions of the Elizabethan theatre’ became inevitable in order to interpret some of the famous 19th century critical dilemmas, which these critics, loved psychologising and interpreting according to their own whims and fancies. Some of these well known problems are Othello’s jealousy, Iago’s-lack of motivation, Lear-division of his kingdom and of course the most favourite Hamlet’s delay.

More over both these scholars, presented for the first time, a picture of Shakespeare that was entirely new and unique in its origin that of “a busy, often harassed artificer”. In their individual studies of Shakespeare’s work they also kept the reaction of the original audience in mind.

Another critic who has contributed immensely to Stoll’s understanding of Shakespearian drama is Robert Bridges. Once interest in historical knowledge became an essential study

‘...in the second half of nineteenth century, attention was directed to the Elizabethan audience which, in one view, conditioned or determined the nature of Shakespearian drama’.

His book, “The Influence of the Audience on Shakespeare’s Drama (1907)” is a thorough study of the audience in Shakespeare’s time. Whatever, Bridges could not understand in Shakespeare’s lines he sorted it as defects or fault in the plays of Shakespeare, these unlikely plots and fickleness in the art
of character depiction was described as, 'extreme badness of passages', 'bad jokes and foolish verbal trifling'. Bridges puts the responsibilities of the 'inconsistency' in Shakespeare's art on the audience. Since by Profession Shakespeare was a playwright he had a difficult job to perform, to please his audience he had to compromise and thus he could not maintain the standard he was actually capable of. If again we walk down memory lane it will be remembered that Elizabethan audience were never thought to lack intelligence by Shakespeare's critics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This view presented by Robert Bridges is indeed a unique way of looking at things unexplored in the world of Shakespeare. This point of view gave way to a new approach in Shakespeare and now the demands of the audience and their influence on a playwright is also taken into consideration.

Recently, studies of the 'original audience' for not only Shakespeare but also his contemporaries and the present dramatist, has also flourished. Stoll has also incorporated this idea of the original audience into his studies, that is in the context of the relationship of a playwright to his playgoer's. Viswanathan has also keenly noted this contribution with approval of Robert Bridges with approval;

"The positive result of Bridge's approach has been to underline the need for awareness of the nature, taste and response of audiences."

However, Bridge's criticism of the Elizabethan audience has not been acceptable to many critics of the modern times. They have absolutely rejected Bridge's claim that these audience of Shakespeare's time were mere ignorant groundlings. Alfred Harbage and many others of his time have questioned this
assumption of Robert Bridges on the basis of the research and investigation carried out, when today nothing is left to conjecture or mere speculation.

Harbage has directly spoken out against Bridge's censure of the Elizabethan audience in his next book. This inferior view of the Elizabethan audience and the blame that it was their poor taste that was reflected in Shakespeare's play is as old as 18th century, which was made into a ready made excuse by Bridges. But modern findings and scholarships do not take such opinion into consideration unless it is factual. Bridge's study of the audience may not have been data based, but initially it was his idea of studying Shakespeare's play from the point of view of the playgoers. He started the trend of studying the indirect impact of audience-cooperation.

Another very interesting point of view in this context has been raised by G.H. Herfords: He tells his readers that 'more fundamental questions than that of 'inconsistency' have been raised by Shakespearean investigation by Professor Stoll and he wonders that if ever the Elizabethan audience had read Bradley's analysis of the major tragedy of Shakespeare along the line of Aristotle and Hegel, would they have understood it. Well Herford, seems to be embarking on the same line of enquiry that may be turned speculative and fanciful. He also makes us aware that, there have been instances when the practical sagacity of the literary scholar has helped the poetic interpretation of the modern critics, that has goaded them towards reciprocal cooperation.16

We can conclude that these scholars of Shakespeare have studied various aspects of Shakespeare's scholarship, which had never been considered before. Hence their immense contribution in this respect just cannot be undermined.
A first hand report on Stoll can be gathered from Harry Levin; who described him as a tall, thin, bookish, austerely, conations figure’ he further says that Stoll lived in a weathered and rambling gingerbread house near the east bank of the Mississippi River, close to the University and far from the rest of the town.

Interestingly, we are enlightened that Stoll was a very lonely man, he never was on good terms with his colleagues, however some of his advanced students were very devoted to him. All this about Stoll’s personal life is very significant, as will be seen in the last chapter of this thesis in the conclusion. Levin provides a first hand information since he was known to Stoll.

His method of interpreting Shakespeare was disliked by the other Shakespeare critic. He was seen as a dissenter because he did not indulge in Shakespeare’s eulogy. His contention was Shakespeare would be better understood if he were compared to his fellow contemporaries and the background of his plays were not forgotten. And it was his and lates on Granville-Barkers that brought about a breakthrough in that romanticized character-study which had reached its limits with A.C. Bradley.

There is no denying the fact that some of Stoll’s studies have the subtitle: “A historical and comparative studies”. But this title was not because he was tracing Shakespeare’s history as critics have branded him as a historical critic of Shakespeare. But all Stoll demands is Shakespeare ‘was best understood in the tradition of its prototypes, modes, and conventions, and that he belonged to a world which included Greek drama, Commedia dell’ Arte, Moliere, Racine, Goethe, Ibsen, and Shaw.”
Even Stoll’s article, ‘Shakespeare studies: Historical and Comparative in Method’, has emphasized the fact that Shakespeare’s place was on the stage and he had not written to be read like a novel, interpreting him like the stories of James Joyce and depicting Shakespeare’s character like real persons and even psychologising, according to Stoll’s understanding all this was anachronistic.

In all of Stoll’s work, the thesis that Shakespeare could only be understood according to his tradition has always remained in his mind. He supports this contention first and foremost. All his articles and monographs have floated the idea of an Elizabethan Shakespeare. Stoll is completely submerged by this controversy of the Elizabethan term and condition, he wants one and all to review literature in the way that ‘Shakespeare intended and his audience comprehended it.’

In the very first sentence of his opening chapter ‘Art and Artifice’ he admit frankly that for him: The core of tragedy (and of comedy too, for that matter) is situation; and a situation is a character in contrast and perhaps also in conflict, with other character or with circumstances.

And because the ancients and the Elizabethan’s never wrote an original play but instead ‘an old story was used anew’ hence Stoll thinks it was quite natural that they gave supremacy to plot construction and not characterization. By this, very, simple observation he lays bare his intention from the very beginning. He has again supported this litigation in ‘Poets and Playwrights’ that “……situation is the essence and soul of drama.”

Stoll appears very keen to trace Shakespeare’s influences. His research regarding the background, stage history and sources, leads Stoll to confirm the tragedy of Hamlet to be in the tradition of revenge tragedies or heroic romance:
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“...a drama of intrigue, blood, and fate—a tradition, derived from Seneca and sponsored in the Renaissance especially by Kyd,...”

That is why Stoll is always at great pains, to convince, the other men of learning, who have made it a habit to study Shakespeare out of time and space. These anachronistic views of his fellow critics have compelled him to take a defensive attitude in all of his writings and most of the time he is repeating himself. It is due to the urgency of the objective he has chosen for himself to surround Shakespeare’s plays with his own audience and tradition. Since he believes in the interpretation that he had discovered and this is what he thinks Shakespeare had also desired so since it was “more like him and his age.”

Most important, Stoll never ceases to forget Shakespeare’s surrounding and nor that primarily he was a playwright. Although his task is full of strife and controversies and his life filled with isolation, and his work is full of challenges and his style never dull or insipid, and his resolve full of determination. His is not the lone voice crying in wilderness, there were other men of learning who agree to this aspect of interpreting Shakespeare. Robert Bridges and Schucking have already contributed in this regard. Stoll was very modern in presenting this outworn contention of his, he is comparative and very knowledgeable. His study always in the proper context he has a thorough understanding of the Elizabethan conventions. He compares Shakespeare to the French, the Greeks and to all of Shakespeare’s contemporaries and does not spare even the modern authors. He has all the facts and figures on his finger tips. So much so that Herford has called him, the ‘modern realist of the more mechanical type.’
Stoll’s ‘Art and Artifice’ could be given the position of being his mouthpiece since not only is this book the quintessence of all his other extensive works but is also the culmination of his enterprising scholarship. The doctrine that he was able to form here, is not his alone but also the contribution of many other worthy critics. Among them Schucking and Robert Bridge’s have already been introduced.

In his monograph, Professor Maqbool H. Khan has remarked about, E.E. Stoll’s, Art and Artifice:

‘Almost all the books written by Stoll are collection of essays directly or indirectly relating to problems in Shakespearian study. His books are remarkable for the fact that certain themes turn up again and again almost obsessively- whatever the ostensible topic, and this leads one to suggest that anyone of them could have been called Art and Artifice in Shakespeare.26

We may detect a tinge of sarcasm creeping into his tone but actually the present author is a staunch supporter of Stoll’s work. He does concede that his books do convey the message or the purpose for which they were written ‘in a salient and succinct manner.’

In his preface of ‘Art and Artifice’, Stoll pleads with his readers to be judged according to ‘the light of the Dogmata’. He puts a lot, of emphasis on ‘The Importance of the Poet’s Purpose’. Stolls only purpose in tracing Shakespeare’s craftsmanship is to bring out the incredible beauty of his art which is realistic and not farfetched. And he is definitely rejecting the epithet bestowed upon him of a realist, ‘mechanical’ and historical. Because he stands resolute in his stance and says. “I think in what is positive and constructive, poetical and dramatic, not ‘scientific’ or historical....”27
It has been recommended by Stoll to study, the conventions as a prelude to the study of Shakespeare. Some of the convention have been discussed elaborately and these undoubtedly illuminate many inconsistencies in Shakespeare’s plays.

The techniques that were employed by the Elizabethan Jacobean writers, in order to write a play whether tragedy or comedy may be considered old fashioned, second hand or even moth-eaten in the present time, but during Shakespeare’s time those devices were thought to be “the traditional means of attaining the contrast or conflict, the compression and condensation, which drama of necessity seeks. In them selves they are devices of accumulation and simplification.”

In addition to this apprises Stoll, the men of taste did not at all hanker after an original product of their own imagination, it was the prevalent trend among the Elizabethan writers to adopt stories and plots from others. The present authors, poets and playwright are found to be much more honest to Stoll, as it is never their intention to catch hold of the work of ancient authors and present it in a new manner. That is, they are not plagiarists like Shakespeare rehashing old plots.

These Elizabethan Jacobean dramatist as has been emphasized by this American stagirite were themselves never creative or inventive they were more at ease grabbing old stories and plots and furnishing them lavishly once more renovating them.

In fact, the Elizabethan and Jacobean were more concerned regarding the proper choice of a situation enriched with intrigue and confrontation and for the achievement of such a striking plot they very easily left out ‘probability and
psychological reasonableness. This was the customary, practice prevalent during those time and they were blissfully ignorant of psychology.

Stoll probes deeper and unravels and enlightens us thus:

Indeed, in the greatest tragedies (and comedies and epics too) the situation has been fundamentally improbable, unreasonable. What are the greatest stories in the world? Those of Orestes, Oedipus, Achilles, and Odysseus; of Iphigeneia, Dido, Phaedra, Medea, and Herod and Marianne; of Tristram and Isolt, Siegfried and Brunhilde: of the cid, Faustus, and DonJuan; of Lear, Othello, Macbeth, and Hamlet; all of them embodying situations improbable to an extreme degree. Their improbability is the price of their effectiveness. Such fine and fruitful situations life itself does not afford. The sharper conflict provokes the bigger passion; the more striking contrast produces the bigger effect; and to genius the improbability is only a challenge.\(^29\)

And yet again Stoll presents for our perusal some other prominent plays of Shakespeare that may be tragic, comic or for that matter historical, but they do not have any link whatever with the real life, they can be said to offer all other aspect except being true to life.

Timon, Romeo and Juliet, Richard III, The Merchant of Venice, Much Ado, As you Like it, the comedy of Errors, Alts Well, Measure for Measure, Cymbeline, Pericles, the Winter’s Tale, The Tempest: these, and the greater ones already mentioned, are stories of disguise, mistaken identity, feigning, or substitution; of tyranny or trickery, deception or slander; of eavesdropping, or the fateful finding of rings, letters, or handkerchiefs; of apparent deaths and revivals; of riddling wills, vows, or oracles; of love or generosity suddenly and irrevocably turned to hatred; and of fate or the supernatural, villainy or magic, love or revenge, triumphant over all.\(^30\)

Supporting this contention of the use of convention in Shakespeare’s plays, Stoll insists emphatically that these playwrights were compelled to
employ such devices, in order to present a dramatic effect that was harmoniously blended. They were rather more desperate to achieve a dramatic and poetic structure then to just present character that emerged above the theme and structure of a play. They gave all precedence to ‘emotional’ illusion and not to ‘verisimilitude’.  

Their object was surely not presenting life as it was, on the stage and in order to garner support for this conviction, Stoll takes the help of Aristotle’s statement. “The impossibilities are justifiable,” speaks the ancient stagirite, if they serve the end of poetry… if they make the effect of some portion of the work more striking.” Longinus is also quoted, by Stoll, “the effect of genius is not to persuade (or convince) the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves, and the object of poetry is to enthrall.”

These are the limitations or restrictions that every dramatists encounter and for Stoll, Shakespeare was no exception, unquestionably the conventions have a great role to play in his tragedies and especially in Hamlet and Othello, Shakespeare has made lavish use of the dramatic illusions.

Regarding the tragedy of Othello- the noble Moor, Stoll apprises that definitely the plot was borrowed from a story or legend and not a play. The situation here is obviously incredible and full of conflicts. The main character is that of a man presented as straitlaced but suddenly his nature changes absolutely which is reflected in his action. When the play begins Othelo is bestowed with all virtues of nobility. He is projected as a hero who is said to be without any jealousy and exceptional large heartedness, after ward he turns out to he a person weak of will and mind and without any evidence, believes, a slanderer, lago, who castes aspersion on his wife’s innocence so much so that
he murders her in cold blood, and does not even give her the benefit of doubt. All this is really and truly fantastic and it takes centuries of investigation in Shakespeare to have realized this great lapse and no one found this or even pointed at such a great defect in Shakespeare's art. It was Stoll who for the first time had the courage to sort out this kind of implausibility that is very frequent in Shakespeare and also found a reasonable explanation for it. In his "Shakespeare Studies" this topic of a Slanderer's art is minutely illustrated. The convention of the Slanderer believed, even by those who have no sound reason or natural inclination to believe him, is in story or in drama, a very ancient one, and has only of late been quite done away with.

This art of employing convention illuminates Stoll, for creating illusion in a drama was not new that Shakespeare has been made accountable by the Victorians and romantic critics. He was already doing so with Claudio in Much ado, Gloster in king Lear, and Posthumus in Cymbeline; only in Othello this art of the convention becomes much more polished and superior. By using this clever method Shakespeare is able to extract sympathy for his hero at the same time absolving him of all sins.

