3-**The Gravediggers Scene**

Shakespeare goes against the classical rules and mingles the comic and the tragic actions together through the scene of the gravediggers in his play. This scene is apparently comic but it has serious implications. At the same time some of the remarks heighten the tragic effect. The scene and the relevance can be discussed as below.

The gravedigger’s scene opens with the two clowns who are assigned the work of digging a grave for Ophelia dead body. The clowns create much comedy by their malapropism (wrong use of word**)**. Jokes, puns and songs, Ophelia denied proper Christian rites as she has committed suicide. The manner in which the clowns discuss this point is quite amusing. The use of the word **“salvation**” for amnation, and the expression **“offended”** for **“defendendo”.** One of the clowns makes an amusing remark about suicide by drowning. According to him, when a person drowns into water, it called suicide. However, if water goes to the person and drowns him, it is not suicide. Another remark made by one of the clowns too is humorous. He says that the gravedigger builds stronger than others do like carpenters and ship-makers. This is because the gravediggers build houses (grave**)** that last until the Doomsday. The gravedigger then sings a humorous song of love. It reveals that a man’s attitude, to love in youth is quite different from that in his old age.

Soon Hamlet and Horatio come there. The gravedigger’s interaction with the prince is very humorous. For instance, when Hamlet asks him whose grave he is digging; his answer is **“Mine Sir”.** He then describes dead Ophelia as **“but rest her soul, she is dead”**. Thus, the indifferent and humorous natures of the gravediggers are in contrast to oversensitive and melancholic Hamlet.

Then Hamlet’s comments on the skulls thrown out by the gravedigger are quite ironical and humorous. Looking at one skull, Hamlet says that it may be of a crafty schemer who in his life might be shrewd as to be able even to deceive God. It could also be the head of a counter who was perfect. Hamlet looks at another skull and speculates that it might be the skull of a lawyer. His quibbling argument are not found. On the contrary, it is being knocked about with the dirty spade of the gravedigger. One more skull is supposed to be that of a buyer of land. All these persons become meaningless after the death. Even the dust of Alexander *The Great and Caesar* might be used for trifle things like blocking holes into a barrel. Hamlet then thinks that one of the skulls might be that of Yorick, the court-jester. His sarcasm also has vanished. Thus, Hamlet’s speculative thoughts are ironical and so are humorous. In addition, the gravedigger’s comment on Hamlet’s madness is quite humorous. He says that in England, nobody will notice the madness of Hamlet, as all persons in England are mad.

Thus, the gravedigger’s scene is quite amusing and comic. So it serves as comic relief in the tragedy. The comedy here is not refined but it is not coarse either.

The gravediggers’ scene has serious implications also. Some of the comic remarks have serious significance as well. For example, in a scene, a grave- maker really builds houses, which remain until the doomsday. The song about love also has serious significance. The decline of love in old age is really a saddening thing. Then Hamlets remarks on the skull also serious significance. Man should not be proud of harsh, as death ends everything. The remarks reveal the inevitability of death. Similarly, most of the remarks are related with death, seriousness and skulls. Thus, it is more serious and more general.