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LEO TOLSTOY ON SHAKESPEARE'S KING LEAR: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Tolstoy's views about Shakespeare's well-known tragedy "King Lear". Tolstoy rejected King Lear through calling it very bad, carelessly composed production and far from being perfect and thus, it can evoke among the readers nothing but repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment. To examine the truth of Tolstoy's views, the data collected in the form of opinions by senior teachers of literature in the universities of Pakistan, United Kingdom, and United states of America has been analyzed through applying Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional reader-response theory as a research model. Through analyzing the data, it has been revealed that Tolstoy's observations are pertinent, however, his assertion cannot be generalized. Every reader of Shakespeare's King Lear derives pleasure from literature in accordance with his personal, educational, cultural and professional background. In this way, it has been confirmed that, Tolstoy's questions are technically relevant but by ignoring all merits of King Lear as a drama, his attitude towards Shakespeare appears to be biased.

INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's dramas appear to be focused on different aspects of human life, i.e., Macbeth (evil in man), Hamlet (paradoxes of good and evil), and King Lear (self-blindness) etc. However, the critics' views about Shakespeare as a dramatist have been developed through reading his dramas from their own specific angle. If the critic comes to know about Shakespeare after reading his dramas, his opinion may be completely from the critic who knows Shakespeare

well before he reads the text of his plays. Obviously, the readers' response to any piece of literature (Drama) may be based on their perception about the writer. This case study is focused on Leo Tolstoy's critical reaction to Shakespeare's King Lear, a tragedy probably discussed and criticised more than all other tragedies.

It examines Tolstoy's assertion (1906, p.5) that, "Several times I read the dramas and the comedies and historical plays, and I invariably underwent the same feelings: repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment". Tolstoy's argument appears to be in line with Transactional reader-response theory, led by Louise Rosenblatt. It involves a transaction between the text's indirect meaning and the individual interpretation by the reader influenced by personal knowledge and emotions. Rosenblatt (1978 p.11) espouses that, during literary reading, the text activates "elements of the reader's past experience both with literature and with life" and "consequently evoke in readers certain images, feelings, attitudes, associations and ideas (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.10).

The study of Tolstoy's criticism of King Lear through Transactional reader-response theory has not only been interesting but also important in introducing new angle to examine Shakespeare's plays and the reasons behind Tolstoy's harsh criticism of King Lear. George Orwell (1950, p.45) claims that Tolstoy has life history like that of King Lear. For example, "In his old age, he renounced his estate, his title, and his copyrights, and made an attempt to escape from the privileged position and live a life of a peasant. Even the ending of his life-the sudden unplanned flight across the country, accompanied only by a faithful daughter, the death in a cottage in a strange village-seems to have in it a sort of phantom reminiscence of Lear". In this way, Tolstoy's response to King Lear appears to be based on practical wisdom, however, a little bit biased. It opens new avenues to explore the points which result in repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment.

Whether the reason behind Tolstoy's reaction is 'absence of appropriate answers to questions raised by Tolstoy about Shakespeare's status as a dramatist or his personal prejudice against Shakespeare'? There is a need to examine the questions and evaluate their worth with reference to statements from the text to determine the extent to which the impression of 'repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment' is justified. By exploring the text of King Lear, Tolstoy's assertion may be evaluated and espoused as either apposite or inappropriate.

Existing Scholarship

This case study primarily focused on Shakespeare's King Lear from Tolstoy's perspective is the outcome of my efforts in exploring, analyzing, and appreciating the views of researchers, thinkers, critics, and commentators whose scholarship on Shakespeare's King Lear is globally recognized. King Lear as a play, is extensively explored by researchers from all over the world and the writings encompassing various aspects of King Lear have left little space for the students of Shakespeare to write. However, the works of Shakespeare based universal themes have opened new avenues for research in today's world. The number of works based on research about King Lear is perhaps higher than any

other piece of literature. In this way, neither it is possible to review all or even majority of them, nor it is scope of this article to discuss the angles from which King Lear has been explored. However, some latest developments in this direction can be reviewed as highlighted in the following paragraphs.