To make the story appear highly dramatic, the situation is made incredible and full of contradictions. Reason has no place in such stories, the motivator or the temptor has to be external like in Othello; it is lago, and in Macbeth; the witches and Lady Macbeth. Hence it cannot be stated definitely according to Stoll, that the tragedy occurred because of ambition or jealousy. Like Bradley interprets it is his Shakespearean Tragedy, and it makes interesting reading, but the credibility of his interpretation remains doubtful.
Stoll could not hide the distaste that he felt, about the present generation making interpretation and criticism a basis for their instinct and impulses. No matter how much these critics influenced by Psychology vent their feeling about:

“self-deception and marked movements, brain storms and ‘swoons of the mind’, the method of French classicism prevails, motives perceptibly appear, the mental as well as the emotional integrity and identity of the character are (as far as may be) kept intact, and The man who murders for ambition or jealousy at the end is made discernibly ambitious or jealous from the beginning.”

If the critics of the 19th century have pursued the point that Shakespeare developed his characters according to the psychology of present day and his major characters became tragic figures because of the ‘tragic flaw’ in their character. Well, Stoll cannot agree to such presumptive assumptions Bradley part since the study of the English stage during the Elizabethan time does not give any such indication neither was there any such technique nor was it ever developed by Shakespeare. (Ibid S. Studies).

In his Art and Artifice and also in his monograph on Othello, this connoisseur of criticism puts forth a very emphatic argument and indicates how Shakespeare after having endowed his hero with all virtue:

If virtue no delighted beauty lack,

Your son-in-Law is far more fair than black.

Othello in contrast to the nobility of his nature commits a villainous act that goes against his very nature. Will such an act be called psychology “Though less obvious and external, it is, an artifice of constructive characters,
like other traditional forms of deception in fiction. Such as disguise and eavesdropping.” The backbiting of Iago appeals more to Othello than the trust he had reposed in his beloved’s innocence.

Due to the outcome of this ‘drama of defamation’, Othello is incited into a terrible flame of anger and hate that has no place for reason but can only be satiated after he has actually murdered his wife.

So unimaginable is this theme of the ‘calumniator credited’ that it just cannot stand up to inquiry and logic. Really how could a general of great velour, stoop so low as to imagine that Desdemona who had tainted her honour in eloping with the Moor and chose him even when her father came to her rescue. Why would she be meeting and flirting with Cassio behind his back; most incredible of all the allegations she had been granting many favours to Cassio since her arrival in Cyprus. If we examine the play for evidence it was only a day before. This is the moment Shakespeare wants to attain, explains Stoll: “... the grossness—the improbability—of the charges only serves to enrage the hero the more”.

Such a situation enhances the thrill and the audience are worked up, all this rushes the hero into hasty action. Hence this incitement of excitement was a very popular device among the ancient too and employed into service by the Elizabethan and Renaissance tragedy and comedies such as: Hippolytus by Euripides and also by Seneca and Racine to name a few.

“In these certainly, it is not the image of life; and if Shakespeare’s use of convention, though vastly superior, be intended for such, is this greatly to his credit?”
However this argument is not just Stoll’s figment of imagination because he is a sceptic. Many who have read this play have been confused regarding this sudden change in Othello’s nature and so their opinion have been differed. But a very reputed stage interpreter, Mr. Granville Barker while discussing Glostes has remarked that: “Shakespeare ask us to allow him the fact of the deception even as we have allowed him Lear’s partition of the Kingdom.”

Likewise in the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, unravels Stoll, Shakespeare was not at liberty to pursue the character of Hamlet according to his own vision since the old Hamlet had only been recently staged and if Shakespeare was to transform the entire portrayal, the audience would not accept this new version of Hamlet. Therefore he had to follow the tradition, that was the prevalent custom that all the playwrights followed. The only improvement apparent was in his style of writing and of diction. With his natural flair for writing he transformed such stale traditional devices such as prevaricated madness and the slanderers tale into an advantage and gave to plays as ancient as the story of Hamlet and Othello an exciting turn.

In most of his work based on Hamlet, Stoll directs our attention towards these artifices that artists often employ. He investigates various playwrights before and after Shakespeare who exercise this craftsmanship or skill. In his review of “Hamlet the Man”, Shakespeare’s studies, Art and Artifices and also Hamlet, he confidently acquaints us with Kyd’s, Hieronimo in the Spanish Tragedy, who in order to come close to the kings fakes madness. Shakespeare also in his early plays; like Titus Andronicus etc. has used such tools. During that time the audience knew about such traditions and conventions, so the artist had nothing to lose. P. Murray in this context deems it fit to censure Stoll scathingly that he has converted Shakespeare the great artist into a mere
provides of exciting spectacle’." But S. Visnathan does not agree with Murray regarding Stoll and thinks that his later work has progressed towards acceptance of the power of poetry in Shakespeare’s work.  

Scholars of Shakespeare’s plays have always complained regarding the prolongation in Hamlet’s tragedy. And because of it, the romantic critics have even interpreted Hamlet as a person weak of will and mentally sick, who is not able to perform the momentous deed and takes a long time to decide. But all this Stoll brushes aside swiftly and musters all the internal and external evidence in support of his contention. Since all this has already been discussed in detail in the chapter No.ii devoted to Hamlet, its needless to renew the argument. Hence to come to the point briefly, Stoll very much agrees there is delay but what he refutes strongly, it has anything to do with the internal struggle of the hero or his being incapable. To quote stoll in his own words:

“... even if Shakespeare had desired it, he could scarcely, on the contemporary stage, have introduced so fundamental in innovation as, in the place of a popular heroic revenger, a procrastinator, lost in thought and weak of will,”

The tragedy of Hamlet has been explained by Stoll according to the Elizabethan terms and conditions that Shakespeare had wanted and his audiences understood it. Stoll has absolutely rejected the Romantic idea of of Hamlet that has been reflected from the 18th century criticism. Stoll main argument, based on the result and research found in the sources of Hamlet and also Shakespeare, he has accepted that Hamlet is in the tradition of revenge tragedy or heroic romance, a drama of intrigue, blood and fate – a tradition acquired from Seneca. Stoll is further adamant that such a hero has no flow and is ideal to the end and in the end accomplishes main task he has been appointed with: revenge.
All this is quite apparent to Stoll that if Hamlet had accomplished the task as soon as the apparition had bid, to do so then nothing would have been left of the tragedy. Since an eventful action or feat could only be performed at the end, hence the hero has to occupy himself some how. Further to satisfy his audiences impatience, the playwright wanted to remind them that soon the execution would follow and this was conveyed through the hero himself. Nothing was wrong with Hamlet, he was only being made to follow tradition, which demanded the delay. Hamlets occasional out-bursts was to remind “the audience that the main business in hand, though retarded, is not lost to view. They motive it by showing the audience that the hero, even in his delay, is a conscious and responsible and (so far) consistent being. In short, they give a reason for the delay... They provide an epical motive, if a may so call it rather than a dramatic one.”

In addition to these discussion the critic, Mr. Stoll, informs that during Shakespeare’s time it was just not customary for writers to hanker after an inner meaning and such casual happenings like the doubting of the ghost and the sparing of the king at prayer and even the trip to England are to be taken at face value. In his evaluation of ‘Hamlet The Man’ Stoll mentions that these Elizabethans were very well versed on these various traditional means that a playwright often administered. It was not the evasion of the hero but rather that of the author since it was his interest in keeping the nature of his hero unblemished till the end.

Stoll in all of his illustrations remains very alert regarding the taste of the audience and a lot of emphasis is put on their expectations throughout his extensive study. In this he has been influenced by Robert Bridges opinion that Shakespeare’s audiences exercise a lot of influence on his art. Such a point of
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view may strengthen the case regarding Stoll being historical. In all his writings, Stoll whether Art and Artifice or His Studies on Hamlet and even Literature And Life Once More, he appears to be very well acquainted with Bridges suggestions he seems to make occasional use of Bridges findings. “It is when their minds (those of the audience) are pre-occupied with his personality that the actions follow as unquestionable realities”, says Mr Bridges of....” 45 So when ever Stoll wants to provide evidence for his own statements or credibility for the motive of Shakespeare’s hero’s where the audience reaction is concerned, he very aptly takes refuge in Robert Bridges ‘realistic’ criticism.

In his study of Hamlet the Man again Stoll quotes from, The influence of the Audience on Shakespeare’s Drama (1896): “Fore the good situation, as in Othello, king Lear, and Macbeth, he ‘risks of even sacrifices’, says Mr Robert Bridges, ‘the logical and consistent and as such a flaw, if it were perceived, must ruin the interest, he is ready with abundant means to obscure the inconsistency’. He does that and more.”46

Stoll, however only partially agreed with Bridges, since he did not share his opinion that Shakespeare was not as great playwright as he was a poet, or that Shakespeare was under the influence of the bad taste of his theatre goers that got reflected in his writing. Mr Bridges thought that Macbeth was just not capable of murdering Duncan and that the plot of Othello was contrary to all reasonable expectation since Desdemona could not have had any relationship with Cassio in such a short span of time ‘much less a thousand times’. Robert Bridges name was only linked to this ‘realist’ group because of the emphasis he paid towards the ‘primitive’ nature of Elizabethan audiences. Thus these three critics Stoll, Schucking and Robert Bridges together have highlighted the significant relation between the audience and its playwright.
These critics seem to raise the factor of audience response into a critical, principle and base their interpretation partly on Shakespeare’s manipulation of it.  

Another very vital point regarding Stoll, is that he began his career by writing essays on historical themes, that is ‘Shakespeare’s Marston and the Malcontent Type’ (1905).

He thinks in this respect that Shakespeare had also borrowed from Marston a stage version of Elizabethan ‘humour’ of melancholy. Marston, even before Shakespeare could have written Hamlet on the model of Kyd’s Hamlet and Spanish Tragedy, had produced. Antonio and Mellida and Antonio’s Revenge (1599) and Malcontent (perhaps 1600). Marston unlike Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy had not concealed the revengers purpose with a madman’s disguise, although it was a revenge comedy, and instead was personified with melancholy humour.

Here, in the two roles—revenger and madman or Malcontent—merged in one, there was, for the cruder Elizabethan theatre, a sufficient, though external, motivation— not only craft to match craft, and murder to match murder, but feigned madness or melancholy to warrant picturesque audacity and impudence. For Shakespeare, letting his hero play madman and Malcontent both, there was, through his finer treatment, a dramatic value in the wider scope and freer vent for the hero when in company.

There are more references to non-Shakespearean, Elizabethan Drama in Stoll’s books than in Bradley’s book. This statement is absolutely true regarding Bradley’s gospel, his book Shakespearean Tragedy. It has have no foot-note and not even reference. It appears as if Bradley is not concerned with Shakespeare’s writings at all as if he has lifted out the characters from nowhere. The space for footnotes are there but it is used for the constant musings and
speculations of Bradley himself. Whereas Stoll is always very analytical and comparative. All his works and all the pages keep on referring continuously now he is with the Greeks and the ancient then suddenly he is citing the critics of his time. He is certainly a very well read person there is nothing that escapes his notice that is why perhaps he is so convincing.

As has already been noted in the very beginning, Stoll lays emphasis on the intention, 'the purpose' of the author. In the Dogmata Critica which he has collected in his most famous book, Art and Artifice, there are two quotations from Aristotle and Pope which has showed the intention of the author. This further suggest that Stoll’s orientation is towards historical criticism.

So far as the doctrine relating to the intention of the author is concerned, Stoll appears to be rather old fashioned. Modern criticism especially ‘New Criticism’ has suggested that unconscious intention and hidden meaning may be reflected in a work of art, of which the author himself may have been unaware. If that is so, we are not here concerned with the fact whether. Stoll was old fashioned or outdated. Our main concern is to show that Stoll did whole heartedly support the intentional theory. The most important aspect of Stoll’s Criticism makes an indelible imprint on our mind, when he lays stress on the fact that most Shakespearian criticism is anachronistic to make it more explicit the critic puts his own philosophy of life into Shakespeare’s work. Bradley’s ‘Shakespearean Tragedy’ is a very good illustration of such a model. Bradley’s Shakespeare is a late 19th century agnostic. Example of this kind of criticism can also found in the recent time in the book called ‘Shakespeare our contemporary’ written by a Polish critic:
In his discussion of Hamlet and Othello Stoll is anguished to find that the present day critic interprets Hamlet according to the psychology of their age and forget totally that during Shakespeare's time they both were heroes of blood thirsty drama. Today Hamlet is projected weaker than Ophelia he is supposed to be inflicted with 'nervous shock', or 'a wound in his mind'. These critics have transformed the heroic deed of a brave hero into an irresolute weakling as if mere words are too much for him.

In justice, our present day Hamlet cannot, as he does, rebuke the frailty of the Queen. To many of the critic, to be sure, that is no drawback, for they would have the Prince infected and poisoned by the air about him, his environment. Sociology must have its innings too. Stoll also rejects Bradley's conception of Hamlet; in his own words:

And whatever other mystery there is in the character is that of great but irregular art, not—begging the question—the mystery of life itself. It is not that of the still prevailing doctrine, liberalism blended with mysticism, whereby we treat Shakespeare's characters as if they were real persons, whom we know but cannot explain---. We than freely psychologize and psycho-analyse, to so little artistic or scientific profit.

Not only Bradley but other critics too, who have said to have followed Bradley's tradition like G. Wilson Knight's have given all significance to 'themes' and 'images' and the characters of Shakespeare have been dwarfed, they only matter as symbols to these new critics.

Even L.C. Knight who was not an actor like Knights has showed his distaste regarding Bradley's only interest in interpreting characters. In 'How many children had Lady Macbeth?' (1933). Although he made fun of Bradley
but seem to commit the same mistake of his predecessor. He compares Macbeth to the poem of Mr T.S. Eliot’s ‘Wasteland’ and to the prose play of Ibsen. Sounding just like Bradley he declares that a Shakespearean drama was to be studied like a dramatic poem.

Again in his, An Approach to ‘Hamlet’ he mentions how grateful he is to Wilson Knight, in The Wheel of Fire, and also to F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit and just like they have done in their essays on Othello he also employs the same method in his Approach to ‘Hamlet’, i.e. develop the theme of the relationship between ‘self and world’.54

This is what Stoll asks the present day Critics to avoid, a man living in the 16th century writing for his audience, he has a difficult duty to perform, please the company for which he was writing and see to it the theatre is full of theatre goers and also keep the satisfaction of the audience in mind. Yet, these representatives of character forget all except their own opinion and approaches that they have to impress the readers with and always have to be discovering and revealing, new aspect of Shakespeare in their book of learning.

Stoll throughout his work lays a lot of emphasis on the study of the background of Shakespeare’s plays. Which naturally includes the audience response and reflection of their taste.

Stoll was of the opinion that whatever was being discovered about the stage, the setting and about the Elizabethan audiences could be used in order to enhance our study and knowledge of the ‘real’ Shakespeare and what he had desired for us to understand.
First of all, the existence of this historical sense was felt in the 18th century. When scholars started taking interest in editing and interpreting Shakespeare’s language. Two scholars, Steevans and Malone need mention because of whom Shakespeare’s Scholarship got proper ‘direction’. The light that was thrown by these pioneers on the Elizabethan and Shakespearian scholarship was not grasped well by the romantic interpreters. Hence its development was very gradual since it clashed with that of the romantic ideals. Some of the greatest of Shakespeare’s critic like Coleridge, Lamb and D. Quincey did not receive and take advantage of the findings of scholarship. Perhaps they did this knowingly because otherwise their image of a universal Shakespeare whose play, they had got in the habit of picturing ‘in a timeless context, divorced from his age and theatre’. That image of a romantic Shakespeare would have been marred. And as Viswanathan informs us it was actually latter half of nineteenth century that promoted Shakespeare’s study and made the Elizabethan scholarship in evitable for the educational institutions. Since A.C. Bradley was also the culminator of the character criticism in Shakespeare he had also not employed the Elizabethan scholarship as if the playwright had no background. Bradley also never felt the impact of the audience nor the stage for which the plays were written. It is said about Bradley that he frequented the theatre occasionally, but such an evidence cannot be had from his book. Not only Stoll but also the ‘New Critics’ have lashed out against Bradley for it was alleged his Shakespeare did not belongs to the Elizabethan time and condition and his interpretation of only the four main tragedies of Shakespeare appeared like the novel of a victorian author. Then how can a character be treated like a man that even an unpolished and primitive one belonging to the 16th century, analyzed with psychological formula.
The poetic school especially L.C. Knight made fun of Bradley because Bradley in his eagerness to do justice to Shakespeare's great art, has gone into such details as Hamlet's age and the number of children Lady Macbeth could have had.

