

# Human Benevolence is Innate to Man as Man: Shakespeare's Art of Characterization with reference to Macbeth

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**Abstract-** *Shakespearean tragedies stand out in the history of world's literature for their influential language, insight into character and dramatic ingenuity. It can be safely established that all of the Shakespearean tragedies are based upon the notion that human benevolence is innate to man as man. The current study focuses upon the notion that the Shakespearean heroes are basically good and noble men whose tragic flaw leads to their obliteration. For instance in Macbeth, Lady Macbeth describes Macbeth as "too full o' milk of human kindness". The character of Macbeth gives the picture of dissolution within the individual. The character of Macbeth has been analyzed to assert that he seems to suffer from a variance between his head and heart, his duty and his desire, his reckoning and his emotions. A psychological insight to his character reveals that he knows from the first that he is engaged in a ridiculous act: a distressed and paradoxical struggle. With the aid of research methods including Case Study and Close Reading this Qualitative research highlights Macbeth's lethal proceedings which not only obliterate his peace of mind but also bring turmoil to the macrocosm of the universe, and shows that along with the king he murders his sense of reasoning as well. Hence this study asserts the idea that Shakespearean heroes possess an inherent goodness corroded by the actions of fate or destiny thus resulting in their tragic downfall.*

**Keywords-** *Dramatic inventiveness; Human benevolence; Assassination; Macrocosm; Paradoxical struggle*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It can be safely considered that the greatest of all the Renaissance drama writers was William Shakespeare arose the status of Romantic drama to its climax. As it is uncertainty about his life, training and education, his wonderful achievements are a mystery to all the writers and philosophers till today. With an imaginative, marvelous and innovative mind, he added new life into the previous familiar stories and coloured them with the soft feelings and grave thoughts.

The conceptions described in Shakespeare's mature tragedies are complex. The most important tragic conflicts correlate to the state of feeling is more firmly defined, more clearly conceived in terms of a possible resolution. In his tragedies the heart of tragic experience is revealed in its full intensity. The emotional unity is mirrored in the clearer conception of character and in a more truly dramatic presentation of conflict.

Macbeth is supposed Shakespeare's darkest tragedy set in Scotland and beset by necromantic art. It is a tale of ambitious chivalry and hotty arrogance gone wild with

valour and good hope, in a time of agitation. Macbeth is the tragedy of such a person who is destroyed by the wavering ideas of masculinity at the war in his own self. It is a tragedy that looks briefly beyond that conflict to the prospect of humanity's liberation from the devastating male fantasies that still plague its survival.

## 2. Research Objectives

The current research has been held to achieve the following objectives:

- To highlight the essential goodness in the character of Macbeth
- To establish the proposition that human benevolence is innate in Shakespearean hero
- To bring out the psychological conflict in the selected play
- To figure out the difference between "self" and "self-actualization" in the character of Macbeth

### 3. Research Questions

In order to fulfil the above stated objectives the research will be focused on the following research questions:

- How does the character of Macbeth reflect the essential goodness?
- How can one establish the proposition that human benevolence is innate in Shakespearean hero?
- What is the psychological conflict in the selected play?
- What is the difference between “self” and “self-actualization” in the character of Macbeth?

### 4. Significance of the Study

The current study is significant for the future researchers as it bridges the gap between literature and psychology and also provides an innovative dimension to view the character of a much celebrated Shakespearean hero. It presents the readers with a reason to study Macbeth as a person suffering from severe psychological conflicts and enables them to understand the battle he fought in his mind and soul.

### 5. Delimitation

The current research has been held to explore the difference rather conflict between “self” and “self-actualization” in the character of Macbeth to prove the proposed contention that Shakespearean heroes are inherently good human beings with certain tragic flaws causing their downfall or demise.

### 6. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Wells that conventional Shakespearean feedback has seen “Macbeth” as “an endorsement of King James I’s character and policies” (122). As a result of James’s conservative propensities, the famous dramatist Shakespeare, is accepted to have bent the actualities, since his primary story to assuage the lord (Raphael Holinshed’s Chronicles of Ireland, England and Scotland, 1587). For instance, Macbeth’s oppression, barbarism and forceful savagery are accepted to be purposefully misrepresented to make a distinct difference to James’ “irenic” characteristics. For such feedback, governmental issues turn into the point of convergence in the drama, lessening it to political control. The tactic, in any case, does not pay attention to relay on equilibrium to a piece of any creative writing highly significant and multifaceted in nature on certain ground realities. At initial stages to explicate the authenticity of the play is solely undertaken with reference to legislative issues, ignoring different elements, which has impact on the composition, pregnant with manliness in the drama. It also diminishes, the given contents, which have been early scrutinized for manliness, impacted due to governmental issues in Renaissance.