Asher (2000) gives a different interpretation of King Lear. According to Asher, knowledge always arrives late, and King Lear is dominated throughout the text with the concept of lateness. The examples from the text of King Lear seem to be relevant. For example, the discovery of true and false son by Gloucester is delayed. Similarly, Lear's recognition of true and false daughter is delayed. Edgar recognizes his brother Edmund's betrayal while time is over. Another example of delayed recognition is presented by Asher, about Edgar and Kent in their journey with the king. Perhaps the best examples of lateness in King Lear are conversion of Edmund to kindness but only when he is about to die, and Lear's dispatch of Cordelia's hangman at the last moment seem to be some of the most conspicuous examples of lateness. Asher concludes by quoting Friar Laurence's statement (Asher 2000 p. 210) that "A greater power than we can contradict has thwarted our intents". Lateness is in this way a necessary part of Tragedy.

Lawrence (2005) claims that most of the characters in King Lear who want to die are unable to do so. The biblical concept of God's control over the life and death seems to be dominating the whole action in this play. Although the title seems to be ironic but the people performing main roles in the play are either looking for death or apparently exposed to death. But the major characters are unable to die till the last moments of this tragedy. Lear survives in the storm in the worst physical conditions and dies only when his quest for death is over. By the end of this drama, all major characters are either dead, dying, or have simply gone except Albany and Edgar. Among the main characters who seek death only Goneril remains successful. Gloucester even after being deprived of eyes is neither dead nor successful in committing suicide at the bottom of Dover Cliff. Most of the characters die but not if or as they try to die. Lawrence concludes that the death is unattainable with one's desire because of divine control on it. Shakespeare's King Lear appears to be typically a biblical drama.

Benson (2007) examines King Lear from a different angle. It is King Lear's belief that dead Cordelia revives near the end of the play. There are numerous interpretations of this concept. Benson's study is based on materialist interpretations suggested by Stephen Greenblatt and Jonathan Dollimore. According to this type of criticism only physical rewards can be regarded as meaningful. Therefore, both insist on Cordelia's revival as quasi-resurrection, since it never reaches completion. H. G. Gadamer on the other hand offers religious interpretation that Cordelia's quasi-resurrection gives a message of a possible redemption from the other world in the absence of worldly justice. However, in Lear's pagan world it may not be physically possible. Benson concludes by stating that Shakespeare's Christian tradition of resurrection cannot be imposed on the pagan setting of the play. Similarly, transcendental and physical world cannot be united in art.

Liu (2009) suggests biblical interpretation of King Lear. As Shakespeare has shown biblical elements in King Lear. The biblical plan of sin, punishment and redemption is followed in analyzing the overall behavior and fate of different characters. According to biblical concept of sin, human beings are born with sins and the impact of sins can be observed in the behavior of different characters. They commit sins because the sin is part of their nature. As God deals with human being without any discrimination, the level of punishment is equal to that of sins. All characters in King Lear commit sins according to their position and status and ultimately punished and redeemed through a process of purification. At one hand God's punishment goes to sinners but He also forgives those who repent and saves those who die for justice or noble cause. Lear's daughters are punished but Lear is ultimately redeemed. Liu concludes King Lear with a lesson of punishment for evil and reward for the good.

Lefler (2010) suggests a link between King Lear and Jesus Christ. The suffering of central figures in Bible and King Lear is regarded as the suffering of innocence in the characters of Cordelia and Christ. This play is a Christian tragedy. The story of King Lear and that of Christ's life show greater affinity. The story of Christ and that of the play give a sense of satisfaction and eternal hope. Shakespeare's play gives a message that the power of evil dominates for the sometime but ultimate success lies with the forces of good.

Elden (2013) examines geopolitics of Shakespeare's King Lear. The country announced to be distributed between the King's two daughters is symbolically the division of Great Britain. The King wants to keep himself free from the burden of responsibilities i.e., interest of territory and cares of state. The play according to Elden, is focused on the politics of space. The main plot is about the land and the claimants to have rights of occupation. King's daughters fight for the land instead of favours from the King. Similarly, the sub-plot is about the war between legitimate and illegitimate contestants for the right to occupy the land of the Duke of Gloucester. The whole drama is in this way about the politics of land. It is territory or land the people fight for. The land is occupied, distributed, gifted, bought, and sold. Elden concludes that King Lear is a document to represent Shakespeare's sense of geopolitics. It can also be evaluated from the last part of King Lear. French army or the force, led by Lear's youngest daughter Cordelia, invading Great Britain with an intention to occupy it shows that King Lear is a play about land politics.