It is this kind of overstatement or rather senile imagination that Stoll actually wants to restrict which leads to an anachronistic approach and interpretation.

This was exactly the background against which Stoll was writing. Perhaps now we can understand, this stricture of Stoll was not just in reaction but more than that. Stoll has intensely emphasised the study of the historical background of Shakespeare's play as it was part of his comprehensive doctrine towards objectivity.

Stoll as we can see has rightly pointed out that Bradley has not adequately bothered himself with the basic question involved in his study of Shakespeare's the exigencies of the theatre, the requirement of the dramatic modes, and most important the artifices in which great art is always rooted.

Another very vital point that must not escape our notice regarding Stoll as a historical critic, is that in all his work there is no emphasis whatever on Shakespeare's intellectual background. If Stoll has insisted, that Shakespeare's plays can properly be understood in Elizabethan term just for that reason, now can he be branded. Well simply and explicitly he can, be distinguished from the other historical critics of Shakespeare.

We take as example J.M. Robertson, during his study of Hamlet, asserts that the basic problem of Hamlet is that of his 'delay'. And this great lapse in
Hamlet's character cannot be explained by any "esthetic theory." And he insists that only by relating Hamlet to his genes and explaining his background can a conclusion be reached regarding Hamlet.\(^5\)

The history of the play, persists Robertson, is thus vital to the comprehension of it. Another well-known contemporary of Stoll although a German, along with him was called historical. He was paid too much importance on the survival of the primitive technique of Shakespeare's plays and his approach towards Shakespeare was not positive like Stoll. If Robertson has complained about the crude taste of Shakespeare's audience, Schuckung has found that Shakespeare often misused the primitive techniques like 'direct self-explanation' and this method was very artificial. He applied these conventions directly on Shakespeare, failed to assess that a great artist like Shakespeare could transcend, even the limitation of these conventions could not imprison the 'soul of all ages'. Schuckung can safely be summoned up in Kenneth Muir words 'With Levin L. Schuckung we have the historical approach in its purest simplest form.\(^5\)

Stoll was very different from Harley Granville-Barker who has in his effort to stage Shakespeare's play according to the Elizabethan custom, has merged both his experience as a producer and pursuit of a playwright. And his ideas regarding the stage craft of Shakespeare is inestimable.

If this approach had been channalized properly by these men of vision the outcome could have been edifying. But as always has been happening one set of approach or interpretation is not acceptable to another school.

But it is rather surprising to call Stoll and Schuckung 'realist school' or even historical. Just because they insist on interpreting 'Shakespeare's drama as
in itself it really exist and that he cannot be studied without his Elizabethan setting and perspective. To even say that their writing was just in reaction to Bradley’s Shakespearian Tragedy will also not be correct. As it is, they were not just giving a ‘new view’ of Shakespeare’s character, nor promoting them selves at the cost of mitigating Bradley’s contribution. But is truth, they were trying to prevent anachronistic queries and evaluation of drama in general.

The main purpose which Stoll wanted to achieve from his writings has sadly been mis-represented and neither was it historical for he has not in any of his book been chronological, nor concerned with the intellectual perspective of the Shakespearian age. If he is compared with the pure historical work of Theodore Spencer and E.M.W. Tillyard and even Hardin Craig, he is different from them. He has never agreed with Spencer trying to misplace Shakespeare’s intellectualism, in sure defiance of the critic prescription of Shakespeare’s creativity Stoll says: ‘The time was ripe for Tragedy’. But how does Professor Spencer at his late day, know so much about the chronology?59

Well as it stands out clearly Stoll as an interpreter of Shakespeare was never trying to apply the limitation nor the achievement of the period or the good and bad phase of the writers life into his creative life like Dowden had done before him. The only aspect that he was keen to see established was, an aspect that had been awfully neglected in the 16th century. He laid stress on the non-naturalistic conventional basis of Shakespeare’s drama, concerns not just character but all the major elements.

In his analysis of Shakespeare’s plays and what ever explanation he gives in order to confront the ‘psychologising’ critics of the 19th and 20th century he always stands out because of his objectivity and his comparative
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analysis he is never condescending in his tone, nor does he ever try to patronize the Elizabethan culture or make them look inferior...

Perhaps because in the initial years of his writing Stoll began highlighting the dramatic practice of the Orthodox Elizabethan playwrights like the casting of ghosts, criminals, the malcontent and the melancholy kind of heroes, that was very common among these people. This was the only association that Stoll had with historical scholarship, and for which has identification, was blemished. Stoll's style of writing is very intense and he is often repeating what he has to assert in all his books and article. He is given to reiteration because he wants his readers to believe in him and his disclosures.

Another very strong point regarding Stoll has been noted by R.W. Babcock in his articles. He presents the 'evolution' of Stoll's writing from his early phase as an interpreter of Shakespeare, when he was a 'sceptic' then he progressed and became objective and in the later phase of his writing Babcock discerns an aesthetic appreciation in Stoll. This change in Stoll has not been noted by researchers.

Even S. Viswanathan applauds the manner in which:

Stoll views all the major elements of Shakespeare's drama, not merely character, from the intentionalist and historical angle provided by relating the drama to the conventions and techniques of the time. He directs our attention to variations and control of emphasis by dramatist;... and to the creation of a non-naturalistic poetic and musical ambience through which a commencing dramatic illusion is created.

Viswanathan further interprets that Stoll's highlight of Shakespearian character with a totally new vision was not deliberate and neither was it is
reaction but rather an effort on Stool's part to shift the focus from character analysis to the study of situation which was the 'core' of every great drama during the Elizabethan time and also to correct and guide the mislead 19th century interpretation, on the right path and provide a new view of interest in character depiction.

This study of Stoll from all angles, reveals to us that Stoll's main concern was with the nature of drama, he wanted to propond a theory for drama. His attention was also focussed on the problem of realism and life likeness in drama in opposition to the impressionistic attitude towards literature.

These are some views that Stoll believed in, to the last: About Literature he said we are not to forget that it is not life but only fiction.63

"A fact in Literature is not a fact, though in history it must be."

"The greatest art is a compromise—in any case, a simplification, if need be a sacrifices, of truth for effect."

And according to Stoll the greatest achievement of Shakespeare:

"And this is the particular crown and triumph of the artist—not to be true merely, but to be lovable: not simply to convince but to enchant."64

True art as Stoll will tell us is not only creating, 'the illusion of reality' but also the beautification of dramatic figures.

If a survey is to be conducted towards, the literary and scholastic vision of Shakespeare studies during the twentieth century. Stoll's place is definitely not among the historical and realist critic but he should be reimbursed and replaced among the early modernists.65 In the beginning Stoll may not have
presented the emancipation experienced through the poetry of Shakespeare but later on this subtle change is Stoll has been marked by men of learning and also mentioned. Like R.W. Babcock in his, The Genesis of Shakespeare's Idolatry, 1931.

The historical judgement that the insistence on the non-realistic nature of Shakespearian drama by the 'realist' school paved the way for the advent of the poetic interpretation has not had due recognition. The irony is that the poetic interpreters thought of themselves as reacting against the historical critics or the realist when it was really the work of this school that brought about the change of climate that incubated the poetic approach. 66

The greatest contribution of these man have been to study the dramatic tradition as a whole and not just in parts, also the analysis of characterization is approached by various methods and not just based on psychology.

In his book Art and Artifice in the chapter IV he confesses that although is grateful to Mr Bridges for his essay on The Influence of the Audience in Shakespeare but had only read it after having finished his essay on Hamlet (1919). Hence its baseless to argue his realism was the impact of Mr Bridges or that it was just in opposition to Shakespearian Tragedy. Not even cooperation with Schucking because at many times he has refuted, his negative interpretation but rather because he wanted to counter the attack made by Mr Archer in his book. The old Drama and the New. 67

William Archer considered to be the greatest champion of Naturalism and realism and the well made play of the twentieth century, in the first half of his book, makes a Scathing attack on Elizabethan poetic drama. His book is now little known but had made a great mark at the time of his first publication. Archer lavishly praises the contemporary well made plays of his time. He
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points out how their plots are coherent and well connected with characterization. According to him the situations in modern drama are life like and convincing. The characters develop and behave in the way of moral human beings. The motive are clearly indicated. These plays do not observe unnatural dramatic conventions. Archer’s main contention is that the early 20th century drama is much superior to the poetic drama of the Elizabethan age because it is closer to normal and everyday life.

It is quite clear that Stoll’s theoretical position can be determined by presenting him as a critic, who was diametrically opposite to Archer’s approach. My contention is that, Stoll is not basically a historical critic. He also does not belong to the ‘realistic’ school of Shakespeare criticism to which Robert Bridges may be said to belong.

Further more his central position was different from that of the German critic Schucking with whom he is wrongly classed. Schucking’s main contention concerning Shakespeare’s dramatic art is basically primitive. According to him many of Shakespeare’s characters are found to be incoherent, inconsistent because in Shakespeare’s day the art of characterization had not really developed. Most of the conventions of Shakespearian and Elizabethan drama were crude and primitive, these devices were used by untrained dramatist to discover a short cut to dramatic illusion.

The real evidence of Stoll’s approach can be found in the following passage from a French critic, Francisque Sarcey (An Essay on an aesthetic of theatre):

“The dramatic Art is a collection of local and universal, temporary or eternal convention with the help of which in
According to Stoll presentation of reality is not the business of great drama, particularly great poetic drama. Drama is basically concerned with the manipulation of the feelings of the audience. He goes back to Aristotle in his contention that the main function of drama is to produce a cathartic effect. His other contention is, that the ordinary naturalistic play of which William Archer was a great champion and which is concerned with the presentation of every day humdrum phenomenon of actual life would certainly, fail to evoke the necessary tragic emotion and to manipulate the audiences feelings in a significant way. It is only great drama with its absence of drab reality and its intensifications that would produce the necessary effect. The devices that the dramatists use—juxtaposition and contrast, accumulations and compression, irony and conflict—go a long way in achieving the real goal of the drama.

The dramatist distorts reality in order to intensify it. Intensity is thus gained at the expense of verisimilitude of life likeness. The dramatist does so through his poetry. (it is actually the poetry of conception that matters and not the use of metre). Thus we find that Stoll’s theory of drama brings him close to the modernist and poetic approach to drama. It also brings him close to the myth and ritual approach to Shakespeare’s drama.

References:


2. Ibid., p.250.

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5. Ibid.


8. Ibid., p.8.

9. Ibid., see Chapter 1.


15. Ibid., p.8-9.


18. Ibid., p.18.

19. Ibid., p.17.

20. E.E. Stoll, Poets and Playwrights (Minneapotis, 1930), p.56

21. M. Weitz in his book already mentioned above, has explained what these Elizabethan critics mean by Elizabethan terms: they mean Elizabethan
theatrical condition, stage and dramatic connections or philosophical, psychological, and political ideas and ideals. P.74.


23. Stoll, Ibid., p.56.


25. Herford, Ibid., p.49.


27. *Art and Artifice* Ibid., p.IV

28. Ibid., p.3.


30. Ibid., p.3.

31. Ibid., See the Dogmata Critica in the beginning.

32. ‘Shakespeare’s Studies’ p.94.

33. Ibid., p.94-96.

34. Ibid.

35. Act I Sc. 3. *Othello, The Moor of Venice*, The Duke Seems fascinated by othello and his being black does not matter, Brabantio who is Desdemona’s father is also present during this moment.


37. Ibid., p.6.

38. Ibid.


41. S. Viswanathan Ibid., p.41.
43. Stoll, *Art & Artifice*, Ibid., p.94.
44. Hamlet, Ibid., p.11-7, Exactly the same disclosure's are repeated in *Art and Artifice* (P. 94-95.)
45. *Art and Artifice*, p.27.
46. Hamlet the Man, Ibid., p.4 (English Association Pamphlet No. 91, 1935)
47. Bridges; Ibid., : (P.vii-215) 1927.
49. *Hamlet the Man*, Ibid., pp.4-5.
52. Ibid., p.120. The same theme has been explained with much detail in Stolls, *Shakespeare Studies*, pp.120-5.
55. Viswanathan, Ibid., pp.6-7.
Stoll's early essays like *The Ghosts* (1907); *Shylock* (1911); *The Criminals* (1912) are included in Shakespeare Studies. Another very inspiring essay which he wrote as early as 1910) is 'Anachronism in Shakespeare criticism', MP.7.


64. *Ibid.*


68. *Arts and Artifico, Ibid.,* PXIII.
CHAPTER – V
THE RISE OF THE NEW APPROACH

In the last quarter of the nineteen century the production, regarding Shakespeare was projected, to have been ‘of bewildering abundance... ‘ and several mind of high caliber and brilliance were all involved in the task of interpreting Shakespeare. Discovery and invention both kept pace of each other and the subject matter of their interest was not merely Shakespeare’s mind but the whole of Elizabethan domain was under keen observance. It is also claimed by G.H. Herford that during those thirty years the work done by these Scholars can ‘surpass any previous generation’1 Yet the fact remains, this age of abundance and richness may have extended their boundaries ‘to Shakespeare’s elusive personal life’ and the Elizabethan, theatre but the demand to’ make it new’ was still there and Shakespeare’s imagery and symbols needed urgent attention for the new generation of the twenty’s to understand Shakespeare.

Hence the New criticism brought about a gradual change and developed into a potent movement in and about nineteen hundred and twenty’s. This movement that was initiated by Pound, Eliot, Yeat’s, Richard, Empson and Leavis was formally given a name, when in 1941, John Crowe, Ranson published his book, The New Criticism remeniscensing, he baptized this crusade as the ‘New Criticism’.2

It is the endeavor of this work to present that this was not a concerted movement because there was no harmony and synthesis neither in their approach nor attitude. Each of these eminent persons projected and practiced this movement of the new approach according to their own individual vision.
Pound has ascertained, in this context that a scientist can only expect to become really great when 'he has discovered something' new.\textsuperscript{3} Not to be left behind I A. Richards boldly took up this challenge and carried out an experiment on the undergraduate student of Cambridge University and made them evaluate poems without telling them the authors name nor the background he belonged to. He wanted a first hand analysis in order to document and discover the result of such an experiment in his book The Practical criticism. Granville Barker also conducted live experiments with the acting of the play, and the theatre became a laboratory for him in order to 'prove' whether 'Shakespeare was a master of stage craft'.\textsuperscript{4}

Changes must take place it is the symptom of progress. But it was as Shakespeare had been put on trial by the modern scholars of this century, under the excuse that since the Elizabethan dramatist, believed in experimenting and venturing into new avenues they could do likewise. This discovery of the historical scholarship of Shakespeare's Elizabethan background generated this fresh opening towards a new attitude in Shakespeare. Thus the New Critics saw themselves totally empowered to experiment with Shakespeare, creating a new genre of progress and evolution, towards the understanding of this ancient playwright in a new way.

