



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TRENDS IN EMERGING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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Volume 3; Issue 4; 2025; Page No. 275-281

Received: 14-04-2025

Accepted: 20-06-2025

Published: 25-07-2025

## The Tragic Vision of Shakespeare: A Study of Roles, Identity, And Authority

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19789423>

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### Abstract

This paper discusses the tragic vision of William Shakespeare through the critical analysis of roles, identity in his major tragedies especially Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and King Lear. It explores the way Shakespeare depicts the plight of people as they strive to find themselves and play their roles in the moral, social, and political system of their world. The study reveals that failure of order and tension between duty and desire are the cause of the downfall of his tragic heroes, as the issue of the human nature and moral responsibility is quite complex. Based on the critical and historical viewpoints, the paper will focus on how Shakespeare creates a dramatic world in which the desire to identify and the use of authority bring out the greatness and weakness of the human in seeking an identity. Finally, this study shows that the tragedies of Shakespeare are not limited to their time, but they provide eternal lessons on what leadership, moral decision-making, and the results of human greed and misjudgment are.

**Keywords:** Shakespearean Tragedy, Elizabethan Society, Lady Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet, King Lear

### 1. Introduction

The tragedies of William Shakespeare are still read and viewed by people as they are so full of the exploration of human nature and the intricacies of life. His tragic vision penetrates into moral, psychological, and social aspects of human life and shows the conflicts in ambition and duty and destiny, in ambition and duty. And Shakespeare, through his classic productions like Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello and King Lear, introduces characters who find themselves in a dilemma as to what they want to do with their life and what is expected of them in the society. The given plays depict the tragic outcomes in cases when people cannot find their roles and establish their identities in a moral and social system that is constantly changing. Tragedies by Shakespeare can thus be a timeless reflection of human tendencies, of the weakness, power, and inconsistencies that constitute humanity.

The key understanding that Shakespeare has in his tragic vision is the comprehension of identity and moral responsibility. His characters are not just some casualties of circumstances or fate; they are multifaceted people

struggling with their inner self and moral dilemma, exposing the full extent of their humanity. Both tragedies are stories of self-awareness where decisions and visions of the main character define his or her demise or discovery. This is the reason why Shakespeare in his plays can be able to delve into the understanding of the human mind and hence be relevant even in the renaissance and modern times. Through the exploration he makes on the construction and test of identity via conscience, ambition, and action, his tragedies provide a type of mirror with the help of which the readers can scrutinize their own moral and mental conflicts.

The other characteristic feature of the Shakespearean vision of tragedy is the issue of power, social hierarchy, and society. His tragedies tend to play out behind the strict organization of family, monarchy and society where the characters are forced to confront loyalty, duty and justice. Weakening of authority, be it personal, political or moral, is a form of catalyst to tragedy, revealing the frailty of human institutions and the threats of moral blindness. By doing so, Shakespeare describes a world in which chaos and anarchy arise due to the inability of people and managers to fulfill

their duties. This paper, thus, will set out to discuss how Shakespearean tragedies reflect the complex interplay of roles, identity and authority as it provides a clue into the timeless vision of the author on the human condition in seeking meaning, integrity and order in a world that was doomed to fail.

## 2. William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) adeptly mastered stagecraft, performance, and the popular preferences of his day. Shakespeare's plays are studied and performed globally. Nevertheless, they were composed by an unremarkable Englishman about four centuries ago. He has an exceptional talent for observing and transforming the peculiarities of human speech and behavior into art. The complexity of his pieces engenders a wide array of interpretations. It is exceedingly rare in literary history for a craftsman to possess both impeccable mastery of their medium and exceptional ease in employing the techniques and conventions of their era, while simultaneously being a universal genius of the highest caliber, merging technical skill with a distinctive talent for articulating experience in poetic language and an extraordinary intuitive grasp of human psychology. He was born at the pinnacle of the English Renaissance, a period characterized by the English's self-identification as a Protestant country and the unparalleled intellectual and artistic excellence of the English court. Shakespeare's feminism encompasses more than a mere collection of noble liberated heroes; it fundamentally resides in his skepticism about the essence of women. Shakespeare consistently modified his original materials to present relatable household themes that resonated with his audience. As theater companies were often uncertain about the duration of their plays' appeal, establishing a link to ordinary life served to maintain audience attention and investment. In early modern England, social hierarchy maintained a strict separation across classes; nonetheless, a commonality shared by everyone, from aristocrats to beggars, was family. In his examination of gender performance in early modern England, Stephen Orgel notes that men and women were often depicted in Renaissance culture as binary oppositions. This gender classification stemmed from the hierarchical and patriarchal structure of English Renaissance culture, suggesting a 'political agenda' that maintained women's subordinate position to males within the hierarchy.