Chin-Yi (2014) suggests that Shakespeare's King Lear is a moral tragedy where evil is shown as not only opposite to good but also something to be defeated by one way or the other. In King Lear, Shakespeare provides the process of defeating or to overcome the evil by portraying divine revenge to restore the world of Christianity. It connects Shakespeare to postmodern world where moral doctrines are comparatively more popular. Christianity as a Religion has gone through a serious decline and replaced with other moral and social values. Chin-Yi argues that during the time of Shakespeare, the faith (Christianity) had strong foothold in Europe which had greatly influenced literature. The Christian world of Shakespeare's plays with divine justice and redemption as major themes is the result of Faith's social popularity. Chin-Yi concludes that good

and evil are not only opposites they are metaphysical truths distinct from each other.

Mahbub-ul-Alam (2016) espouses that King Lear is perhaps the most remarkable play composed by William Shakespeare for being artistically perfect example of blending the forces of good and evil in the whole body of the play. The play is dominated by the figure of old King Lear who is supposed to be a man of wisdom because of life experience, but his attitude reflects a totally different picture. He is influenced by the forces of evil and makes a totally insane decision. Mahbub-ul-Alam concludes that although it is good piece of literature, but the critics' opinion is also justified. There is exaggeration in presenting the forces of evil. The power of evil is presented in such a way that it frequently defeats the forces of good. The poetic justice is frequently rejected which may give pleasure to its readers.

Al-khazaali (2017) examines the role of human weakness in determining his future. The power of love, ambition, passion, to rule, hatred and revenge sometimes prove to be the man's driving force to achieve specific goals. But in most cases these weaknesses have been proved to be the ultimate causes of human downfall. Al-khazaali has examines the role of human weakness in King Lear who represents tyrannical power foolishly behaves during the climax of his royal period. To be impressed and misguided by flattery is the worst weakness of rulers like King Lear and ultimately, they must lose their worth and wealth. How his daughters exploited his weakness of self-love which deprived him of his power, wealth, honor, and even the love of his beloved daughter Cordelia which is the actual tragedy of King Lear.

Chatterjee (2017) suggests some links of current world with that King Lear's world. He is focused on establishing relationship of themes in King Lear's tale with modern times. Lear's character as a tyrannical father, political power as a nursery of corruption, dominance of autocrats, and the role of flattering companions in misleading their leader to make insane and inappropriate decisions. Lear's confused state of mind is one of the major concerns of present time. This tragedy could seem to be as realistic in the time of Shakespeare as it appears to be in today's world. Lear's hasty decisions resulted in destruction, and everybody had to suffer as in modern times, haughty leaders make decisions and the whole nation must suffer. Chatterjee has created a picture of modern world like that of Lear's world. It gives the impression that the nature of mankind is not changed even after centuries.

Abaalhasan (2019) explores theme of love in Shakespeare's tragedies particularly, King Lear. In King Lear the nature of love is a bit different from other tragedies. King Lear is all about family style love between the father and his three daughters. However, the tragic end of this love has almost similar impact on Lear as it may be in the end of romantic relationship. He becomes heartbroken and psychologically depressed and disillusioned. Abaalhasan espouses that Shakespeare's presentation of love through his characters is simply superb and the reader begins to feel the pain or happiness the character is feeling by an overall impact of love. Although the love of father and daughters is different from romantic relation, but the level of temptation is almost equal

to that of romantic relation. In both categories, the need and desire of beloved is given unconditional priority. The study of King Lear from Tolstoy's perspective is an addition to existing scholarship on King Lear.

METHOD OF STUDY

The text of King Lear may provide necessary material or statements which cause the feeling of Repulsion, Weariness, and Bewilderment to any reader in general and critics like Tolstoy in particular. The reader's response to any piece of literature is based on variety of factors including the reader's knowledge of the language, knowledge of the subject, level of reading in the field, and the reader's preconceived ideas. Tolstoy's views as a reader, may be examined through applying any research model based on reader response theory.