However, this has to be emphasized, it was not mere change of a single nature, it was in fact, considered by eminent scholars as a revolution that came suddenly although some view it as a recalcitrant attitude towards the nineteenth century, character approach and also the historical and theatrical scholarship. Hence one can opine that because this very fresh and 'profitable approach wanted to make a deep and lasting impact, they veered a way out for their
crusade, rejecting and breaking away from all that was traditional and orthodox and thus achieved their goal.

The terminology of ‘New’ has spontaneously been used for this methodology because such a development was never before on the canvas of Shakespeare criticism. In the Victorian era a great deal has been written about Shakespeare but the use of symbol and imagery in his writing still remained in darkness. This side of his art remained in constant negligence and ignorance rather, until 1920. While Shakespeare’s characters and plots were analysed and his biographical and textual enigma were being removed, his style and language still perplexed and confused critics.

If we cast a backward glance, it will not be difficult to remember all the strictures that were laid upon Shakespeare’s language in the neoclassical period. Even Dryden had complained of his figurative expressions and he wanted to remove ‘that heap of rubbish under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly buried.’ Such a remark was not criticism, it was sheer lack of understanding, became the time of his age was not ripe enough to have discovered and decoded Shakespeare’s idiom.

According to L.C. Knights, ‘the implication of Dryden’s remarks became the common places of criticism for the succeeding generations.’ Even a genius like Pope was unable to decipher the metaphorical language and thought the playwright to have made a mistake in using such ‘high words and metaphors.’ To Francis Atterbury, who was the Bishop of Rochester, Chaucer was more legible to him than the obscurity of the bards Shakespeare language and ‘in a hundred places’ he just was unable to grasp Shakespeare. Warburton, an editor in the eighteenth-century has also objected to the ‘hard and forced
construction' of Shakespeare's sentences. The censure of Samuel Johnson in his Preface (1765) was also related to the faults of Shakespeare's age and he finds Shakespeare style 'ungrammatical, perplexed and obscure.'

It is reported by Hazelton Spencer, that the Neoclassicists could not appreciate the metaphorical opulence of the poetry in Shakespeare's plays, because they lived in a different era. In order to grasp the idiom of Shakespeare they either entirely rejected or changed; metaphors were changed to similes and a more dignified form was adopted in place of quibbles and low-words to maintain tragic decorum.

But at the close of the eighteenth century, Walter Whiter's, *A Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare* (1794) presented the study of Shakespeare's dramatic imagery for over a hundred and twenty years. His book presents a study of the formation of images and recommends a thorough examination of the image clusters. But perhaps it failed to have influenced the critical opinion of his age. However, in the 1930's it suddenly re-surfaced. Interestingly Muir observes that Whiter went unnoticed because the title of his publication was, 'deceptive', and hence although a 'pioneer work' it made no 'stir'.

The nineteen century critics as we can remember, never gave the feeling that they were handling the poetic plays of Shakespeare, they treated the plays more like novels and their central interest was in the characters. An exclusive study of Shakespeare's dramatic imagery never even crossed their mind, we do find a scattered comment here and there but this was only of passing interest. Except that in Coleoridge's case, who emphasized the organic beauty of the playwright's diction. Although obsessed with character depiction, his remarks were rare and uncommon in this age. In this regard even Dowden's and
Bradley’s name also cropped up: ‘Dowden had some interesting remarks on the prevalence of blood in Macbeth, and Bradley referred to the animal imagery in King Lear.’

There were other outside factors equally responsible for the appearance of this new way, which has already been traced in the first chapter of this thesis. Indeed, the scholars realized that enough had been said about his character and his still as a theatre artist and felt the need to give attention to Shakespeare’s style and language. They wanted to explore other procedures in order to translate Shakespeare.

The belief that a Shakespeare play might be regarded as a dramatic poem rather than a primarily a studying human character steadily gained support, and as it did, interest in the poetic and symbolic, as distinct from the psychological and dramatic, aspects of Shakespeare’s work increased.

Besides this concern there was another parallel movement led by some great writers and critics of the early twentieth century such as Yeats, Eliot, Joyce and Lawrence. They were bestowed with the epithet of ‘great guiding influences’ of the new approach. Their impact was upon these ‘New Critics’ who carried out the crusade. Wilson Knight, Caroline Spurgeon, L.C. Knights and F.R. Leavis – they refuted not only Bradley’s but also Stoll’s approach and have taught their era to see Shakespeare’s ‘essentially poetical approach’. The revival of myth and the impact of Freud and Jung was indeed deep and shattering on the current literature of that phase. A renewed interest in the language and symbols of the Metaphysical poets, could distinctly be sensed. Due to all these causes the demand for a new way to evaluate a work of art whether ancient or modern became the necessity of the day.
If we cast a glance over the history of criticism that has existed after the nineteen thirty’s, it becomes obvious, how essential imagery had become. It has been granted a new very important role as if it is the answer to all the enigma of Shakespeare’s art. Critics have even tried to decode the problem of authorship and even think it essential for biographical information. In today’s world interpretation through poetic imagery has pervaded all genres and is considered most lucrative and gainful.

In 1933 it was L.C. Knights extreme manifesto that geared up this movement, “the only profitable approach to Shakespeare is a consideration of his plays as dramatic poems.”

This comment was deliberate, because he wanted to register his reaction against the orthodox way of interpreting Shakespeare that had been conditioned by character criticism. But during this time the focus was only on the language of Shakespeare and not on the action of the play. Some worthy books also got published on this subject in between the 1920 and 1930 by some reputed critics like G. Wilson Knight and H.W. Wells. In 1935 C.F.E. Spurgeon’s Shakespeare’s Imagery made quite an impact, and this resulted in a rapid increase of writing on this subject. The profitable approach’ that L.C. Knights had wanted to pursue, had become a reality. This was further observed by A.H. Sackton in 1949:

‘...it is now becoming a commonplace of criticism that an Elizabethan play may be approached most profitably not as a study in human character, or as an expression of an individual philosophy but as a dramatic poem.’

Different authors concerned with the poetic approach, practice different methodology and goal to achieve an interpretation but nearly all of them agree with the proposal that a play should be regarded first and foremost as a poem.
The Rise Of the New Approach

In spite of having shared theories there have been cross currents of antagonism; in practice only a few have a definite programme or a methodology to follow, some are mere imitators. Regarding the modus operandi of the new critics R.A. Foakes informs us:

"only a few, among them Caroline Spurgeon, W. Clemen, G. Wilson Knight and Una Ellis Fermor, have made clear their method of analysing imagery and their reasons for following it. The majority seem either to have taken over another's method, usually Miss Spurgeon's, or to have criticized and adapted another's method of approach, without considering the attitude upon which it was based." 17

It is indeed very difficult to chalk out the exact methodology that these New Critics followed. The study of imagery and that too of Shakespeare's may be a very useful innovation in the field of criticism, but there is as S.L. Bethell acquaints us

'a good deal of confusion about the nature and function of Shakespeare's imagery and about the critical technique required to deal with.' 18

The understanding towards this New approach can only be achieved if we take up some of its major critics who have employed this method to understand the Dramatic Imagery in Shakespeare's plays. George Wilson Knight was a critic, actor, director and playwright and also a professor of English Literature at the University of Leeds. He is the first representative, of the symbolic explanation of Shakespeare's dramas. These are some very invaluable contribution in the field of critical studies made by him; Myth and Miracle 1929. The Wheel of Fire (1930). The Imperial Theme. It was his view
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primarily, that in a work of art, we are not to look for 'perfect verisimilitude to life, but rather, see each play as an expanded metaphor.'\(^{19}\)

His powerful book *The Wheel of Fire* was published in 1930 with an introduction supplied by T.S. Eliot. Knight was praised for delving "below the level of 'plot' and character", by Eliot and instead giving us 'music' which unified the entire work of Shakespeare. It is to the credit of G.W. Knight that he gave to Shakespearian play a new theme and converted then into 'dramatic symphonies'.

Gary Taylor illuminates them Knight’s writing and makes the meaning clear;

Knights writes a chapter on “The Othello Music;” he writes a book on The Imperial Theme. In Knight’s handling ‘theme’ becomes an insistent leitmotiv in the vocabulary of Shakespearian interpretation, fusing the word’s musical definition with its rhetorical one. The object of Shakespeare criticism, as defined by Knight, is to identify the theme of each play. Thematic tones and images recur in the speeches and action of diverse characters; character and plot serve only to illustrate theme.\(^{20}\)

Some of the critics who have contributed towards this new approach, have made an effort to provide the ways and the means of interpreting the imagery and symbolism in Shakespeare plays. But among all these scholars it is W. Knights who has produced a detailed analysis and provided arguments in its favour and to some extent he has been convincing. If we remind our selves of the preface in the *Wheel of Fire* by W. Knight, it appears as if it was written as an assault on the prevalent traditional ways of thinking, where Shakespeare’s drama was concerned. Then in place of the orthodox interpretation his own
critical theory was prescribed as a treatment and replacement. Knights had rightly pointed out his distaste for those critics and scholars who were obsessed by Shakespeare’s ‘intention’ and he thinks that already too much had been said about his characters, plot and even sources. So he was eager to change the existing scenario and wanted to bring some balance in to Shakespeare’s reading. Subsequently he proceeds to discuss this new method of understanding Shakespeare an approach that had been completely overlooked earlier the poetic interpretation.

He explains in detail that there are two basic elements in drama, the ‘spatial’ and ‘temporal’. 21

The critics before Knight were dedicated to only one aspect of Shakespeare criticism that was ‘temporal’, the succession of event and the reason behind them ‘linking dramatic motive to action and action to result in time;’ and Knight is sure that by taking exclusive interest only in the temporally nature of Shakespeare’s drama they wiped out ‘what, in Shakespeare, is at least of equivalent importance’. In order to establish an equilibrium in one’s point of view, ‘one must be prepared to see the whole play in space as well as in time’. He provides strength to his contention, and further emphasizes regarding a Shakespearian Tragedy ‘is set spatially as well as temporally in the mind,’ he wants to convey here that in the entire play there are sets of inter-relations which communicate with one another and the ‘time sequence’ of the story does not depend upon it. Knight explains his idea in this manner,

‘if we are prepared to see the whole play laid out, so to speak, as an area, being simultaneously aware of these thickly-scattered correspondences in a single view of the whole, we possess the unique quality of the play in a new sense’. 22
Thus, we find that G. Wilson Knight has conceded equal status to both temporal and spatial elements. In his preface he opines: 'to relate any given incident or speech either to the time sequence of story or the peculiar atmosphere, intellectual or imaginative, which binds the play' and those poetic critics who have been his supporters have imitated him in 'relating imagery to themes, patterns of meaning and recurrent symbolic motifs'. His followers mostly choose different groups of recurring images from the play, without giving any importance either to the characters who employed them in their utterances in the dramatic context in which they were used. The place and the time sequence is not important for them. They have a very deliberate programme laid out, and hence neglect of the temporal elements of the plays is absolutely necessary in order to maintain the purity of a play as a poem, liberating it from the claims of genre. In order to study the plays as poems, they had to forget in which dramatic context they were written, their interest centered around 'the poetic' worth of Shakespeare's art. They concerned themselves with the metaphysical aspects, the moral implications and the metaphorical opulence. Their method was new and revolutionary since they were completely opposed to the traditional 'dramatic' approach. They considered the study of character, plot and theatrical technique as a kind of restriction of the scope that a Shakespeare's play can provide for its interpreters and readers. And they thought that by not confining the variety and the complexity of a Shakespeare's play, they could give free rein to their imagination and then do justice to each play as a whole.

G.W. Knight invented this new insight into the plays of Shakespeare and gave it a new lease of life, completely renovating the old structure. Yet by many scholars he is considered just an extension of 'Coleridge, Hazlitt and Bradley in
The rise of the poetic approach has more to do with these developments than with a revolt against Bradley. Placed in this context, the School of the Poetic interpreters can be seen to have a double relationship, not only of rivalry, antagonism and at times conflict with the School of theoretical and historical scholarship and interpretation, but of more or less tacit and unconscious collaboration, even of indebtedness.  

W. Knight held a similar view as the romantics but the difference was very obvious. Because his predecessors Coleridge, Hazlitt, Bradley and even Johnson’s treatment of Shakespeare was like a novelist when for Knights he was a supreme poet. According to his opinion in the prefatory note to The Wheel of Fire, ‘the literary analysis of great drama in terms of theatrical techniques accomplishes singularly little.’ Shakespeare as a man of the stage held no attraction for him although his experience as ‘an actor producer and play-goer’ is immense. His experience further teaches him to probe the inner meaning that is perhaps the reason, the discovery of the theatrical and historical scholarship and interpretation appear inadequate to him and the ‘productions remain inorganic’ since what he terms the re-creation from ‘within’ has not been accomplished. This deficiency from the scholastic translation of Shakespeare’s play could only be removed through a poetic interpretation. Hence for W. Knights:
Poetry itself may be defined as pre-eminently as blend of the dynamic and the static, of motion and form and, at the limit, the perfectly integrated man, or superman is to be conceived as a creature of superb balance, poise and grace. He raises the issue of the essence in Shakespearian plays, he does not find that element in characterization and is sure the traditional critics are at fault to have tried to discover that essence in characterization, this was the mistake they made and hence became victim to adverse criticism. Knight absolutely rejects the term ‘character’ criticism as he says he does not like to involve him self into a make belief ethical argument. According to him these critics always tilted their judgement of Shakespeare’s protagonists towards the ethical standards of real life: even a powerful hero in Shakespeare’s play like Macbeth has been converted into a feeble-minded door-mat, if one happened to encounter him in real life. Knight persists that Macbeth should not have been scrutinized like a man but rather like a dramatic persona, as the ethical criteria of real life is not that of art. He has emphasized the need to reform the ethical criteria of such critics who were at fault, and in his opinion, instead initiate them ‘into a new artistic ethic which obeys the peculiar nature of art as surely as a sound morality is based on the nature of man’. He further explains that according to the criticism of the traditional critics Macbeth and Lear may have been a disappointment in real life but when the play was stage they were declared dramatic successes. This stricture of Knight’s, may have been borrowed from the realist or the historical critics as they have been called because before Knights Wheel of Fire got published it was Stoll and Schucking who were persuasively arguing against this very notion of the traditionalists that Shakespearean characters were not at all plausible and lifelike. But as Stoll has vociferously shown in book after book that they were stage fit and not psychopathic case as the romantic would make us believe.
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Through propagation of such thoughts and ideas Knight makes it explicit they his preference is for the 'metaphysical' approach rather than the 'ethical as practiced by the character critics. He further thinks in this context that application of such crude tools of 'ethical philosophy' to the 'delicate symbols of the poet's imagination' is not a profitable way of interpretation. These dramatic characters who are sources of our pleasure and entertainment were recurrently being searched for 'failures', 'mistakes' and faults. Knight feels strongly that such destructive criticism transforms our response towards a great work of literature and influences our experience that could be dynamic and positive. Hence to achieve such an experience one must consider 'each play as a visionary whole,'

Close-knit in personification, atmospheric suggestion, and direct poetic-symbolism; three modes of transmission, equal in their importance.”