William Shakespeare is the preeminent English author. He was born on April 23, 1564, in Stratford-upon-Avon; Shakespeare was the most extensively recorded playwright of the Elizabethan era. Shakespeare, who was acknowledged throughout his lifetime, passed away on April 23, 1616, shortly after retiring and drafting his will on March 25, 1616. The reason of his death remains unrecorded. He was the eldest kid in a family with three brothers and four sisters. He was 15 years old, and she was 26 years old. By the age of 21, they had three children. He composed his first play about 1591, fifteen years subsequent to the inauguration of London's first theater (The Swan Theatre). Shakespeare had two theaters and authored a minimum of 38 plays. He was an actor prior to becoming a writer. This is the appropriate approach to interpreting the playwright Shakespeare: the essential need is a vivid and focused

imagination. However, this alone will hardly be enough. It is essential, particularly for an accurate understanding of the whole, to compare, evaluate, and deconstruct. They are mistaken; I contend they would not diminish if they recalled two factors. Initially, in this process of comparison and analysis, it is not only unnecessary but detrimental to dismiss imagination in favor of a presumed objective reasoning; it is merely a lack of practice that renders the simultaneous application of analysis and poetic perception challenging or tedious. Furthermore, these analytical procedures, while they include imagination, serve just as a replacement for presumed rationality; it is solely the lack of experience that makes the simultaneous application of analysis and poetic perception difficult and burdensome.

An aspect of destiny, along with the hero's acts, seems to make the tragedy inevitable. Nonetheless, the ultimate resolution of the tragedy may still seem like a calamitous accident. In any drama, whether it a comedy or a tragedy, actions emerge from the interplay of the characters' traits. These actions are thus a significant factor. They are activities that fully convey the genuine motivations behind their diverse behaviors. His plays narrate a tale of tragedy. Shakespeare's primary focus was in elucidating the motivations of his creations-the genuine catalysts of their diverse deeds. His plays convey a narrative, but not only for the sake of narration. If it recounts the great man's tribulations, he articulates it in a manner that unequivocally demonstrates to the readers or audience that such suffering arises directly from his own actions, mostly if not entirely. The assertion that character is destiny, as articulated by Shakespeare, is not an exaggeration but rather a profound fact. Upon meticulous examination of any Shakespearean tragedy, it becomes evident that the protagonist's misfortunes and tragic demise are inextricably linked to his intrinsic character as the narrative unfolds. The hero ultimately bears responsibility for his trials and tragic demise, rather than any other forces such as destiny or deities. Shakespeare, being a profound playwright and thinker, inevitably included the element of chance into his tragedies. He always remembers that life includes accidents-events or acts beyond his control, influenced by the words and deeds of others. These factors have a little effect on an individual's life; yet, the ordinary person perceives them as fate or destiny, implying an external supernatural force from which one cannot escape. Shakespeare assigned an appropriate significance to it in his narratives.

Shakespeare's plays are rife with enigmatic events. In the analysis of Shakespeare's tragedies, it is customary to focus on the four that are widely acknowledged as his most significant: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth. The first is a vengeance drama, the second a home tragedy, and the third and fourth are chronicle histories with changes. Shakespeare's tragedies primarily focus on a one character-the hero-whose fates constitute the central narrative. All four tragedies are named after the central character, namely the hero of the play. Shakespeare's tragic hero is not an average individual; rather, his status or abilities elevate him beyond other characters. Hamlet is the prince of Denmark, Lear is the monarch of Britain, and Macbeth and Othello were esteemed warriors.