Data Collection

As Tolstoy's reaction to Shakespeare's play is based on his own feelings which he experienced through reading King Lear. To evaluate Tolstoy's response to Shakespeare's King Lear as Repulsion, Weariness, and Bewilderment, the opinions of Twenty senior professors engaged in teaching Shakespeare's works for a long time, have been sought. The participants of literary survey came from different English departments of Postgraduate colleges/ universities in Pakistan, UK, and USA. The questionnaire, based on Tolstoy's objections to King Lear, was designed in the form of Agree/Disagree. The following objections were included in the survey:

1. In the introduction of King Lear, Gloucester says, "Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?" (1.1.11-13). "Such is the introduction. Not to mention the coarseness of these words of Gloucester, they are, farther, out of place in the mouth of a person intended to represent a noble character" (Tolstoy 1906, p.10).
2. According to Tolstoy (1906, p.12) It is difficult for a reader or observer to accept the fact that a King whether old or stupid preferred the words of his vicious daughters over the words of his favorite daughter and punished her by cursing her and banishing her. The feelings of the reader do not coincide with the unnatural scene.
3. "The relations between Gloucester and his two sons, and the feelings of these characters are as unnatural as Lear's relation to his daughters, or even more so, and therefore it is still more difficult for the spectator to transport himself into the mental condition of Gloucester and his sons and sympathize with them, than it is to do so into that of Lear and his daughters" (Tolstoy 1906 p.14).
4. "Goneril's steward appears, and behaves rudely to Lear, for which Kent knocks him down. The King, still not recognizing Kent, gives him money for this and takes him into his service. After this appears the fool, and thereupon begins a prolonged conversation between the fool and the King, utterly unsuited to the position and serving no purpose. This way the long conversations make the reader feel uncomfortable and uneasy while even the jokes are not witty enough (Tolstoy 1906, p.16).
5. "Lear curses Goneril and says: Turn all her mother's pains and benefits, To laughter and contempt, that she may feel, How sharper than a serpent's tooth

it is, To have a thankless child. (1.4.241-244). These words which express a genuine feeling, might have been touching had they stood alone. But they are lost among long and high-flown speeches, which Lear keeps incessantly uttering quite inappropriately." (Tolstoy 1906, p.17)

6. "Such is the second act, full of unnatural events, and yet more unnatural speeches, not flowing from the position of the characters, and finishing with a scene between Lear and his daughters which might have been powerful if it had not been permeated with the most absurdly foolish, unnatural speeches--which, moreover, have no relation to the subject, put into the mouth of Lear." (Tolstoy 1906, p.23)

7. "Then Lear declaims a monologue on the unfairness of legal judgment, which is quite out of place in the mouth of the insane Lear. After this, enter a gentleman with attendants sent by Cordelia to fetch her father. Lear continues to act as a madman and runs away." (Tolstoy 1906, p.38).

8. "In the fourth act, the scene between Lear and his daughter might have been touching if it had not been preceded in the course of the earlier acts by the tediously drawn out, monotonous ravings of Lear, and if, moreover, this expression of his feelings constituted the last scene. But the scene is not the last." (Tolstoy 1906, p.38).

9. "The Duke of Albany wishes to champion Lear, but Edmund does not allow it. The daughters take part in the dialog and begin to abuse each other, being jealous of Edmund. Here everything becomes so confused that it is difficult to follow the action." (Tolstoy 1906, p.42)

10. After this an old and ill Lear enters carrying Cordelia in his arms. Then the awful ravings of Lear begin which are as shameful as his unwitty jokes. Lear demands that all should howl, and, alternately, believes that Cordelia is dead. Then he says that he killed the slave who hanged Cordelia. Next, he says that his eyes see badly, but at the same time he recognizes Kent whom all along he had not recognized." Tolstoy 1906, p.44).

11. "For any man of our time--if he were not under the hypnotic suggestion that this drama is the height of perfection--it would be enough to read it to its end (were he to have sufficient patience for this) to be convinced that far from being the height of perfection, it is a very bad, carelessly composed production, which, if it could have been of interest to a certain public at a certain time, cannot evoke among us anything but aversion and weariness." (Tolstoy 1906, p.46).