Knight thinks it useless to study characters as separate elements, which would only result in distorting our vision of dramatic perception and led one searching a motive from real life again. The truth that an artist presents in a character is only for the dramatic and artistic interest. In the tragedy of King Lear, his daughter Cordelia cannot be projected without the drama in which she was cast, that is the only world where she exists. Knight's wants to put a stop to such idiosyncrasies, when Shakespeare's characters are removed from their real 'poetical settings' to become a part of discussion and discord among the critics.

Knight has recommended a new way of interpretation which treated each play as an organic whole, and not as an extract of a component like character
and plot. The poetics that Knight’s has proposed regarding a Shakespearean play is the very basic theme of his interpretation:

“Being aware of this new element we should not look for perfect verisimilitude to life, but rather see each play as an expanded metaphor by means of which the original vision has been projected into forms roughly correspondent with actuality…”

The critics have to be aware of ‘personification’ if he is to give us a sense of the whole plan of a play. Knight according to his hypothesis has substituted ‘character’-for ‘atmospheric suggestion’ and also ‘poetic symbolism’. Thus Knight’s makes it inevitable that to study Shakespeare’s plays according to the poetic method one has to regard them entirely as dramatic poems, not merely dramas nor poetic dramas.

His aim is to give a correct translation of the play. He has called his method of analyzing a work of art ‘interpretation’ and restricting this to comparison and evaluation. Knight has stressed upon the primary task of a critic is to first to give an interpretation and not reach a conclusion but to understand a play, this is the essential part of a scholar’s duty. In order to achieve such an aspiration he gives his own poetics regarding the nature of Shakespeare’s drama. And most of his understanding of Shakespeare’s plays is based on his hypothesis that has already been discussed earlier. The best glimpse of his unique understanding of Shakespeare’s plays could be gleaned from his lecture, ‘Tolstoy’s Attack on Shakespeare’ (1934), reprinted in The Wheel of Fire, which Knight’s admonishes such critics in the following words:

We have not understood Shakespeare. And our error has been this: a concentration on “character” and realistic appearances
generally, things which do not constitute Shakespeare's primary
glory; and a corresponding and dangerous, indeed a devastating,
neglect of Shakespeare's poetic symbolism.  

Thus, for Knight's the conclusive structure of Shakespearean drama is
comprised of the 'spiritual' symbolic, or thematic element—the spatial—in which
the characters and plot—the temporal—are fused. The basics of, defining
caracter of each drama is its static, pervasively thematic element. This
explanation of Shakespearean drama is the correct analysis for Knights and he
has interpreted most plays even Hamlet according to this definition. In order to
understand a work of art interpretation is the medium that is chosen to
comprehend its spatial temporal reality. This helps Knight to focus (of the play)
and also probe 'the very essence of the play concerned'.

Knight further clarifies that the poet's creation (his plays and characters)
have to be understood and the poet himself and in order to analyse such the
help of interpretation can be employed, too which is again seen as an attempt to
reconstruct the poet's vision.

One sees "the whole play laid out, so to speak, as an area, being
simultaneously aware of these thickly-scattered correspondences in a
single view of the whole..."  

He outrightly objects to such curiosity that questions the intention of the
poet in the construction of his work, the sources of the play, and the ethical
aspects of the characters and their purpose. He clarifies illuminates illustrates
and brands such inquiry as, 'irrelevancies born by intention to the instinctive
power.'
To sum up, 'interpretation' according to Knight is an endeavour on the side of the critic to illuminate the basic, controlling, thematic design of a play; if it clarifies the truth of the play, then the solid elucidation can be said to be 'true' interpretation or understanding of the play.

G. Wilson Knight and L. C. Knight were two staunch supporters of this poetic school of thought. W. Knight in 1930, lowered the importance of character to music, L. C. Knight also did not lag behind, and in 1933 he rejected character delineation completely. Derisively mocking Bradley he wrote: "How many children had Lady Macbeth?" He was in fact, assailing the author of Shakespearean Tragedy for having presented the dramatic persona of Shakespeare's major tragedies as true to life and trying to probe in the minutest of detail regarding these characters. This critic along with some others took up this issue of flaying the misguided tradition of Shakespeare criticism since Restoration and paving the path for interpreting Shakespeare in a new manner:

"... the only profitable approach to Shakespeare is a consideration of his plays as dramatic poems.... The total response to a Shakespeare play can only be obtained by an exact and sensitive study of the quality of the verse, of the rhythm and imagery, of the controlled association of the words and their emotional and intellectual force.... We start with so many lines of verse on a printed page which we read as we should read any other poem."

Lionel, Charles, Knights, a Professor of English in the University of Bristol, has written the Drama and Society in the Age of Johnson (1937), Shakespeare's Politics (1937), Some Shakespearean Themes (1959) and An Approach to Hamlet (1960) and his essay, How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth? (1933) In this he proposes that this true to life attitude distorts the unity of the play. He wants to establish this unity in all of Shakespeare’s work, individually and as a whole. This intense reaction of L. C. Knights, towards his
seniors was due to their critical method, because they involved themselves with every aspect of Shakespeare’s plays but left the text and the words in it untouched. According to him it was ‘the main business of the critic to examine’. With the same disposition as Wilson Knights, he highlights his argument that separating such aspects as plot, character and construction for study was not going to improve our full concentration of the play, and it may hamper our understanding of a work of art. Both the Knights have been pre-occupied with symbols, images and themes from the very beginning. His main concentration as can be gleaned from his analysis was towards the ‘total response’ of Shakespeare’s play, which he believes,

“can only be obtained by an exact and sensitive study of the quality of the verse, of the rhythm and imagery, of the controlled associations of the words and their emotional and intellectual force, in short, by an exact and sensitive study of Shakespeare’s handling of language”.

As is obvious here, the author is eager to emphasize Shakespeare’s virtue as a poet, and his plays for him are treated foremost as poems. The Victorians failed to acknowledge Shakespeare as a theatre artist and playwright they converted him into a novelist. The poetic critics have ignored completely Shakespeare’s supreme quality of a dramatist completely.

If Macbeth is presented as illustration, and the interpretation of both the approaches is taken into account, the variation between these two gets revealed. Bradley as we know, has made use of the traditional method of character criticism, acknowledges the play of Macbeth as a tragedy and considers it the destiny of a man of eminence who is responsible for his fall because of his ambition and also the hand of fate is foreseen. Even the calamity of Banquo is projected as brought upon him because of his own desire of conquest and the
design of the supernatural element in the form of witches. L.C. Knight has interpreted Macbeth, as ‘a statement of evil’. The complete meaning can only be comprehended according to what he puts forth, ‘from a lively attention to the parts, whether they have an immediate bearing on the main action or ‘illustrate character’ or not’.38

Knights has also proposed a substitute to character criticism through his own study of the plays in terms of images and themes, the themes of the change of values of artificial chaos and of deceptive sight. According to Wilson Knight, ‘Macbeth is Shakespeare’s most profound and mature vision of evil’. In his essay on Macbeth L.C. Knight is aware of the method by which Shakespeare uses recurring and interconnected patterns of imagery. Very much like two other new critics, Heilman and Cleanth Brooks, he searches the images for an opening to what the drama really has to convey.

L.C. Knight in his book, Some Shakespearean Themes, has come forward with a new conception of Shakespeare the artist, who use to fulfill the demands of his Elizabethan audience. He thinks that the other critics of his school of thoughts have converted the old indifferent Shakespeare into a new and revolutionary one. In his view his predecessors have projected Shakespeare as if he was:

“...the God-like creator of a peopled world, projecting—it is true—his own spirit into the inhabitants, but remaining essentially the analyst of ‘their’ passions, he is now felt as much more immediately engaged in the action he puts before us.” 39

Most importantly, L.C. Knight makes us aware of two reasons, why his Shakespearean themes should bring ‘to light the assumption that it makes about the poetry’. Firstly because he wants to demote orthodoxy, and he advocates
"thought about the way the plays work’. The other reason, based on his assumption is that the verse has become the ‘centre’ of Shakespeare criticism in the current years.

“...this is because linguistic vitality is now felt as the chief clue to the urgent personal themes that not only shape the poetic-dramatic structure of each play but form the figure in the carpet of the canon as a whole.”

After justification of this new trend that he has decided to support, he also takes the role of a defender since he is endorsing this movement from the very beginning. L.C. Knights does not agree with the adverse criticism of Professor O.J. Campbell regarding two critics—Cleanth Brooks and D.A. Traversi.

Actually Professor Campbell gets his objection registered not because he is against such interpretative criticism but rather due to the excess towards which these critics seem to be indulging which they themselves have discredited earlier, in the case of Bradley and his followers.

In fact Una Ellis-Fermor has whole heartedly agreed to this admonishment: In the Shakespeare survey, this view has been presented:

Campbell’s sane, conservative estimate of the limitations of the function of interpretation in the study of imagery comes at a moment when it is needed, if not overdue.

L.C. Knight feels that such strictures as Campbell’s which undermine the role of imagery in Shakespeare’s plays, are critically doing a disservice to Shakespeare and blurring and misfocussing the ‘alternative critical principles’ that these ‘New Critics’ are aiming to achieve.
Continuing with this argument on 'some contemporary Trends', he praises the modern Shakespeare scholarship for giving them co-operation regarding this particular attention that they want to grant to Shakespeare, i.e., hearing 'the whole orchestration and seek our meanings there, not simply picking out the more obvious time.'\(^4\) In his opinion his focus on poetry is justified according to the research of the last thirty years which illuminate the situation that Shakespeare faced when he wrote for the Elizabethan audiences and theatres according to the conventions and traditions of Elizabethan dramas.

Before Knights sums up he again makes a claim,

"... The essential structure of Shakespearean Tragedy is poetic
we at least do not violence to Shakespeare the Elizabethan
dramatist.\(^5\)

Further he wants to concern him self 'with generative power'. His aim is to probe the very core of Shakespeare and find 'different meaning at different levels and thus, for Knights the interpretation of Shakespeare is a continuous search of 'ourselves'. \(^6\)

The foreword in his book expresses the 'belief' that Shakespeare's plays 'form a coherent whole, that they stem from and express a developing 'attitude to life'. Although he does concede the influence of a 'particular audience's' response to his individual plays, but he wants to assume that even though this may have been the fact but Shakespeare wrote to promote his own interest and not the interest of his indifferent spectators but rather preference was given to his own sense of life's meaning.
Caroline Spurgeon is also one of the most acclaimed pioneers of this approach, the immense value of her book, Shakespeare's Imagery (1935) cannot be belittled. There are other scholars who have preceded her in interpreting Shakespeare according to the study of Imagery, but it was her contribution entirely to have for the first time verbalized this trend and regularized some of its outcome.

The study of imagery is the most essential aspect of Shakespearean plays, for her. In order to grasp the meaning of a play and also to understand Shakespeare as a person, one has to comprehend the customary images which in each play illustrates its basic sense. Spurgeon has not like G.W. Knight, given us a definition of imagery, though it is the only focus in all her agenda, elucidating these images instead, through illustrations of metaphors and similes. She gives credit to poetic imagery because it "gives quality, treats atmosphere and conveys emotion in a way no precise description however clear and accurate, can possibly do."  

R.A. Foakes in his enlightening essay, "Suggestions for A New Approach to Shakespeare's Imagery" in Shakespeare's Survey has made a valiant effort of explaining what these Imagist are actually illustrating and for the readers convenience, has divided the study of this new imagery under four headings. In all these considerations the key figure who emerges as essential necessary focus is no other than Miss Spurgeon.

She restricted her discussion for a special purpose, to find out some thing about Shakespeare the man. She studied only "the little word picture used by a poet to illustrate, illuminate and embellish his thought", because she believed these images
proceeded from “the storehouse of the unconscious memory”, and would reveal “the furniture of his mind.... The objects and incidents he observes and remembers, and perhaps most significant of all, those which he does not observe or remember”. She ignored references, as proceeding not from his unconscious but from his conscious mind, and as relating to the every day world of trivialities. 49

Most often it has been observed regarding Spurgeon, that she is only interested in the ‘subject matter’. To illustrate her point of view we consider this line from Macbeth:

Sleep that knits up the ravell’d sleave of care (Macbeth II, ii, 37).

She considers ‘ravell’d sleave’ as the subject matter and does not concern her self with the underlying idea’, which has been termed ‘object-matter of the image’ by these new critics. Sleep’ may have dramatic importance and undercurrents of deep meaning but to her it holds a ‘wonderful picture of knitting up the loose fluffy all-pervading substance of frayed-out floss silk’. 50

She has analyzed iterative patterns in the second part of her book Shakespeare’s Imagery and also pointed out the ‘dominant’ patterns of images. She has provided herself with this subject-matter so that she could manipulate ‘Shakespeare’s imaginative vision of the play concerned’ providing a reason for the study. Following her example, many other critics also study images in a similar vein and describe it as the ‘dominant’ pattern when actually they visualize the picture most obvious in the mind of the reader or the audience, because it is impossible to present the image projected by Shakespeare’s mind.
According to Spurgeon’s preface, her very purpose for writing, Shakespeare’s Imagery was an attempt to investigate his work and reveal the directions that the study of Shakespeare’s images bring to light.

As she herself describes it, her study mainly reveals the hint made by the imagery, she deals with: Firstly her study of these imagery enlightens the personality, thought and temperament of Shakespeare. Secondly the themes and characters of the play are illuminated.

The other involvement of her book is with the dispute of authorship, which is queried through these freshly acquired images that have been used as evidences in favour of the author. These images concern ‘the background of Shakespeare’s mind and the origin of his imagery’. These images that occur in Shakespeare’s plays have also been compared with the images of those of his contemporaries. This task of hers is full of toil and has taken up several years of hard work and perseverance. But Spurgeon has accepted this mission as a challenge because it is a method that is new and untouched and it enables one to get close to the mind of this great author. In her own word she has adopted this approach because it:

... throws light from a fresh angle upon Shakespeare’s imaginative and pictorial vision, upon his own ideas about his own plays and the characters in them, and it seems to me to serve as an absolute beacon in the skies with regard to the vexed question of authorship.

Caroline Spurgeon’s work is exceptional, because she has not just picked one or two passing thoughts of the poet’s mind but in fact all his images, have been ‘collected’, ‘sorted out’ and then scrutinized very systematically:
"... the good with the bad, the disagreeable with the pleasant, the coarse with the refined, the attractive with the unattractive, and the poetical with the unpoetical. 54

They have all been studies in one group without any distinction or prejudice, examined for all kind of information and then the result is declared which may even be a surprise to the examiner himself.

Caroline Spurgeon feels these collected images reveal 'a world in themselves', because they exhibit the most fascinating of all experience and intense imagination that is a privilege to man. But to study them is not easy, and one needs a lifetime of devotion and dedication to the study of the 'brilliance that once existed in the authors mind.'

Spurgeon may well feel that she has revealed an absolutely new and enlightened avenue for examination and study, but in Shakespeare scholarship nobody could have the credit for having completed the study regarding Shakespeare. Her own work is up for scrutiny and critics are not satisfied with neither her subject matter or her methodology.