## 3. Tragedy in William Shakespeare

According to Aristotle, a tragedy is an imitation of a serious

and complete action, characterized by artistic embellishments, with distinct separations at the conclusion of each segment of the play. It is presented in the form of action rather than narrative, featuring incidents that evoke pity and fear, ultimately achieving the catharsis of these emotions. A tragic hero is often a significant someone who has exceptional qualities and possesses a tragic defect, which is a critical mistake in judgment or a character deficiency that precipitates their demise. A tragedy is a tale concerning significant and consequential events that culminate in misfortune. A tragedy often concludes with the demise of the principal characters. Shakespeare created the majority of his recognized works between 1589 to 1613. His first works mostly included comedies and history, genres. He ascended to the pinnacle of sophistication and creativity by the conclusion of the 16th century. narrates a sequence of events in the life of a notable individual, the tragic hero. The objective of tragedy is to evoke feelings of sorrow and dread in the audience, illustrating unfulfilled potential. A tragic hero often reaches the zenith of his career, enjoying success, until calamity befalls him. The tragic hero often perishes at the conclusion of the play. The tragic hero is fundamentally a virtuous individual with a character defect, known as a tragic flaw. The tragic hero confronts external constraints that compel him to make erroneous decisions, exacerbated by his tragic fault, including both plays and poetry. The important aspect was the narrative rather than the characters. It was destined to occur by chance, fate, or divine intervention; however, Shakespeare altered this notion with one exception. Upon analyzing his four tragedies, it is acknowledged that tragedy in Shakespeare invariably involves individuals of high status, frequently kings, princes, or state leaders, as exemplified by Coriolanus, Brutus, and Antonio, as well as in Romeo and Juliet, which features members of prominent families. Whose disputes result in the demise of a prominent individual, although no extent of misfortune leads to the death of a person of great status. However, no degree of misfortune that unexpectedly struck an individual, like to a bolt from the blue, could only constitute the essence of its narrative. The misfortunes of a tragedy do not occur spontaneously, nor are they sent from the heavens or manifestations of divine anger.

#### 4. Characteristics of Shakespearean Tragedy

Tragedy originates from ancient Greece and antiquity. Tragedy ought to evoke sympathy and dread. The unfolding tragedy culminates in catharsis as the hero confronts his defeat with fortitude. In contrast to Greek tragedy, Shakespeare employs humorous relief. External influences may precipitate the hero's demise, culminating in a disastrous outcome. This conclusion often entails demise. Tragic heroes often acknowledge their flaws. Shakespeare composed tragedies from the outset of his career. One of his early plays was the Roman tragedy "Titus Andronicus," which he subsequently followed a few years later with "Romeo and Juliet." Nonetheless, his esteemed dramas were composed throughout a seven-year span from 1601 to 1608. These include his four principal tragedies: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth, in addition to Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, and the lesser-known Troilus and Cressida.

Numerous individuals have associated these plays with

Aristotle's principle about tragedy: that the protagonist should be a commendable but imperfect individual, allowing the audience to comprehend and empathize with the character. Indeed, all of Shakespeare's tragic figures possess the capacity for both virtue and vice. As a prominent Shakespearean critic of the 19th century, C. Bradley contends that the dramatist consistently emphasizes the principle of free choice; the (anti)hero retains the capacity to withdraw and attain redemption. However, the author asserts that they must go heedlessly into their demise. Some, such theater historian Brain Arcing in his work "Heavy Seneca: His Influence on Shakespeare's Tragedies," have noted their Senecan characteristics, distinguishing them from Aristotle's principles and Greek tragedy. In a rare deviation from the notion that Roman literature was predominantly a superficial imitation of Greek works, the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca composed several closet dramas in exile, intended not for live performance but rather as didactic pieces aimed at imparting the virtues of Stoicism to the reader. Shakespeare was either oblivious to or indifferent towards this and subsequently adopted and adapted certain elements, including the five-act structure and the previously mentioned sequence of poor decisions, culminating in the protagonist's eventual 'stoic calm,' wherein the character nobly accepts the repercussions of their mistakes, as exemplified by the line "lay on, Macduff," in Macbeth.

