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# Poetic Justice in Literature

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Pandey

Assistant Professor of English, A.S.D., BTKIT, (Govt. Of U.K.), DWARAHAT, Almora-263653, India

**Abstract:** *Poetic justice in literature describes evil characters are punished or brought to justice for their actions, and good characters are rewarded. Literature that utilizes poetic Justice will often have happy endings with moral lessons for the reader to learn. The history and definition of poetic justice come from Thomas Rymer, a drama critic who wrote the essay "The Tragedies of the Last Age consider'd." in 1678. Rymer's view was that a poem (In a sense that includes dramatic tragedy) is an ideal that realm of its own and should be governed by ideal principles of decorum and morality and not by the random way things often work out in actual world.*

**Keywords:** *Poetic, justice, Literature, Reward, Considered, Tragedy, Comedy, Principle, Random.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Poetic justice often turns stories into tools for the betterment of the reader and society. Literary works such as fables and parables, for example, tell stories with specific Lessons. Readers of these works are expected to learn from the characters who do bad things and are punished for their actions.

There are many stories in literature that use poetic justice as a literary device, some of them are as ; Oedipus Rex by Sophocles - as a play that follows the King of Thebes, Oedipus, as he seeks out the murderer of Laivus, the previous king. The story takes on an ironic manner as Oedipus eventually discovers that he is the murderer and gouges out his own eyes as justice for his actions.

We find first reflections of the poetic justice in Plato's Republic, where he complains...that what the poets and prose-writers (orators) tell us about the most important matters concerning human beings is bad. They say that many unjust people are happy and many just ones are wretched, that in justice is profitable if it escapes detection, and that justice is another 's good but one's own loss. I think we'll prohibit these stories and order the poets to compose the opposite kind of poetry and tell the opposite kind of tales.

The question how justice or that which is regarded as just-ought to be defined became a topic in literary history a long time before Rymer's coinage of the term. Are literary texts able to widen the range of forms of justice, and even to change established views on and interpretations of justice? This question is certainly a pertinent one with regard to Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton. The ending of this novel proposes a resolution that tries to fulfil the demand for justice. The justice achieved eventually is not based on well-doing and perhaps not even 'deserved' if we think of Mary's behaviour in some parts of the novel.

Poetic justice occurs at the conclusion of a novel or play when good characters are rewarded and bad characters are punished. Poetic justice is thus somewhat similar to karma, and can be summed up by the phrase "He got what was coming to him" or "She got what she deserved".

In other words it may be said that poetic justice takes both positive and negative forms, depending on how a character has acted through the narrative.

As stated above poetic justice has sometimes been named as the reason that Literature is important in a society. The genre of fable and parable often contain poetic justice as a wise and good character is rewarded and any bad characters are punished. The idea of these stories is to provide a moral foundation for readers.

Some examples of self-fulfilling prophecy are also examples of poetic justice. If an evil character hears a prophecy and does cruel things in order to stop that prophecy from coming into being, then the villain's ultimate defeat or death is attributed to the poetic justice that there was a sense that logic prevailed, and that characters do not suddenly change and warrant different treatment than what they deserve for example, in Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol it does not poetic justice that greedy Ebenezer Scrooge suddenly became good and therefore would warrant good treatment of course, not all authors are interested in poetic justice. More Modern authors showed good characters receiving bad fortune and bad characters being rewarded. These authors would probably argue that their role in society was not to provide a moral education for readers, but instead to depict situations that are closer to reality. Indeed, believing too much in poetic justice could be harmful and give rise to questions like, why do bad things happen to good people.

So we may say that poetic justice is a literary device and not an accurate duplication of real life.

Poetic justice often turns stories into tools for the betterment of the reader and society. In the Modern literary works we find poetic justice in the form of an ironic twist of fate. The purpose of poetic justice is to uphold moral standards that come from societal beliefs. When poetic justice occurs, the belief that good always triumphs over evil is upheld. It provides a satisfying resolve to audiences who connect with good characters. A feeling of completion and satisfaction naturally results after bad characters are punished and good characters are rewarded.

As humans, we are always looking for ways to right wrongs and maintain order in society through punishments that fit crimes appropriately because this way people will not commit more crimes out of fear of getting caught again, and punished by poetic justice. The idea is that poetic justice is a person's fate in life mirrors his or her actions. It can also refer to an event occurring at a time when it seems justified by some past action on the part of the individual concerned. In today's society, poetic justice can be seen through social media channels and other forms of online communication as well as being present in our everyday lives. In the modern poetry, poets, use this concept as a means of exploring our connection with nature and our place within it. For example Christina Rosset's poem "Goblin Market" explores how people who are good-natured but mischievous may find themselves punished for their actions by harmful spirits called Goblins who take advantage of them when they are at their weakest points whereas those who are cruel will eventually reap what they sow because poetic justice is always reserved up. If somebody commits an act of cruelty or injustice against another person.

Then their own actions will come back to haunt them later on. This need not always mean that it has to happen immediately after the event itself but may be delayed until a more appropriate time, for instance at the end of one's life when one is about to face judgement from the fates themselves. What we should take away from this expression though is that there will always be consequences for our actions and we cannot escape these by doing anything; something bad. It is a notion that people's deeds will meet appropriate rewards or punishments in due course. The concept of this can exist in many different forms, but it is often used as a literary device or allegory in fictional works. Justice is defined as the moral principle that people should be rewarded or punished for their actions.

Moral and ethical knowledge is the first point on which Gandhi's concept of value education is based. Gandhi believed that any education that lacked these two elements could not be considered adequate. Gandhi reasoned that without morality and without ethics, no students in a real sense could be considered healthy in mental or physical terms. A person who is not a moralist and who does not differentiate between right or wrong cannot rise to the essential level of a true student.<sup>25</sup> For instance, Knowledge was the learning of crafts, subject in school, and being self-sufficient. Gandhi felt it was important to learn a craft such as weaving, without the influence of modern machinery.<sup>26</sup>

It is also known as the wages of karma. Mahabharata is specially meant to help us understand and appreciate the nuanced meanings and principles of dharma. Dharma impacts us in many ways; through our religion, morals, Law, family, profession, and personally as well. Beyond these, dharma addresses our personal relationship with the supreme lord, Shri Krishna. One of the major concerns today is the quality of justice available to the citizens of society. This is also an element of dharma. There are many instances in the Mahabharata where the concepts of justice are boldly displayed and no one would fault the Pandavas for the taking action.

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