R.A. Foakes does give her allowance for a special reason that is, the purpose of her writing that has been mentioned in her preface and that has been discussed on the page preceding this one. Many other scholars who imitate her, paying full attention to poetic image, do not like her, have any 'special reason' for doing so. They are not actually concerned with the 'image picture' in Shakespeare's mind like Spurgeon is, rather they want to be a part of the trend in modern interpretation. 55
It is U.M. Ellis-Fermor who has marked this disparity among the New critics. Except W. Clemen she criticizes H.G. Wells, J.M. Murray and even F. Kolbe for being subjective. Spurgeon has been approved by Fermor for being scientifically objective.

Even Spurgeon’s approach to Shakespeare is not fool proof and many protest have been marked, one of them by L.H. Hornstein, ‘The Analysis of Imagery’, her method has also been assailed by W.T. Hornstein, in ‘Shakespeare’s Imagery’. Her incompatibility, in inefficiency her own data to the study of imagery and her inflexible attitude not granting that even simple reference could contain some fantastic idea. She also could not grasp nor permit that some of Shakespeare’s imagery may have been plagiarized or could have been a simple maxim, much in use, during the time Shakespeare lived. The major fault in her work, her opponents felt was her dictatorial decision regarding:

‘……what is conscious and unconscious in Shakespeare’s work.
The borderline between the two can never be known, and recent research into the use of logic and rhetoric in Shakespeare’s age suggests that figures of speech were artifices to be used deliberately for given effects. 56

Spurgeon has also been fascinated with the clothing images in Shakespeare and particularly she finds this image very powerful in Macbeth. Foakes reveals that the study of such images may have been essential for the embellishment that Spurgeon wanted to achieve but their utility in the enhancement of the readers or audience’s understanding was less obvious. The work, of such images that have been sorted out by Spurgeon to be observed,
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was of the more silent kind and according to Foakes their creation was to build up the ‘peculiar atmosphere’ of the play, which is more properly described by Wilson Knight the ‘spatial quality’. The special permission that had been granted by Foakes to Miss Spurgeon is withdrawn and he insists that such iterative words and the ‘object-matter of images, their dramatic importance’, have to be investigated carefully and researched, since the study presented by Spurgeon is incomplete.\(^{57}\)

The other writers with a similar interest as Spurgeon pertain to studying the role and outcome of the nature of imagery and for them the study of substance is of greater value, rather than a specific inquiry relating to Shakespeare.

It has been contended by I.A. Richards, that it is not compulsory that poetic imagery should attract visual or different perception but he has urged for the involvement of rational knowledge; primarily.\(^{58}\) According to D.G. James, the major function of imagery should be to communicate the fanciful notion or intention.\(^{59}\) Besides these, there are some other scholars of a similar school of thought relating to imagery. They are S.J. Brown who wrote The World of Imagery (1927) and Maud Bodkin, the writer of Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (1934). Also, more recent among these critics, the name of Rosemond Tuve and her work on ‘Imagery and Logic’; Ramus and Metaphysical, Poetics’, is worth mentioning, since she “has shown that the Elizabethan thought of imagery as logically functional in poetry, its business being to persuade the reader and compel his understanding. An image was effective, she
claims, if its controlled suggestions illuminated the idea concerned, and caused the reader to forget irrelevant associations.  

These writers who have been discussed, above related the images in the context of the reader, and not as personal pictures communicated by the author’s insight. The meaning of ‘sleep’ must be of great dramatic significance in the verse it is mentioned, but Spurgeon has managed to convince, the students of English literature that its significance is of ‘domestic or knitting image’, which does not seem to relate to the play of Macbeth but rather to the habit of the author and the picture in his mind.

It is difficult to estimate whether this inclination of Spurgeon to regard iterative patterns as the exclusive subject-matter of imagery which is instrumental in bringing forth Shakespeare’s fanciful insight, is foolproof. These kinds of assumption fail to satisfy the scientific temperament that prevails in today’s world and already voices of dissent can be heard. Even her reliable defender, Una Ellis-Fermor had to concede:

‘… in the special case of drama, there are sometimes reasons for extending it to include the frontiers of symbolism, description, or even, it may be, the setting itself.

Una Ellis-Fermor, The Frontiers of Drama

Thus, regarding the research that Spurgeon embarked upon, the definition of imagery certainly has to be expanded more than the scope provided by her. And for such scholars who want to find the meaning or to interpret the play or may be only to appreciate such a notion of imagery as provided by Spurgeon could prove insufficient.
All this discussion regarding the scope and subject-matter of Imagery, strengthens one’s resolve that the study of Shakespeare’s plays is in drastic need of a flexible definition of imagery that would take a play into consideration as a drama and not as a poem only. The prevailing temperament during was to study Shakespeare’s play as a dramatic poem hence more emphasis was given to poetic images by the critics who wanted to follow the dominant trend. Even G. Wilson Knight, desired to “see each play as an expanded metaphor”.

Cleanth Brooks idea of studying Shakespeare’s play was also borrowed from metaphysical poetry. R.B. Heilman another scholar of images considers “the large metaphor which is the play itself.”

A poem can very well become a metaphor even to exist “inside an image but how can the same be claimed of a Shakespearian play. These new critics forget that a play has a purpose, it has to be staged and also it has to convey some message to its viewers. The images that are functional in a play, cannot exist all by themselves. They are not just words, they have to have a link with the dramatic situation, stage effect and interplay of characters and even the time sequence has to fit in. These imagistic critics want to accomplish an impossible mission, through the interpretation they want to probe the complete meaning and also the significance of a play. Some like R.B. Heilman become all the more innovative and transform the characters into symbols and imagine the plays as extended metaphor and even a type of poetic allegory. Being, scholars of Shakespeare’s Dramas, how can they banish the other resources that also contribute towards an enhancement of understanding and enriching the effect and the meaning of the plays.
While comparing Wilson Knotts to Spurgeon, Gary Taylor notes a very interesting distinction between them. Although W. Knotts wanted to probe the consciousness of Shakespeare’s mind he could not, since he had no plan to see his desire carried out. It is, said about Caroline, that her method was less gullible than W. Knight.

“Wilson trying to illustrate the essence of Shakespeare’s mind, narrated instead the history of his body, an account dependent on events, relationship, chronologies, the thickness of material world.”

Hence it is said about Wilson that most of his study is based upon conjectures, since document in support of such fancy does not exist. Where as Spurgeon was assisted by Shakespeare’s own text and the images that he created in order to capture that eluding Shakespeare essence. She also in her eagerness to picture Shakespeare as a man ignored, “the dry records of legal documents and law-suits.”

T.E. Hulme’s description of the sensibility of modernism that he had found in poetic imagery leading to “the very essence of an intuitive language,” perhaps this was the turning point in the criticism of Shakespeare which also inspired Spurgeon in discovering the very essence of Shakespeare in his own imagery.

What Spurgeon does is to first collect all the images separate them and than investigate them on a ‘systematic basis’, these are contrasted with the images of Bacon, Marlowe, Johnson, Chapman, Dekker and Massinger. These selected images are able to convey to Spurgeon that Shakespeare “was healthy
in body as in mind, clean and fastidious in his habits, very sensitive to dirt and evil smells",

"a country man through and through", who "does not like noise",
"a competent rider" who "loved horses, as indeed he did most animals, except Spaniels and house dogs", "an expert archer",
commonly "deft and nimble with hands".

Regarding the inside person, "five words sum up the essence of his quality and character as seen in his images—sensitiveness, balance, courage, humour and wholesomeness". The powerful writing of these two women writers of that time, still remains invaluable. Una Ellis-Fermor’s interpretation of The Jacobean Drama 1936. Muriel Bradbrook launched her prize winning essay on Elizabethan Stage Conventions published in 1932.

Most importantly these very women were instrumental in shaping Shakespeare’s prevalent image during the mid twentieth century. Most amazingly they were not conscious like their Victorian predecessor, that they were women. Virginia Woolf, it seems has given a new image to the women of twenty first century through her book, A Room of One’s Own. She acquaints us with the desire of creating a women who could have been ‘Shakespeare’s sister’ and could exhibit his genius.

Every secret of a writer’s soul every experience of his life, every quality of his mind, is written large in his works, yet we require critics to explain the one and biographers to expound the other.

This citation has been used by Spurgeon as an epigraph to her book, Shakespeare’s Imagery, but Woolf’s ideology of feminism failed to have made
its mark on her work on Shakespeare. It is very clear and explicit here that
gender discrimination of any kind is absent in Spurgeon’s work. In fact she has
not perceived Shakespeare’s images from the point of view of a woman. These
women writers were in the habit of using initials such as “C.F.E.” Spurgeon,
“M.C.” Bradbrook and “U.M.” Ellis-Fermour so that they would not be
considered any differently from “L.C.” Knight’s, “I.A. Richard’s and “E.E.
Stoll. (P.260).

There were other variations that was obvious in Shakespeare’s
interpretation as a reflection of the change in the social set up and the tilt
towards the concentration in sex. Even Shakespeare could not be saved from
this obsession of sex. Since this dissertation does not concern it self with this
recent development in Shakespeare studies, the details would not be dealt with.

Eliot’s exposition in regard to the explanation of Hamlet “we should
have to understand things” concerning Shakespeare “which Shakespeare did not
understand himself.” These were some of the assumption with which these
New Critics began and, even psycho-analysis was employed in order to defend
their stance. Spurgeon used the images from psychoanalysis for the study of the
author imagery:

The repeated evidence of clusters of certain associated idea in the
poet’s mind... throws a curious light on what I suppose the
psychoanalyst would call ‘complexes’; that is, certain groups of
things and ideas—apparently entirely unrelated—which are
linked together in Shakespeare’s subconscious mind, and some of
which are undoubtedly the outcome of an experience, a sight or
emotion which has profoundly affected him.
The dogs or spaniels were definitely linked to the images of licking, groveling blending melting even to sweets like candy and sugar these images have been related, the moment one is mentioned, it conjures up the image of the other images. These manifold tangles that Spurgeon has discussed in her books, the idea seems to have been further broadened and studied by E. A. Armstrong in 1946. In his book *Shakespeare's Imagination* he has stumbled upon several more image clusters, those of disease restraint, bed, spirits, kite, birds, food and many others to name a few. His methodology is much more refined than that of Spurgeon. Although his functioning also concerns delving deep ‘below the level of consciousness,’ but he allows Shakespeare, ‘the ordering of the images to his subliminal mind’ and he involved himself more with the issue of plot and dramatic intention. Although Armstrong did not agree with Freud’s specific project of the psyche that was made evident but he thought that the procedure through which imagination had to pass was unconsciously operative and that it could be back tracked via the joining of similar imagery. Thus, Armstrong introduces us ‘to the image house of music’.  

Spurgeon too likes to compare Shakespeare’s recurring images to that of Waghner’s music. Shakespeare’s poetry is appreciated by Armstrong and Spurgeon as if they were writing about music, this had also been the trend of Shaw and Eliot and even Knight. The language of Shakespeare has the capacity to produce music for these critics. They transformed Shakespeare’s verse into music.

At this stage that Shakespeare has been brought at by his new critics, his appeal is directed towards music. Among his modern critics it is Gary Taylor who laments this fact that Shakespeare’s identity has been changed.

“But where O where has the author gone? He has disappeared again, fallen between the interstices of his own images.”
For these image interpreters like Armstrong, Shakespeare’s images reveal nothing about the author’s private life neither worldly, spiritual nor anatomical they exhibit only the objective conduct of a poet’s imagination, that has become its own authority. Shakespeare no longer matters as a person he has become a symbol for projecting thoughts and imagination.

This treatise on the New Critics would remain unfinished without mention of Cleanth Brooks. He has been very highly praised by Mr. Taylor:

“one of the most influential American critics of the twentieth century, maker of textbooks, propounder of critical and pedagogical method”.

Brooks, well known essay on Macbeth is likened to that of Pope’s Dunciad and Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy. His essay was published in 1947 and is considered a representative of the characteristics of that era of Shakespeare. Brooks did not belong to England, but English Literature in the twentieth century was not any longer the personal property of the English. Joyce and Yeats and Shaw were Irish; Stoll and Eliot and even Pound were Americans. Literary studies were still controlled by Cambridge University. The change in the textual studies was brought about by two undergraduates Grej and Mckerrow which came to be known as New Bibliography in 1890’s. In the early twentieth century an edition of novelty and excitement was published by Cambridge University Press, titled as the New Shakespeare by Dover Wilson. Richard’s, Leavise’s, Knight’s, Empson and Bradbrook in the 1920’s and early 1930’s flourished under the patronage of Cambridge. After the world war II the American education system adopted English literature in their colleges and universities.
Shakespeare was demarcated as a poet and not as a dramatist by Brooks in his popular essay, ‘Shakespeare as a Symbolist Poet.’ He was also allied to a special kind of modernist poetry that belonged to the French symbolist, Mallarmé etc. In England it was supported by Arthur Symon’s effective book on The Symbolist Movement in Literature, and this same cause was represented in English by Eliot, Pound and Steven’s. This essay helps in placing Brooks in the direction of modernist poetry and also becomes an illustration of ‘reiterative thematic imagery of modernist criticism’.  

Brook’s scholarship is commendable because since he corroborates his discourse with many references from established authorities of that time like T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richard, Spurgeon and even Coleridge, who did not belong to the twentieth century. Brook observes “an elaborate pattern in the imagery” of Macbeth; he also ascertains that some symbols are more obvious in the play. He also believes that to comprehend the play completely the ‘inner symbolism’ has to be grasped which in turn has been geared up by Shakespeare’s in conscious. 

L.C. Knight’s, “Shakespeare and Shakespeareans” conveys this message to his disciples that the ‘essential qualification’ of a genuine critic of Shakespeare, should have “a lively interest in the present and the immediate future of poetry”. This same theme is utilized by Brooks, because he believes in such ideas of his contemporaries like Eliot and Knights. In today’s world of criticism and poetry, comprehension can only be attained, of an individual play or poem by confining it to the larger literary system. In effect of which Brook’s essay on Macbeth in The Well Wrought Urn, has been granted a status along with the essays on poems by Keats, Tennyson, Herrick, Donne, Gray and Wordsworth and even Yeats. In fact, Brooks has pleaded for such an
understanding in his essay on Macbeth, which consider the play as a link of a larger literary system. According to this school of thought, like Knights had long ago declared, 'Macbeth is a poem',

There are some inconsistencies in his book which have been marked by Taylor:

The book begins with Donne, then back-pedals to Shakespeare before resuming its forward motion. Indeed, in the original version of the essay Brooks introduces Shakespeare as "Donne's great contemporary".81

Then he definitely makes Donne appear, more superior as a poet, in comparison to Shakespeare by cleverly hinting that if Donne is read more frequently then it would 'enable us to read Shakespeare more richly.'82 By these skilful verbal nuances, he tries to subjugate and restrain the genius of Shakespeare to that of the Metaphysical poet. There is another subtle suggestion in his essay on 'Macbeth' that, as if, the development of the 'New Criticism' was brought about for the reinstatement of 'Donne and the Donne tradition'. 83

These are some of the irrelevancies that have been noticed in Brook's writings:

1) "Brooks treats all parts of the play as though they were simultaneously present and visible to viewer", collapsing time into a single dimension;..." A similar treatment is meted out to literary history.84
2) It appears as if through the idea of projecting Shakespeare and comparing him with Donne, he wants to advertise the conceit projected in his own essay.