A Shakespearean tragedy is a five-act play culminating in the demise of the majority of its principal characters; however, to grasp the essence of Shakespearean tragedy, one must explore an entirely different dimension. It is insufficient to simply enumerate the literary devices employed, identify those prevalent in all of Shakespeare's tragedies, and deem this compilation their essence. We identify tragedy in literature as it resonates with an intrinsic feeling of the terrible inside ourselves. We must examine the literary approaches in the plays not as fixed aspects of tragedy, but as manifestations of it. Consequently, it is conceivable that an individual would unearth a long-lost Shakespearean play that might really be classified as a tragedy, however devoid of any or all conventional sad elements seen in existing tragedies. Certain literary techniques, however, reoccur with regularity. Therefore, we may assert that they are especially effective instruments for conveying tragedy, or at the very least, that they were notably beneficial to Shakespeare. We empathize with the protagonist; in Hamlet's soliloquies, we are privy to ideas known only to him. Similarly, in Macbeth, we are informed of the conspiracy to kill Duncan and the prophecies that drive Macbeth's actions.

#### 5. The Substance of Shakespearean Tragedy

We should be capable of articulating this aspect and manner in terms comprehensible to the intellect; such a description, if accurate and sufficient, may subsequently be referred to interchangeably as an account of the substance of Shakespearean tragedy, an account of Shakespeare's conception of tragedy, or a perspective on the tragic phenomenon. Initially, two further cautions may be necessary. We must acknowledge that the sad aspect of existence is but one dimension. One cannot fully comprehend Shakespeare's whole dramatic perspective only

via his plays, unlike the understanding derived from Milton's viewpoint. In addressing our topic, it is advisable to refrain from seeking to expedite the process by resorting to renowned theories of drama. The narrative thereafter culminates in the hero's demise; hence, any play concluding with the hero's survival is, in the quintessential Shakespearean meaning, a tragedy. Consequently, we no longer categorize *Troilus and Cressida* or *Cymbeline* as tragedies, as was done in the folio versions. Conversely, the narrative also illustrates the tumultuous aspects of the hero's existence.

In the midst of a tragedy, we experience feelings such as attraction, repulsion, sympathy, curiosity, terror, horror, and sometimes hate towards dispositions, acts, and individuals, but we refrain from judgment. This perspective arises only when we, via our own error or that of the playwright, deviate from the tragic context while reading a play, or when we subsequently revert to our quotidian legal and moral concepts in our reflections on the play. Tragedy, much like religion, does not fit within the confines of these concepts; neither does the imaginative response to it. While immersed in its realm, we observe events unfolding, recognizing their pitiable, dreadful, and mysterious nature, yet refraining from passing judgment on the agents involved or questioning the ultimate power's justice towards them. Consequently, employing such language in efforts to articulate our imaginative experience in terms of comprehension is redundant.

## 6. Construction in Shakespeare Tragedies

After analyzing the elements of a Shakespearean tragedy, we should proceed to investigate its form, which encompasses several aspects such as Shakespeare's techniques of characterisation, his linguistic style, his versification, and the architecture of his plots. However, I plan to address just the last of these themes, which has been largely overlooked, since building is mostly technical. The renowned critics of the romantic revival seem to have devoted little attention to this topic while composing an intriguing book on Shakespeare as a theatrical artist. This study significantly pertains to Gustav Freytag's "Technik des Dramas," a work that merits more recognition among English-speaking individuals engaged in play. Additionally, for the advantage of classical academics, Freytag includes a chapter on Sophocles. The reader of his work will readily identify, should he want to, the sections where I write independently of him. In discussing construction, I have considered it prudent to presume that my audience had no prior understanding of the issue; hence, I have refrained from addressing the extent of discourse around Shakespeare. Shakespearean tragedy embodies a struggle culminating in disaster, and such tragedies may be broadly categorized into three segments. The first set elaborates on the circumstances that precipitate the conflict. It constitutes the majority of the play, including the second, third, and fourth acts, as well as portions of the first and fifth acts. The last segment of the tragedy illustrates the problems of the conflict amid a disaster. The implementation of this division system is inherently rather random. The first segment transitions seamlessly into the second, which then flows into the third; delineating boundaries between them may be challenging, although it is even more difficult to separate spring from