12. "In King Lear the persons represented are indeed placed externally in opposition to the outward world, and they struggle with it. But their strife does not flow from the natural course of events nor from their own characters, but is quite arbitrarily established by the author, and therefore cannot produce on the reader the illusion which represents the essential condition of art." (Tolstoy 1906, p.48).

13. Lear who had spent all his life with his daughters didn't possess a motive for his abdication gets into a tragedy having no appropriate reason to trust the words said by his two eldest daughters and ignores the truth said by the youngest daughter leading to tragedy. (Tolstoy 1906, p.48).

14. "It is not enough that all the characters speak in a way in which no living men ever did or could speak. They all suffer from a common intemperance of language. Those who are in love, who are preparing for death, who are fighting,

who are dying, all alike speak much and unexpectedly about subjects utterly inappropriate to the occasion.” Tolstoy 1906, p.54)

15. “In Shakespeare everything is exaggerated: the actions are exaggerated, so are their consequences, the speeches of the characters are exaggerated, and therefore at every step the possibility of artistic impression is interfered with. Whatever people may say; however, they may be enraptured by Shakespeare's works, whatever merits they may attribute to them, it is perfectly certain that he was not an artist and that his works are not artistic productions” (Tolstoy 1906, p.80)

The survey was conducted from July 1, 2020, to September 30, 2020. The data was collected through seeking opinions of twenty (UK-05, USA-05, PK-10) professors of English literature on Tolstoy's objections to Shakespeare's King Lear. As a reader their opinions are either supporting or rejecting Tolstoy's views. The participants' age (50 years -70 years), education (Ph. D), and teaching experience (20 years -35 years) are in English literature. Their opinions can be presented as follows:

Table-01. Data from the Participants' Opinions

No. of Participants	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4	Q. 5	Q. 6	Q. 7	Q. 8	Q. 9	Q. 10	Q. 11	Q. 12	Q. 13	Q. 14	Q. 15
UK-05 (A/D)	60/40	40/60	40/60	80/20	40/60	20/80	60/40	40/60	60/40	40/60	20/80	20/80	40/60	40/60	20/80
USA-05 (A/D)	60/40	60/40	40/60	80/20	40/60	20/80	60/40	40/60	60/40	40/60	20/80	20/80	20/80	40/60	20/80
PAK-10 (A/D)	60/40	50/50	50/50	60/40	40/60	40/60	50/50	40/60	50/50	40/60	30/70	30/70	40/60	50/50	20/80
Total Percentage	60/40	50/50	43/57	67/33	40/60	27/73	57/43	40/60	57/43	40/60	23/77	23/77	33/67	43/57	20/80

Note: UK-05 (5 participants from the universities of UK), A/D (Agree/Disagree), 60/40 (agree-60%, disagree-40 %), USA-05 (5 participants from the universities of USA), PAK-10 (10 participants from Pakistani Universities).

Description of Data

The survey provided logical data to be used for analysing the views of Leo Tolstoy. The participants' opinions are focused on Leo Tolstoy's observations. There preconceived views about King Lear may be different or partially in agreement with Tolstoy's views. The participants belong to universities of three different countries and thus it is divided into three categories i.e., UK, USA, and PAK. There is partial similarity of opinions, but overall opinions of participants are different from each other. In the light of available data, it can be stated that the volume of differences is more than the size of affinities.

On the coarseness of Gloucester's words (Question No.1), a prolonged and purposeless conversation between the fool and the King (Question No.4), Insane Lear's monologue on the unfairness of legal judgment (Question No.7), and everything is confused and to follow the action is difficult (Question No.9), a

general agreement exists between Tolstoy and the participants of this survey. Similarly, on the questions of unnatural speeches (Question No.6), very bad and carelessly composed production (Question No. 11), persons placed externally in opposition to the outward world (Question No.12), Lear does not have any necessity for his abdication (Question No. 13), and everything in Shakespeare is exaggerated (Question No.15) there are serious differences of opinion between Tolstoy and the participants of this survey as readers.