3) The critical method that he has adopted in his book *The Well Wrought Urn*, to analyze the poems from Shakespeare to Yeats, in exactly the same procedure purposely divorces the poems from their background. This particular method of study was derived from Eliot, Joyce and Pound, called the “mythic method”, that provided ample scope to these critics to project without any hesitation, works of writers from different periods.

4) He ignores all social, political, cultural and ideological considerations of Shakespeare’s age. He deliberately withholds even the facts regarding the King’s accession and that occurred in Shakespeare’s life span for the first time in England, the royal family and their children had inherited monarchy. All these factors has influenced the writing of Macbeth and even the audience were aware of the ‘social detail”, Nevertheless:

He suppresses history, including the history of texts. He wants a significance that transcends temporal particulars.\(^{85}\)

Brooks had a great duty to perform, to wanted to change the description of poetry and bring eminence to his own vocation. In this light his acknowledging poetry as “more universal than the expression of the particular values of its time” conveys the significance of his deliberate attempt to bring about a change in ‘the temper of our times’ with this powerful ‘relativism’ that he finds in the medium of poetry.
This was also perhaps a reaction towards the historical scholarship, which had nearly confirmed that Shakespeare belonged to the stage and relied upon certain conditions and convention that made his play a success in the theatre. By demonstrating such facts regarding Shakespeare, they placed him back on the Elizabethan and Jacobean scenario. Even the textual scholars of Shakespeare were it the grip of presenting, the real Shakespeare and to authenticate not only his work but the meaning and theatre performance. The restoration of Shakespeare by his critics, editors and directors only resulted in the appearance of a very artificial Shakespeare, who no longer belonged to the present time. Brooks along with the other New Critics changed the concept of belonging to a particulars time and space. Historical scholarship was completely uprooted by these critics and even the theatrical performance was rendered useless. The authority of the 'New Critics' was thus established and the dismissal of historical Scholarship was achieved. This also solved the problem of the American academics as through promoting this new way of Shakespeare’s interpretation these critics had completely hijacked Shakespeare from London.

Historical Scholarship and, book, documents had all thrived on the English soil, till now, but through this revival of a new Shakespeare by an American critic, America attained its supremacy in literature also. These New Critics who were the offsprings of the American environment needed only the new version of Shakespeare’s text and may be The Shakespeare Glossary in order to churn out Shakespeare criticism.

Brook’s made quite an impact on the American intellectuals and the school-college children. The greatest affinity between these New Critics was
their insolence towards their cultural inheritance and their preference of a formless existence. For Brooks and for the other 'New critics':

"... the search for universal values leads only to a confirmation of current values. "Eternity" is a euphemism for the isolationist present, which retrospectively commandeers the past." 87

Hence we find the continuing influence of these writers of Shakespeare's symbolism, imagery and ambivalence. Besides W. Knight's, C. Spurgeon L.C. Knight and Cleanth Brooks work, Wolfgang Clemen also made an impact, and his voice was also heard. Wolfang Clemen 89 influenced a chronological enhancement of Shakespeare's use of imagery, yet he differed in the presentation of his book from Spurgeon and W. Knight. M.C. Bradbrook reviews his book in a befitting manner.

Each play is approached in the manner dictated by its own form; thus in Hamlet and Othello imagery is studied as it serves to distinguish character in Antony and Cleopatra and King Lear the use is more complex, the variety greater, and the world of the play more entirely. P.9, Sh. S: 7). Created and displayed through this means. Cleman is in search of "a truly organic method of understanding the images." 89

Although the impact of Clemen's book was not bewildering its reader it was indeed a retrieval from the traditional criticism and hence salutary. His approach was serious and perceptive and provided a change from Caroline Spurgeon's focus on comprehensiveness and W. Knights escape into a realm of poetic exuberance.
The Rise Of the New Approach

The method that Clemen followed was utilized by Una-Ellis-Fermor in her Jacobean Drama (1936) and even Tillyard has applied it in his volume of Shakespeare's Last Plays (1938). S.L. Bethel and D. Traversi also need to be mentioned in this context, since both of them studied The Winter's Tale in detail with the application of this new method.

Hence this literary approach which led its scholars and students to take interest in the imagery and symbolism of Shakespeare's plays, did not remain contented for long. The mere analysis of Shakespeare's theme through imagery and symbolism opened new doors and paved the path of an approach that was full of 'doctrinal irrelevances'. This was the unique contribution of Shakespeare himself, that he had the power of luring and encompassing the minds of his readers completely and also housing all kind of enchanted discoveries in his work and his personality. This kind of interpretative criticism was a welcome change for the scholars of Shakespeare who did not have all the pedagogical learning of either ancient literature of Elizabethan literature in order to excel as critics of Shakespeare. This new approach provided limitless scope from the binding effects of character and plot and also of the theatre and the text.

This was the deviation that these new critics have achieved, Hamlet has become the fantasy of a patient, who is being treated by a psychologist and also a drama of a son's abnormal love for his mother's suffering from Oedipus complex and The Winter's Tale, the product of a vegetation myth. Thus, the dawn of nineteen hundred and thirty saw to it that:

'Shakespeare the playwright was sunk in Shakespeare the poet.'
Eliot and Yeat’s reversed this and glorified this Elizabethan and Jacobean playwright as the greatest of all poets who created music for the tempest, the king and the beggar all alike.

Paradox, dichotomy and ambivalence, polarity and integration were favourite terms of the new critical diction.91

There is a recent controversy that has emerged between two schools of thought, the scholars of imagery or the ‘New Critics’ because they have entirely separated Shakespeare from his original settings and the theatre of his age, and the more traditional scholars of the historical background. Lionel Trilling in his ‘The Sense of the Past’ (The Liberal Imagination, 1948) has commented on this conflict that both are subjected to the whims and fancies of their own kind, and both of them replace explanation with interpretation. Trilling also hints that all this is a deliberate attempt on the part of the universities in order to keep a subject alive and developing, to keep more and more students occupied with the work of research and publishing. It is no longer a matter of reviving Shakespeare at all cost, but the scholars and teachers of literature have also to survive and hence thrive.

The most remarkable of all achievements of this approach is the possibility of evaluative judgment and that it grants critics scholars infinite scope to evolve towards a true perfection and glorification of art. But it requires great restraint from the literary champions of literature, in order not to become slaves of such a discipline but emerge as masters.
The Rise Of the New Approach

References:


11. Ibid., p.18.


13. Ibid., p.10.


16. This is cited from Retic as a Dramatic Language in Ben Johnson 1948, p.4 in shakespeare Survey 5, 1952.

17. Sh. Survey 5, Ibid., p.81.

18. Ibid., p.62.


20. Reinventing Shakespeare, Ibid., p.239.


22. Ibid., 1930 edn. P.3.


24. Ibid., p.10.


26. The wheel of fire, P.VI.

27. Ibid., p.VIII.

28. Knight seems to be echoing stolls contention. This is one of the major objection that stoll has raised regarding the analysis of the Romantic.

29. The Wheel of fire Ibid., P.10.

30. Ibid., p.30.

31. Ibid., p.15.

32. Ibid., pp.271-72.

33. Ibid., p.2.

34. Ibid., p.3.

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47. Caroline F.E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare’s Imagery and What It tells us (Cambridge, 1935)


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50. Spurgeon, Ibid., p.125.

51. R.A. Foakes, Sh.S.5, p.82.

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53. Ibid., p.X

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76. Gary Taylor, Ibid., p.266.

77. Ibid., p.286.

78. Ibid.


81. Taylor Ibid., p.281.


83. Ibid., p.642.

84. Taylor Ibid., p.292.


86. Ibid., p.293.

87. Ibid., p.294.

88. His book was translated in 1951 although his book *Shakespeare Bilder* was written in 1936. It was translated and revised as *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* (1951).


90. Ibid.

CHAPTER – VI

CONCLUSION

The aim of this final chapter is to sum up in retrospect, the content of the whole work. A bird’s eye view is presented of the different critics and the critical approaches dealt with in each chapter, and an attempt has also been made to identify some of the forces and counter forces operating on each stage in the chronology of the Shakespeare criticism.

First of all the theme of chapter-1 will be analyzed. It is firmly believed that Shakespeare cannot be studied without his past. The New image that Shakespeare has been bestowed with by the modern scholars, is a welcome change, but one must not forget that this change in Shakespeare did not exist all by itself. This was generated by the former projections of Shakespeare. And whether we like it or not this new image of Shakespeare is actually based on many of the old views that are now considered out-worn and out-dated and hence rejected. The past cannot be rejected or obliterated, in some form or the other it does exist. Hence, the plea that needs to be established here is that, in order to interpret Shakespeare that, his background cannot be evaded. It becomes inevitable to trace his lineage back to the middle of the seventeenth century. If one ignores the past and fails to relate it with the present the future perspective becomes myopic.

In order to specify more explicitly one needs to re-view Chapter-I that goes under the sub-title of ‘The Shakespearean Scene’. The history of Shakespeare criticism has evidenced various rises and falls of movements, methods and approaches. A time had come in the history of Shakespeare criticism, when the only object of interest were characters. But however there
Conclusion

were out-right rejection of such an approach due to extreme manifestations in
the form of Anna Jameson and Mary Cowden Clarke’s, *Girlhood of
Shakespeare’s Heroines*.

In the third quarter of the 18th century, Shakespeare’s character surfaced
occasionally to receive scattered remarks but they never became a matter of
strife and contest, like in the nineteen twenties. In the Age of Reason
Shakespeare was mainly censured for his lack of learning and observance of the
unities. Yet in spite of the harsh critical commentaries, Shakespeare flourished
and continued to entertain his audience and readers. But as time progressed
these ideas regarding the importance of scholarship and emulating the ancients
proved wrong. Shakespeare’s eminence was established and his treatment of
drama was seen to have been correct and thus ‘the Aristotelians with their
decorum and, their three unities were put in their proper place’.

This significant fact should also be accepted that it was the work of
scientific study that has from time to time yielded enormous development in the
field of Shakespeare studies and has also helped in diminishing the bias and
authoritarian attitudes of scholars and researchers. After the powerful attack of
Samuel Johnson on the ‘unities’ of time place and action, in his *Preface to
Shakespeare* (1756) the glitter and gleam of Aristotle’s rules started to fade into
insignificance. This was definitely a turning point in the interpretation of
Shakespeare’s plays. The controversy over Shakespeare’s learning was swept
over by the Romantic movement and its creed of personal individuality started
to be reflected in the criticism of Shakespeare. Thus this tradition of immense
interest in character studies was transported to the twentieth century.
Another point that has to be emphasized in this chapter of evaluative study is that A.C. Bradley's publication of *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) was not out of time and place, he had behind him the rich inheritance of the romantic tradition. When ever one appreciates Bradley's work and his significant contribution in regard to Shakespeare, it is not possible to overlook the concerns and predilections of his ancestors who were before him. Because it is natural for him to have accumulated and later integrated their ways and methods into his own analysis. Hence in order to explain Bradley's philosophy in Shakespearean Tragedy, one has to understand Coleridge, Hazlitt and Maurice Morgann as well. Bradley has proclaimed Morgann's famous essay on Falstaff as being incomparable in the world of Shakespeare criticism. And the suggestions made by Morgann regarding how to properly treat the characters in the plays,

'rather as historic than dramatic beings'.

These kind of technique were vastly incorporated by the critics of character analysers from Morgann's day to that of Bradley's. Even some of Coleridge's remarks concerning character study can be found to be under Morgann's impact.

'The characters of the dramatis personae, like those in real life are to be inferred by the reader; they are not told to him'.

Similarly Morgann has also emphasized upon 'latent motives' and 'policies not avowed', having a sure reflection upon Coleridge's opinion. These kinds of suggestion and inferences led the nineteen century critics to indulge in excesses so much so that they dexterously started probing into the lives of the character as if they were real human beings. They could not distinguish between art and life. They did not know how to balance their
wayward ideas and hence attracted immense strictures towards themselves. Coleridge and Bradley have been targeted frequently by the critics for having forgotten that Hamlet was only a character for the stage and one just could not trace such matters as his whereabouts during the time of his father’s death. But one finds that these kinds of inquiries and over-interpretation had become a general trend. Hence, the inconsistencies that we often find in Bradley’s writings his speculations, and his pleasure in supplying unnecessary details regarding Shakespeare, even at times providing Shakespeare’s characters, intention and his thought, all this was a common practice among all of his predecessors. Both of Bradley’s books, Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) and Oxford Lectures on Poetry (1909) were published in the form of lectures.

Typically, Bradley’s criticism, like Dowden’s takes the form of academic lectures designed for undergraduates, subsequently collected and published by the lecturer. To these circumstances his work owes much of its accessibility.

Bradley’s analysis of Lear was unexpected, it was not like what Shakespeare intended. Actually the commentators have found the reflection of Dowden’s thoughts on its and Bradley has even agreed to such an impact upon him in 1909 he affirmed, “In everything that I have written on Shakespeare I am indebted to Professor Dowden.”

Another fact regarding Bradley that needs to be highlighted is that the theatre mattered less to him and to the dominant trend that he had followed during his time. Hence Bradley in his Shakespearean Tragedy addresses the readers of Shakespeare’s plays and lays stress on the effect of passages when read. That is the reason why Bradley was assailed by critics for treating
Shakespeare like a novelist that too a Victorian, and not like a playwright. The point that needs to be ascertained here is that the style of the writer is due to the impact of his time:

Dryden the dramatist had cast his criticism of Shakespeare in the form of a dialogue of Dramatic Poesie; the journalists Steele and Addison had inscribed Shakespeare in shapely prose essays; Keats and Coleridge had been the greatest practitioners of a mode of criticism typified by lyrical fragments. In Bradley's hands Shakespearean criticism became a philosophical novel.\(^7\)

The highlights of the first chapter of this work conveys one message very explicitly that each of these authors, critics and movements are consciously or unintentionally associated with each other. Samuel Johnson may have seen many flaws in the writings of Shakespeare along with Dryden but later on in the 20\(^{th}\) century these very 'false wit, puns, and ambiguity' became the center of interest for the 20\(^{th}\) century 'New Criticism'. And while these devices were subject to very harsh censures in the neo-classical era they were now praised for their resonance of meaning and profundity. Johnson has further been acclaimed for having generated the criticism of Shakespeare's characters that reached its culmination in the late 19\(^{th}\) century work of A.C. Bradley. Before Bradley, William Hazlitt had been granted, the credit for developing the character analysis begun by Johnson; Hazlitt regarded each of Shakespeare's characters as exceptional but discovered unanimity through analogy and gradation of characters. With A.C. Bradley, the end of a phase in character study may have reached its apex, but the idea and thoughts of Bradley are not curtailed and obliterated but spreads and gets absorbed by the 20\(^{th}\) century imagistic approach. The hint made by Bradley that Shakespeare's plays have a
unifying imagistic atmosphere, was an idea that brought about the rise of the new approach.

Thus, we find how these critics and the movements they endorse were inter-related, on surface they may appear to be totally opposing but actually at the same time they were providing ample scope and range and even inspiration and inadvertent co-operation to each other in an implicit manner.