summer and summer from autumn; nonetheless, spring remains distinct as spring, and summer as summer. The playwright's primary challenge in the exposition is evident, as seen in the works of inexperienced authors, such as in "Remorse" and "The Cenci." He must convey to the audience a certain amount of knowledge on subjects they typically understand enough for his objectives; nevertheless, the act of just gathering this information is distasteful, and its direct transmission lacks romance. In the absence of a prologue, he must conceal from his audience the nature of their being informed and convey his intended message by inherently engaging methods. These methods, in conjunction with Shakespeare, include not just utterances but also deeds and happenings. From the outset of the play, although conflict has yet to emerge, events transpire that, to some extent, captivate, astonish, and invigorate; in several scenes, we comprehend the circumstances without recognizing the playwright's intentions, though this is not consistently the case with Shakespeare. In the opening soliloquy of Richard III, the speakers directly engage the audience; similarly, in the second scene of *The Tempest*, Prospero's extensive explanation to Miranda is evident in its intent. Overall, Shakespeare's expositions are exemplary works of art.

## 7. Plot Construction of The Shakespearean Tragedy

*Hamlet* (1600-1601) The primary objective of this chapter is to examine the enigmatic mechanism that unifies the events and actions in the play *Hamlet*. Shakespeare has used creative dramaturgical tactics in his exploration of the conventional topic of retribution tragedy. The primary objective is not to unveil those creative techniques but to examine his dramatic prowess as shown in the interconnections and integration of events with the characters' actions, therefore emphasizing the feminine viewpoint. The subject of vengeance is embedded in the framework of the play *Hamlet*. Despite extensive exploration of this concept, its influence on female characters warrants more scrutiny than it has so far gotten. This research addresses two primary concerns with female characters in *Hamlet*: firstly, Hamlet's perception of women, and secondly, their social and political status in current society. Society primarily bears the responsibility for shaping and nurturing individual behavioral patterns; even social relationships are influenced by the social and political forces that engender customs, conventions, and traditions as fundamental institutions of a civilized society.

Shakespeare grants each of his characters the freedom and environment necessary for individual development. In *Hamlet*, the spectator observes the operation of reactionary forces via many forms and styles, alongside the evolving patterns of situations and circumstances in which people encounter the tumultuous fluctuations of rise and fall in their contradictory battle for survival. Numerous contemporary feminist scholars have sought to understand and analyze the female characters in Shakespeare's plays, often removing them from their contextual framework to express their opposition to chauvinism. The drama *Hamlet* begins with the disclosure of male treachery, sibling betrayal, and female vulnerability that intertwines the whole narrative. A queen's freedom is constrained by royal traditions and imperial duties. She is not permitted to violate the

constraints established by royal traditions and regal etiquette. A queen is not a free person like the general populace to choose according to her preferences. She is the mother of a young boy, the queen of a state, a ruler, a lady of power and honor, the wife of the king, and the mother of the prince of Denmark. Subsequently, Hamlet's emphasis in the play transitions from his mother's tumultuous marriage to his cherished Ophelia, as the fissures in his psyche likewise redirect towards her feminine representation. The lover in Hamlet has a transition into a misogynist. Ophelia seems to embody a 'coy mistress,' an innocent creature confined within the traditional constraints of male authority. Shakespearean tragic era "Hamlet." We come to-day to *Hamlet*, the first of our four tragedies, a few words must be made about its likely position in Shakespeare's literary career. However, I will limit my remarks to what is essential for our specific objective and will mostly provide commonly recognized findings from research, without delving into the supporting data.