Data Analysis

Tolstoy's avowal (1906, p.5) that, "Several times I read the dramas and the comedies and historical plays, and I invariably underwent the same feelings: repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment". The data collected through a survey shows that although Tolstoy's argument appears to be partially acceptable, yet his views are not fully recognized by the readers of King Lear from different parts of the world. To evaluate Leo Tolstoy's claim, Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional reader-response theory has been followed as a measuring rod. Transactional reader- response model suggests that a reader's response to literary text is primarily based on the "elements of the reader's past experience both with literature and with life" (Rosenblatt, 1978 p.11). and "consequently evoke in readers certain images, feelings, attitudes, associations, and ideas (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.10).

In the light of Transactional reader- response (TRR) model, the readers'(participants of survey) different reaction to Shakespeare's King Lear from that of Leo Tolstoy shows that their experience with literature and life was not similar to that of Tolstoy, and consequently King Lear has evoked different feelings in survey participants than those of Tolstoy. It also gives picture of two different literary traditions; one being followed by Tolstoy and other by the readers (participants). As Tolstoy follows his own theory of literature, his reaction to literature must be different from the reaction of those who follow literary theories and concepts developed by others.

Tolstoy's argument against King appears to be based on his concept of art associated to pleasure. He claims that "My consternation was increased by the fact that I always keenly felt the beauties of poetry in every form; then why should artistic works recognized by the whole world as those of a genius, --the works of Shakespeare, --not only fail to please me, but be disagreeable to me? (Tolstoy, 1906, p.5). It shows that Tolstoy's reaction to King Lear was more of a critic than a reader. How a critic can enjoy a piece literature who has preconceived ideas about the writer of that piece of literature?

Tolstoy's observation about King Lear's inability to judge the real character of his own daughters as unnatural (Tolstoy 1906, p.12) appears to be intentional. Keeping in view the story of King Lear the reader can assume that the King's failure to evaluate things adequately is willful instead of his lack of judgement. It is not only that he lacks foresight and cannot see people clearly or assess their motives accurately; he will not. Both Cordelia and Kent try to correct his vision. Kent cries out in vain, 'See better, Lear, and let me still remain, The true blank

of thine eye' (I.I. 152-3). The disasters that follow are thus the direct result of willful blindness (Halio 2005, p.14).

Any reader may agree with Tolstoy's observation (Tolstoy 1906 p.14) about Gloucester's unnatural relation with his two sons, and difficulty in feeling sympathy for them. The number of sub-plots makes King Lear a bad play. Orwell has rightly observed that, "one wicked daughter would have been quite enough, and Edgar is a superfluous character: indeed, it would probably be a better play if Gloucester and both his sons were eliminated" (Orwell 1950, p.156). In this way, an overall impression of King Lear a puppet show, a ballet, and a sequence of pictures appears to be stronger.

On the other hand, King Lear represents social criticism through statements of Lear, Edgar, and Fool, while they pretend to be mad. This important aspect of Shakespeare's King Lear is totally ignored by Tolstoy. He, as a reader, claims (Tolstoy 1906, p.16) that unsuited conversation between the fool and the King, bring him nothing other than wearisome uneasiness. Orwell suggests that "in his sane moments Lear hardly ever makes an intelligent remark. (Orwell 1950, p.164). It can be stated that Lear as a king lacks wisdom, but as a human being (being mad), his level of wisdom is the highest.

Tolstoy's reaction to Shakespeare's works including King Lear is primarily based on his own concept of art. While reading Shakespeare's works from the perspective of his own theory of art, his reading can neither lead him to appreciate the works nor form a positive opinion about the writer. The outcome of his reading, in this way, may be nothing but rejection of the piece of literature. His sweeping statement about Shakespeare, "his works are not artistic productions" (Tolstoy 1906, p.80) reflects his apparently biased approach. Orwell believes that "when his perception that it takes all sorts to make a world had deserted him, he came to think of Shakespeare's writings as something dangerous to himself" (Orwell 1950, p.167).

As Tolstoy's concept of literature is based 'artistic pleasure'. He appears to be convinced (Tolstoy 1906, p.46) about King Lear as a carelessly composed production, can evoke nothing but distaste and tiredness." (Tolstoy 1906, p.46). Orwell's argument seems to be pertinent that, "the more pleasure people took in Shakespeare, the less they would listen to Tolstoy. Therefore, nobody must be allowed to enjoy Shakespeare, just as nobody must be allowed to drink alcohol or smoke tobacco. True, Tolstoy would not prevent them by force" (Orwell 1950, p.167). Orwell's comment seems to be influenced either by love for Shakespeare or hatred for Tolstoy.