The Second Chapter of this thesis undertakes to study the criticism of Hamlet, which has been selected as a specimen for a clear understanding of Bradley, Stoll and W.Knight. The examination of the various doctrines as revealed by the author themselves gives each of them a unique identity of their own. Some critics have been grouped together due to the similarity of their approaches. Although critics as different as J.M. Robertson, E.E. Stoll and L.L. Schucking’s work have been considered under the same banner, although no doubt, they wrote regarding Shakespeare but with different aims and understanding. They have been grouped together for study because of their initial commitment that, Hamlet could only be properly illuminated in the Elizabethan terms and conditions which includes the theatre and the audiences.

Their doctrine of an “Elizabethan Hamlet” ‘consists of the following ideology’:

“The primary aim of the job of the critic of Hamlet is to explain the play by relating it to its conditions of the Elizabethan age. The critic may, if he wishes, go on to evaluate the play or to interpret it for our time, but his central task remains an explanation of the play in its contemporary terms”.


Stoll, along with the pioneers of new criticism has tried to show that such a criticism as has been pursued by Bradley and his successors cannot do justice to Shakespeare’s plays, particularly Hamlet. While Wilson Knight, Caroline Spurgeon, William Empson, T.S. Eliot and other poetic critics have essentially presented the plays as poetic creations and de-emphasised the significance of Shakespeare’s plots, his characters and their motives, Stoll’s contention was to prove that the focus on the true to life image was not right as Shakespeare often sacrificed character in order to project the significance of plot.

Stoll’s idea of artifice that he created Shakespeare of using in order to thrill his audience, this indeed is very new and revolutionary and cannot be surpassed by any other vision of Hamlet’s interpretation. Yet Stoll’s criticism has been branded as ‘provocative’ and he has been badly assailed by fellow critic and his idea of Hamlet as an ideal hero challenged by Dover Wilson. Stoll has projected Hamlet as an Avenger-Malcontent with no hint of inner conflict according to the tradition of older Hamlet.

This present study regards the issue of Hamlet’s delay that arises from Bradley and Stoll’s criticism can not ever be resolved and is a continuous process of defining and rejecting. The real mystery that lurks in the character of Hamlet is an enigma. It is an achievement not of the commentators and critics but of William Shakespeare. The mystery can never be solved it shall remain as an object for debate and research, exactly like Mona Lisa’s Smile similarly you can never rob a rose of its fragrance. It is the marvel, the triumph of the artist.

There are evidences of paradoxes visible in the criticism of New Critics. These very critics like W. Knight who deemed it fit at first to subordinate
character to themes and images also "repudiated character analysis completely." Yet Knight sometimes sound absolutely like Bradley in comments like:

>'His wit is often illuminating, often amusing, sometimes rather disgusting'.

Even L.C. Knight's who participates very actively in repudiating Bradley's excessive concentration on character has frequently indulged himself in the same kind of philosophical speculation as Bradley. In his essay on Hamlet (1940) this is the kind of description that Hamlet is bestowed with:

>"What Hamlets wit, his cruelty and his self-righteousness have in common is a quality of moral relaxation which more or less subtly distorts the values for which he professes to stand.'

Moreover, another strong assailant of Bradley, C.S. Lewis can also not be spared of this hypocrisy, because in the very same essay where he rejects Bradley's character criticism, he has remarked regarding Hamlet: "the affection we feel for the Prince, and, through him, for Horatio, is like a friendship in real life". These scattered comments often project that even Bradley's opponents did not practice what they preached.

This review on the criticism of Hamlet can never come to the finishing point unless, one gives space to the most important problem of Hamlet, according to Bradley. The basic problem in Hamlet as viewed by Bradley, is the delay in Hamlet's main task. He designs his entire doctrine on the assumption that Hamlet's action in hesitating to accomplish his duty was the core of the tragedy. He takes all these points into consideration without discussion or debate. And as Weitz informs us:
Bradley assumes, without question, that Hamlet's delay is an undeniable datum of the play.  

Thus, in the entire discussion of the play, he is engrossed with this only issue for which he provides explanation. Naturally the critics of 20th century have challenged this datum of Bradley. G.B. Harrison, a critic depending on scientific research and historical investigation questions Bradley on this assumption, and declared that, 'In the play which Shakespeare wrote there was no delay.'

This analysis does not seek to question the truth or the falsification of Bradley's or any other critic's interpretation. The critics have been too harsh on Bradley because if we examine our inner self honestly, have we not had the inclination to feel like Hamlet at times. And that 'smack of Hamlet' that Coleridge had felt has percolated down to the modern times. There is another very illuminating side to Bradley's criticism, it is Bradley's unique insight to Hamlet's fondness of quibbles and conceit that has today paved the path of newer discovery into Shakespeare's language that had been brushed aside by Dryden and Johnson as great defects on the part of Shakespeare. Caroline Spurgeon and W.H. Clemen have followed this hint of Bradley's and converted these vague quibbles into a basic clue to the understanding of Hamlet. Hence, even in this context we can trace the co-relation between these critics one's hint leads to the others exquisite discovery and renovation. This analysis on these major critics enriching the understanding of Hamlet could be summed by this keen observation of Clifford Leech:

Hamlet, Written by more than one, perhaps written by Shakespeare more than once, has a smack of each of us in it; Stoll
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gives us its theatrical excitement Bradley and Ernest Jones the working of the protagonist's mind, D.G. James its twentieth century appeal, Dover Wilson and Schucking its special reverberations for its first audience, Granville-Barker its available meaning for a producer.\textsuperscript{15}

What is desperately needed in Shakespeare criticism is not another movement or rejection of others definition but a synthesis of artistic assessment and literary intuition of finesse and knowledge.

The third chapter of this work is attempted as a reparation to Bradley’s esteem, it is also a kind of twenty first century perspective of Bradley. The severe criticism that had been directed towards Bradley’s \textit{Shakespearean Tragedy} twenty five years after its publication had to some extent undermined the significance of Bradley’s profound analysis. Bradley became an easy target in the hands of this massive critical assault which had actually been directed against the orthodox point of view their obsession for character analysis. This brick-batting was being hurled at the core of that belief that had been carried into the nineteen century criticism from Dryden to Bradley. Bradley and his predecessors had all voiced the same fundamental belief that “Shakespeare’s character were essentially true to nature and to life.”\textsuperscript{16} And these twentieth century critics who were paving a new way to the understanding of Shakespeare were compelled to carry out this vociferous attack.

This study of Bradley aims to convey that even if, he is viewed as an adversary, he should be granted the status of a stimulus who puts these assailants into their mettle. Hence it is the contention of this chapter to restore Bradley back to his former glory so that once again his study of Shakespeare
could be acclaimed as among the wisest and truest interpretation of
Shakespeare’s plays that had ever appeared. This chapter further highlights that
no matter how scathingly critics have tried to prove Bradley’s incompetence in
his understanding of Shakespeare’s plays, but no professional expert and not
even the readers could afford to ignore his Shakespearean Tragedy. The
objective of all literary books—should be to give immense pleasure and
entertainment and that happiness and upliftment is definitely the hallmark of
Bradley’s book one and only book. Also, one must not forget that the
developments in the early twentieth century in Shakespeare’s scholarship as
well as Shakespeare’s criticism were also related to Bradley. The new critics in
a number of ways have inherited from Bradley Wolfgang Clemen in his
invaluable study of ‘The Development of Shakespeare’s Imagery (1951) has
bestowed a place to Bradley as the pioneer in the study of metaphors and
‘images’. Finally, it dawns upon us that character-criticism is not a spent force
it does exist till now, and it is an essential aspect of the dramatic art.

Chapter-IV of this work has defined the nature and impact of Stoll’s
collection to the study of Shakespeare criticism, and intends to illuminate that
E.E. Stoll like the other historical critics cannot be accused of being critically
naive. It has been highlighted that his criticism has a solid basis and a
remarkable contribution to a perfect understanding of the nature of dramatic art.
One very important aspect of his criticism is his demand not to displace
Shakespeare from his background of Elizabethan terms and conditions.

Although Kenneth Muir has attached some significance to the
contribution of Stoll in his article, ‘Fifty years of Shakespearean criticism’ in
Shakespeare Survey, 4(1951), but neither Arthur Eastman, in his History of
Shakespearean Criticism, nor Augustus Ralli in his two volumes of History of
Shakespeare Criticism, has not done sufficient justice to the pioneering and distinguished work of E.E. Stoll. The synthesis of all his doctrines can be gauged from his Art and Artifice in Shakespeare its enormous contribution to Shakespeare criticism is not as well known as Bradley’s, Shakespearean Tragedy. But inspite of having all the qualities of a good critic and scholar, it is rather puzzling, that Stoll did not receive the attention and the acclaim that could have been his. He went unsung and unrecognized and one wonders what could have prevented Stoll from being a famous critic, when Bradley with his , one and only well known book is better known than Stoll.

As is indicated by this short review that has been mentioned above there has to be a definite reason for Stoll having been deprived of that acclaim that was his due. An attempt has been made to explain where Stoll went wrong, and why he could not carve a niche for himself and secure a position as one of the top ranking critics and intellectual of Shakespeare studies, inspite of Stoll having argued vigorously over a period of forty years his doctrine could not make a mark on the English psyche.

If one looks back in retrospect, one remembers that it was Stoll and Schucking together who presented Shakespeare for the first time as an Elizabethan Jacobean playwright. Shakespeare’s hegemony as a universal genius and his eternal relevance had long been established by that time and nobody could challenge it. Shakespeare was above all projected by Stoll above all as a practicing playwright, with a very difficult duty to perform- the entertainment of his audiences and also keeping with the tradition of his time. These two scholars had the audacity to present Shakespeare with an absolutely new image that had never been attempted before that of, ‘a busy, often harassed artificer’. Then again they broke this looming myth regarding Bradley’s
Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) that ‘the last word’ about Shakespeare had been written and that character study is a vein exhausted by Bradley and no longer exploitable. They brought about a turning point in the study of Shakespeare’s characters and changed the very outlook of scholars and their orthodox ideas. Some of the well known problems that assailed these characters according to the Romantic viewpoint was Othello’s jealousy, Iago’s lack of motivation, Lear’s division of his Kingdom and the most favorite, Hamlet’s — delay. To have branded Stoll and Schucking’s movement with the title of ‘realist school’ has been a gross injury and a great error, because they desired to see Shakespeare’s drama as it really was during his tenure. Stoll and Shucking have also made a lot of immense effort to concentrate on the contradictions of Shakespeare’s plays and have done a good job illuminating and often making excuses for their technical flaws and one finds some similarity between them and Bradley here. Except that Bradley focused his attention on characters when these two took up all the other element for study. Furthermore to even present their movement only in reaction to Bradley would mean that these two critics also were an extension of the 19th century character analysis with a little difference.

One thing that Viswanathan observes intuitively is that; Stoll’s argument and reasoning regarding the characters in Shakespeare’s was considered provocative and generated a lot of adverse criticism but his achievement lies not in the strife but in highlighting the knowledge of an aspect of Shakespeare’s drama that had never been highlighted before.

‘...namely, the conventional basis of its techniques and modes, and their ‘primitiveness’ with a refreshing absence of patronage towards Elizabethan taste.’
Harry Levin’s analysis regarding Stoll was that, he was ‘audacious enough to resist the tug of Shakespearolatry’.

Stoll appears to be a dissenter to his contemporaries and one of them is Kittredge. When asked to offer an opinion about him: “The trouble with him is that he thinks he’s superior to Shakespeare.”

Stoll was in fact a lovely man having been abandoned by friends and colleague alike. When he died in the year 1959, “his complaint about being forgotten had become almost justified”.

The above written review regarding Stoll’s personal life and his position among his contemporaries has been highlighted to lend authenticity to the point that is to be highlighted here.

It seems to me that Shakespeare has been bestowed the position of God. Hence any writer who tries to humanize Shakespeare gets sidelined and denigrated by them who have monopolized Shakespeare for their own requirement. There have been some lone voices in the history of Shakespeare criticism who have from time to time objected to this over-estimating, of Shakespeare’s importance and uniqueness but they have been quelled like Stoll has been. Back in the eighteenth century, Rowe and Pope could admit that ‘Shakespeare made mistakes’. But a century later such an attitude towards Shakespeare came to be considered disrespectful and even harmful. By the European scholars Shakespeare has been given the status of God and naturally, God does not make mistake.

In Stoll’s case it seems to be this was, one very obvious reason why his doctrine could not be appreciated, though he was an eloquent pioneer of this
mode of particular criticism. There is another factor that could have prevented Stoll from making a mark, perhaps the upsurge of the poetic movement was too strong for Stoll’s doctrine to survive hence Stoll’s evolution towards a more balanced critic have just not been sufficiently noticed Although:

E.E. Stoll writing during the 1920’s had put Shakespeare back on the stage. But this latest movement has again brought Shakespeare back into the study and also into the laboratory to be experimented upon. Thus Shakespeare the poet and philosopher has once more been revived and Shakespeare the actor and dramatist of Elizabethan era has long been forgotten.

The percussion of the new approach in Shakespeare criticism was so overpowering and so exacting that one was lured towards it without any question and its deceptions and hypocrisy went unnoticed because of exuberance that radiated on the surface. John Holloway may have been the first critic to have raised valid objection regarding their doctrine of rejecting all that was traditional and orthodox. One of their predecessors frailties was obvious in their own practice. For example, G.W.Knight assailed Bradley for personification of stage characters in his preface to The Wheel of Fire Yet illustration can be found in his own work of extreme character interpretation in the Bradleyian tradition. He writes regarding Hamlet.

“The consciousness of death, and consequent bitterness; cruelty and inaction, in Hamlet not only grows in his own mind disintegrating it as we watch, but also spreads its effects outward among the other persons like a blighting disease....

L.C. Knight’s audacious essay in Bradley’s context can never be forgotten for the serious issue that it had raised in the year 1933 regarding ‘How
Many children had Lady Macbeth'? Yet his comments regarding Macbeth and his declaration of a Shakespearean tragedy being a dramatic poem had already been anticipated by Bradley in his Shakespearean Tragedy.

What one can infer at this stage, is that because of their magnetic appeal and external sincerity and sophistication the new critics inadvertently may have hampered other more objective studies on Shakespeare to have made their presence felt. E.E. Stoll is one such critic who's doctrine inspite of having all authenticity and objectivity was misrepresented and he was not able to introduce his doctrine in a profitable manner.

Finally the fifth chapter of this work traces the rise of the poetic approach. The 'New critics' have done commendable works, the poetic language of Shakespeare has been reconsidered and his imagery and symbolism have been deciphered, according to the present day requirements. Moreover, the endeavour of Wilson Kinghts, L.C. Knights and Caroline Spurgeon has a definite place in the history of Shakespeare criticism. But nevertheless this method of interpretative criticism has its own limitation and there is always the imminent danger of criticism becoming personalized as we have witnessed in Bradley’s criticism of Shakespeare. Hence what is required here is a disciplined control, by the historical and literary critics and even to some extent the textual scholars, because it is they who have brought us nearer to what Shakespeare wrote. The study of Shakespeare has to be re-founded within a boundary of control and discipline and also there has to be a synthesis and a synchronization in all kinds of attitude and approaches then only can we claim an achievement of true scholarship towards Shakespeare.
Reference:


3. Ibid., p.240.

4. Ibid., p.172.


11. L.C. Kinight’s op.cit., p.68.

12. Lewis op.cit., p.205.


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19. Ibid., p.17.

20. Ibid., p.18.


23 Wilson Knight, the Wheel of Fire, op.cit., p.32.
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