Upon examining the tragedies, we immediately discern a notable distinction between the initial two and the subsequent ones. Both Brutus and Hamlet possess a profound intellect and a reflective disposition, warranting their characterization as philosophic in a general sense, with Brutus fitting this description in a more rigorous sense. Each individual, characterized as a 'good' man, exhibits a profound and often distressing anxiety to act rightly when confronted with critical situations. Although they inevitably falter in distinct manners while addressing these circumstances, their failures are more closely linked to their intellectual disposition and contemplative tendencies than to any capitulation to passion. Consequently, the term 'tragedy' of thought, as attributed by Schlegel to Hamlet, can similarly be applied, as it has been by Professor Downing, to Julius Caesar. The subsequent heroes, namely Othello, Lear, Timon, Macbeth, Antony, and Coriolanus, all had fervent dispositions, and broadly speaking, one may ascribe the tragic downfall in each instance to their passions. However, concerning this second point of divergence, a qualification must be articulated, which I will elaborate on further, as its necessity appears to have been largely overlooked. While all subsequent tragedies may be categorized as tragedies of passion, not all exhibit these extreme manifestations of malevolence. Neither, although the latter two do. Ultimately, the impression we are left with at the conclusion is noteworthy; although it is profoundly strong, it can hardly be deemed purely tragic. If we categorize it as such, the sense of reconciliation that intertwines with the manifestly tragic emotions is distinctly pronounced. Notably, the death of Antigone occurs prior to the commencement of the fifth act. The demise of Cleopatra, which concludes the play, elicits sympathy and admiration from the reader, even a sense of exultation at her thwarting of Octavius; these sentiments are intensified by the deaths of Charmian and Iris, who remain heroically loyal to their mistress, akin to Emilia's fidelity in *Coriolanus*, where the sense of reconciliation is even more pronounced. Interest has been mostly focused on the questions as the conclusion approaches.

**Othello:** Othello (1603–1604) Shakespeare has established an atmosphere of two cultural paradigms of social order,

simultaneously clashing and blurring in accordance with the differing circumstances. The complexity of court culture has been amalgamated with the unembellished and direct culture of soldiers, which seems to include underlying concerns related to relationships, envy, power, love, and, above all, loyalty. From a feminist standpoint, an entirely new interpretation of the play is required. This is highlighted by the temporal background, the archetypal female characters, and the morals and ethics of the male characters about the 'woman' and her societal role. Historical evidence indicates that early 17th century English society saw women as inferior to males, with their allegiances confined to their families and spouses. Daughters were expected to maintain allegiance to their dad and the patriarchal culture, whereby males were the heads of their households. Marriages were orchestrated to perpetuate familial allegiance and preserve family names. In *Othello*, Shakespeare surpasses existing views on the portrayal of female characters via his inventive dramatic prowess. Desdemona, the protagonist of the play, audaciously transcends the constraints of contemporary morality. She disregards all other factors such as color, ethnicity, religion, and societal conventions while selecting her preferred life mate. Her elopement with the Moor clearly indicates her worry that her father and the surrounding courtiers would not let the solemnization of her marriage to the black Moor, Othello.

It is almost certain that *Othello* was the tragedy composed immediately after *Hamlet*. The external evidence available supports this conclusion, corroborated by similarities in style, diction, and versification. Additionally, concepts and phrases from the earlier play resonate in the later one. Although the protagonists of the two plays are markedly dissimilar—each capable of navigating the other's fatal circumstances—they are both portrayed as exceptionally noble and trusting individuals, each confronting a profound disillusionment. This theme is first explored by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*, then in *Othello*, and reappears with variations in *King Lear*. It likely influenced Shakespeare's decision to partially rework another author's tragedy, *Timon*. These four dramas can thus be categorized together, distinguishing them from the other tragedies. This would constitute a critique of the play only if those who find it objectionable assert that its fullness and candor, which they deem disagreeable, also signify a deficiency from a dramatic perspective or indicate an intention to appeal to unpoetic sentiments in the audience. However, I do not believe this assertion is upheld, nor that such a perspective is credible. Some readers find certain aspects of *Othello* shocking or even repugnant. They might articulate their objection by asserting that Shakespeare transgresses the principles of art by depicting violence and brutality that is unnecessarily painful and more sensational than tragic. The passages that likely provoke this offense include *Othello* striking Desdemona, his treatment of her as a resident of a disreputable household, and ultimately, the scene of her death.