Another point on which majority of Shakespeare's readers seem to agree is that Tolstoy's criticism is biased. While analyzing King Lear as a play, he does not appear to criticize the merit of Shakespeare's art but Shakespeare and the lovers of Shakespeare's art. The bitterness that readers experience while reading Tolstoy's views on Shakespeare makes his fairness as a reader questionable and doubtful. Orwell observes, "He will try to get inside the mind of every lover of Shakespeare and kill his enjoyment by every trick he can think of" (Orwell 1950, p.167).

Before making any judgement, it is important to ask a question, whether Tolstoy's questions or arguments can be answered? An appropriate answer to this question is difficult to find. The remarks given by the participants of survey for this article also confirm that, despite his biased approach, Tolstoy's questions raised against King Lear are pertinent. Orwell also admits that "one cannot answer Tolstoy's pamphlet, at least on its main counts" (Orwell 1950, p.167). There is a conflict between Tolstoy as a reader and Tolstoy as a critic. As a reader, he could perhaps enjoy Shakespearian tragedies but as a critic, his survival is perhaps based on rejection of Shakespeare as an artist.

CONCLUSION

Through analyzing the data based on the views of professors teaching Shakespeare's works in the universities of three different countries, it has been confirmed that a general agreement exists among the readers of Shakespeare's King Lear that it gives necessary pleasure usually expected from any piece of literature. Tolstoy's observations on King Lear have been partially accepted. Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978), followed as a research model provided a measuring scale to evaluate Tolstoy's views as a reader. It was kept in view that "elements of the reader's past experience both with literature and with life" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.11) may determine the level of pleasure a reader can derive from a piece of literature. Whatever was Tolstoy's experience with King Lear, it was supposed to be linked to his personal and as well as professional life.

Tolstoy's reading of King Lear did not give him any pleasure because he did not read it as a reader for pleasure but as a critic to find out necessary material to develop an argument against its everlasting popularity even after centuries. His reaction is not only focused on shortcomings of Shakespeare's dramatic art in King Lear but also his critics' views, i.e., Dr. Johnson (There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed, which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity), Hazlitt (We wish that we could pass this play over and say nothing about it), and Shelley (King Lear may be recognized as the perfect model of the dramatic art of the whole world). Tolstoy in this way, provides new direction to read a text of literature.

It can be safely concluded that Literary qualities of King Lear that Tolstoy could not mention or willingly ignored, could give him more pleasure if he read it as a reader instead of a critic. The quality of dialogue he called boring and unnatural could give him pleasure instead of repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment if he could be willing to respond to King Lear as an ordinary reader. It could be more interesting and enjoyable to Tolstoy if he could be aware of resemblance between his own life story and that of King Lear. It can also be confirmed that his response as a reader of King Lear may be inappropriate but as a critic it is not only logically perfect but also a model for other critics of Shakespeare's works.

Suggestions For Further Research

Tolstoy's criticism provides alternative approach to study the works of William Shakespeare. Further research is suggested through following Tolstoy's critical

approach to analyze other tragedies of William Shakespeare like Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Julius Caesar, and Antony and Cleopatra. It will help to produce new literature and encourage new efforts to challenge the ideologies socially accepted and literary trends previously established. There is a need to explore thematic and structural similarities between the dramas of Shakespeare and those of Leo Tolstoy like, *The Fruits of Enlightenment*, *The Light Shines in the Darkness*, *The Living Corpse*, and *The Power of Darkness* etc.

It is also suggested that an intertextual relation between the works of Shakespeare and Tolstoy may be explored. There must be some similarities, contrast or influence of Shakespeare's works on Tolstoy as a reader and critic. The works of great literature are supposed to have something common like universality of thought, depiction of human nature, description of universally accepted human values, and poetic justice etc. If these values are comparatively explored in the works of Shakespeare and Tolstoy it may significantly add to existing scholarship in the field of comparative literature. As Shakespeare and Tolstoy speak two different languages i.e., English, and Russian, through juxtaposing them, it may also help to understand common cultural values of English and Russian societies.

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