**King Lear:** *King Lear* (1605–06) - *King Lear*, like to *Macbeth*, examines the dynamics of chaos in the external realm and the natural world, but at a very different level. The parent-child bond between father and kid is disrupted. This chapter focuses on a detailed analysis of the text,

emphasizing the dynamics of the father-daughter relationship and their power struggle. The drama depicts the turmoil associated with power, property, and inheritance. The dramatist contends that Lear descends into madness with the loss of his social rank. King was unable to acknowledge that he is no longer a formidable ruler and has lost all his control and influence over his three daughters. Drama also addresses the gravity of quotidian ethical dilemmas. The play begins with a formal ceremony when King Lear resolves to abdicate his throne and partition his kingdom evenly among his three daughters, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia, each required to publicly demonstrate their affection via a 'love test' before their father's court. All three must declare their unwavering affection for their father. This conflict ultimately shapes the remainder of the play, resulting in foreseeably disastrous consequences for almost everyone participants.

King Lear has repeatedly been characterized as Shakespeare's paramount work, the pinnacle of his plays, and the tragedy in which he most comprehensively demonstrates his diverse talents. If we were compelled to forfeit all his dramas except one, it is likely that the majority of his most ardent admirers would advocate for preserving King Lear. What is the significance of these contradictory sets of data on whether Shakespeare's admirers are entirely correct, as opposed to the ordinary reader and theatergoer? Taste and Johnson were entirely mistaken. I find myself skeptical while reading King Lear, since two perceptions remain in my mind that seem to correspond to the two sets of facts. King Lear appears to be Shakespeare's most significant accomplishment; however, I do not consider it his finest play. I am not evaluating it solely as a drama, but rather associating it with works such as Prometheus Vincit, the Divine Comedy, the greatest symphonies of Beethoven, and the sculptures in the Medici Chapel. Consider this occurrence applied to Othello, and you will get the stark contrast in dramatic mood between the two tragedies. In Othello, it would represent a shocking or ridiculous contradiction; nonetheless, it aligns with the essence of King Lear. Moreover, contrary to expectations, when executed appropriately, it is not at all absurd on stage; the imagination and emotions have been profoundly influenced by the depiction of the Clift and the representation of the old man's despair alongside his son's courageous and affectionate wisdom, rendering us oblivious to the absurdity of the incidents from a rational perspective.

The second passage is more significant, as it addresses the origin of the entire conflict. The frequently reiterated assertions that the initial scene of King Lear is absurdly improbable, and that no rational individual would contemplate dividing his kingdom among his daughters based on the magnitude of their respective declarations of love, are excessively severe and stem from a peculiar misunderstanding. This scene operates effectively, and to the imagination, the narrative is not implausible; it is merely unconventional, akin to many tales that inspire our romantic dramas. Furthermore, Shakespeare has considerably mitigated the improbability of the legend, accomplishing far more than the casual reader may recognize. The very first words of the drama, as Coleridge noted, indicate that the division of the kingdom is already determined in all its particulars, leaving only the public announcement to be

made. Subsequently, we see that the boundaries have already been delineated on the map of Britain, and moreover, that Cordelia's portion, which constitutes her dowry, is clearly recognized in Burgundy.

The multitude of characters in King Lear, characterized by excessive affection or self-interest, engenders a distinct impression; they fail to provoke intellectual curiosity or contemplation over the existence of such individuals. We pose inquiries to ourselves. What accounts for the existence of mankind in such fundamentally divergent forms, and specifically, what element is absent from human nature, or if no ingredient is lacking, what distortion of these elements results in the emergence of such beings? This question compels us to inquire, but in King Lear, it is repeatedly elicited.

**Macbeth:** Macbeth (1606) Shakespeare conceptualizes and depicts his characters fundamentally as individuals functioning within a societal framework defined by connections. Nearly all of his characters inhabit a realm of timelessness. His characters may be encountered in any location and any era. Their everlasting and universal nature stems from the brilliance of his comprehensive vision, which delves deeply into the workings of the human psyche, revealing no significant or categorical distinction in the portrayal of male and female characters. At the beginning of the play, three witches intercept Macbeth and Banquo in an enchanted locale as they return to their respective destinations. Each critic and researcher often examine the playwright's perspective in presenting the witches as female and the potential dramatic function this serves. The female figures with beards evoke a semblance of hermaphrodites, potentially to look abnormal, uncomfortable, foreign, unusual, or ferocious, so captivating the current audience. A more appropriate and accurate label for them is 'strange sisters.' The term sister unequivocally implies their identify as females. Contemporary critics have shown significant interest in the beards of witches as an emblem of flawed femininity. The role of witchcraft serves as a compelling inversion of gender boundaries. This function may serve as a means of ridiculing identities and ideas that people see as genuine.

Shakespeare illustrates the complex psychological motivations of Lady Macbeth and her genuine commitment to the whole endeavor, driven by a desire for its fulfillment. In this context, we encounter another facet of this soliloquy as Lady Macbeth initially embodies the role of a loving, loyal, and nurturing wife; however, she progressively becomes apprehensive, akin to a mother who affectionately advises her child to remain resolute on a chosen path, devoid of retreat or hesitation. Shakespeare adeptly examines the characteristics in a female character that make Lady Macbeth a potent catalyst, culminating in a captivating but destructive conclusion.

Macbeth was likely the last of the four classic plays written and immediately before Antony and Cleopatra. In the play, Shakespeare's final style is presented in its whole for the first time, and the move to this style is much more evident. In Macbeth, parallels to Hamlet are more evident than to Othello or King Lear. The protagonists in both plays experience a complex transition from contemplation to decisive action, which captivates the audience. Unlike

Othello and King Lear, where profound pathos is a predominant effect, Macbeth, while exhibiting tremendous energy, does not embody the frigid inhumanity of Iago or Goneril. Similar to Hamlet, Macbeth is haunted by remorse. Furthermore, Shakespeare transcends the confines of purely human agency, as seen in the earlier tragedies; supernatural phenomena reemerge, with omens in the sky, apparitions rising from their graves, and an ethereal light illuminating the head of the doomed protagonist. The notable success of Hamlet and Macbeth may be attributed, in part, to several shared traits, particularly the allure of the supernatural.

## 8. Conclusion

The tragic vision of William Shakespeare is a very ancient and profound comprehension of the human nature, moral warfare, and precariousness of the equilibrium between the order and disorder. His tragedies depict the people that are torn between their own ambition and the societal responsibility, and how the struggle to establish role and remain right usually costs them. Shakespeare reveals the repercussions of pride, indecision, moral blindness through Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello and King Lear, demonstrating that tragedy is not only the product of fate but also the product of human beings themselves and their weaknesses. The theme of identity in Shakespeare emphasizes the intricacy of self-knowledge and the impossibility of aligning the internal and external demands. The quest of his characters to find meaning, purpose and recognition in the regimes of authority and obligation is the quest of humans in general to find meaning in their lives. The moral and social disintegration of his plays is a caution against the devastating power of imbalance, whether in authority, conscience or self-commitment. After all, the tragic vision, as presented by Shakespeare, does not reflect its Elizabethan context but addresses eternal questions of the human experience. His depiction of imperfect but immensely human characters still live on due to the fact that they capture the gist of the uncertainties in life and the unavoidable repercussions of moral failure. This paper confirms that Shakespearean tragedies are not just tales of destruction but great essays about how mankind has always sought to have order, truth, and self-image.

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