This section deals with the Robin Headlam’s view about “Arms and the Man”, recommends that we found two “commonly contradicted originations of masculinity”

(p.140) Macbeth. Further, Robin Headlam asserts that contingent with heroic fiction and other literary works on Gospel do not guarantee predominance on each other. In any case, the theory adjusts contentions of principal, assert notwithstanding with welcoming approach to engage both. It is of the opinion to trust, the similitude’s of Shakespeare attracts the portrayal of Macbeth to be called a saint, does not detach him from his antiquated partners of the epic. Aeneas along with other popular figure Achilles, typify chivalrous manliness; they are celebrated around the world for their honour and equity, as well as for their fierceness and noxious severity.

The blood he sheds is made inconsequential when contrasted with the triumphs he accomplishes and his valour and mercilessness rule. In any case, that masculine picture is soon shaken when this overwhelming legend turns out to be so effectively influenced by his peevish spouse’s venomous insults. His endeavours to ward off her malevolence requesting show a solid conviction and unflinching purpose on his part to recognize masculinity with common profound quality and respect, yet he in the long run neglects to consent to this masculine mental self-portrait and capitulates to her desires.

By looking at Macbeth in the system of Freud’s psychoanalytic hypothesis, a great amount consisting, different activities of the play results novel implications. . Freud comes with the opinion in one of his essay “On Dreams”, that “The dream-thoughts which we first come across as we proceed with our analysis often strike us by the unusual form in which they are expressed; they are not clothed in the prosaic language usually employed by our thoughts, but are on the contrary represented symbolically by means of similes and metaphors, in images resembling those of poetic speech” (26). Freud has very appropriated described the world, painted by an author is believed to be a fantasy in his statement. Very rightly it is would be called that dreams stand with emblematic esteems, thus, completes an artistic content.

The Catch 22 of manliness in Macbeth can’t be fathomed in confinement from the psychoanalytic impacts at play. The reality of the matter is that social and social weights affect human choice, while social can be seen as merging in psychoanalytical aspects. More profound mind boggling mental questions, deciding man’s conduct, especially if transgress has been seen in that man. Further, Freud analysis has been added by Coppelia Kahn and Janet Adelman to the likelihood, deciphering the story. They accordingly, giving novel implications to appearance of manliness. The said speculations suggest that the hidden social clash in the story is significant clash in personality, impacted by its forming, encounters with youth. The speculations of Adelman and Kahn on the father/child battle and the mother/new-born child grid are two prevalent components that force themselves on the psychoanalytic perusing of the play. By applying those hypotheses to the play and interfacing them to the states of mind and practices of the significant characters, a more

conceivable comprehension of the problem of manliness can be accomplished.

A comparative idea is affirmed by the Italian writer of the sixteenth century, Torquato Tasso, who characterizes legends as remarkable men who resist customary profound quality. He contends that there is a contrast between moral righteousness and chivalrous temperance with the last being a —greatness that resists description (Wells 2). It is evident that Macbeth consolidates the two ideals in their substance with his underlying presentation in the play. His ethical uprightness is shown in his ethical commitment towards lord and kingdom repressing foes and swindlers and his gallant goodness is shown in his unbeatable valour. In the event that one or the two ethics characterize masculinity then Macbeth encapsulates a perfect manliness in any event amid his presentation in the play. His later murders can be appropriately legitimized in light of the fact that they too take after eccentric profound quality. These two comparable perspectives qualify Macbeth as a saint for his uncommon characteristics and protect his activities against what pundits may call his flippancy or unethical behaviour.

## 7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has conducted qualitative research for the analysis of Shakespeare's Macbeth. L. R. Gay asserts that qualitative research is "the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual (i.e., no numerical) data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest" (p.7). The researcher has compiled the data which asserts the idea that Shakespearean heroes possess an inherent goodness corroded by the actions of fate or destiny thus resulting in their tragic downfall.

Moreover, the current research is fundamentally a case study research. Miles and Huberman illustrated,

*Case study is an investigation of phenomenon that occurs within a specific context. In other words, if the phenomenon you want to study is not bounded, not identifiable within a specific context, it is not appropriately studied as a case study. (p.214)*

With the aid of research methods including Case Study and Close Reading this Qualitative research highlights Macbeth's lethal proceedings which not only obliterate his peace of mind but also bring turmoil to the macrocosm of the universe, and shows that along with the king he murders his sense of reasoning as well.

## 8. CONTENT ANALYSIS

Life throws several hurdles to test the strength, courage and ability of people. Temptations have always led a way for the final decision of fate of a person. Temptations could appear in different forms, shapes and varieties. Macbeth became the victim of such a temptation. It appeared in the form of witches who instigated him.

"FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth that shalt be king hereafter! (1.3.51-53)

When he heard the witches declaring him the king in the future he became inquisitive about it and asked them that how it was possible and how could he be the king but he was told that if not now then later situation would incline in his favour and he would be the king. Surprised by the prophecy, he moved back on his way. His mind kept tinkling over that prophecy of his being king. He could not stop himself from thinking over it. As the lines state:

"MACBETH [Aside]

If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,  
Without my stir. (1.3.157-159)

He got enslaved by the lust of power and money. In the illusion of the prophecy Macbeth lost his conscience. He became so mesmerised by the prophecy that he couldn't control his thoughts. His desire overwhelmed his conscience and became the cause of his devastation. Instead of waiting for the right time to come, he rushed towards it. He himself made the prophecy come true. He paved way for all the events himself. His fate was decided by his own actions. That is what the Shakespearean age depicted that a man is himself responsible for his fate. As Shakespeare said in Julius Ceaser, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves".

Macbeth became cause of his own destruction. He was invaded by the fate for which he drew map himself. He kept walking the path that was destined to end.

Shakespeare displays one more feature of Macbeth character that brings forth his lack of decision power. He depicted him a weak character who relied on his wife's ideas. He did not have the strength to follow his own directions rather he did what his wife asked him to do. The first temptation that he became victim of was the witch and after that he became victim of his wife tempting ideas. So this could relate his wife to the character of witch. but witch only prophesied his future but his wife forced him to achieve now what has to be his after sometime.

*"Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let  
me clutch thee:  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed  
brain?"*

This depicted the feeble character of Macbeth who couldn't overcome these temptations and got into clutches of these hand cuffs. The chain of his hand cuffs being driven by his wife.

*"Alack! I am afraid they have awak'd,  
And 'tis not done; the attempt and not  
the deed*

*Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers  
ready;  
He could not miss them. Had he not  
resembled  
My father as he slept I had done't. My  
husband!"*

His wife was a weak character herself who used Macbeth to fulfil her wishes as she exclaimed that she would have killed king Duncan herself if he did not resemble her father. That displayed that she was a feeble character who used Macbeth's shoulder to shoot her gun. After that Macbeth killed Duncan, he came to his wife and said that he had killed him but he felt guilty now. As is stated in the lines:

"I could not say 'Amen',/When they did say God bless us," Macbeth confesses to his wife. But Macbeth gets blind in the shine of his dream to be the king. The second time he meets the witches, they inform him about the danger that he might have from Macduff:

*"The First Apparition: "Beware  
Macduff; Beware the Thane of Fife." The  
Second Apparition: "none of women  
born Shall harm Macbeth." The Third  
Apparition: "be lion-mettled, proud, and  
take no care who chafes, who frets...  
until Great Birnam wood to high  
Dunsinane Hill /Shall come against him  
[Macbeth]."*

Macbeth got success in killing the king but his feelings of guilt were cured by his wife's consolation.

*"These deeds must not be thought  
After these ways; so, it will make us mad." (Act 2)*  
Lady Macbeth always made Macbeth think that his act was justified.

*"Why, worthy thane,  
You do unbend your noble strength to  
think  
So brainsickly of things. Go get some  
water,  
And wash this filthy witness from your  
hand.  
Why did you bring these daggers from  
the place?  
They must lie there: go carry them, and  
smear  
The sleepy grooms with blood."*

Lady Macbeth played the role of being the lady of words and not of deeds as T.S Eliot described in his poem about such people who only talk and instigate other people and they themselves stand behind and do not act. Macbeth was slowly drowning in stream of guilt.

*"I'll go no more:  
I am afraid to think what I have done;  
Look on't again I dare not."*

Even in the realisation phase when he realised that he has committed a crime and ghost of king won't leave him without taking his revenge, he behaved as a mental patient and his wife too got mad being guilty of their crimes. They

feared their fate but it was too late and they could never settle it the way they wished.

As Shakespeare says

*"Cowards die many times before their  
death"*

*Macbeth kept fighting with his fear and  
guilt.*

*"Macbeth – soliloquy*

*'Whence is that knocking?*

*How is't with me, when every noise  
appals me?*

*What hands are here! Ha! They pluck  
out mine eyes.*

*Will all Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand  
will rather*

*The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green one red."*

These lines show his progression towards madness. He almost lost his senses and he had hallucinations. He saw those things which actually did not exist. Out of his fear and guilt, he confessed himself of his crime. His lines that he said to Macduff and Lennox:

*"Had I but died an hour before this  
chance*

*I had liv'e a blessed time; for, from this  
instant,*

*There's nothing serious in mortality,*

*All is but toys; renown and grace is  
dead,*

*The wine of life is drawn, and the mere  
lees*

*Is left this vault to brag of."*

*Then the final lines of his confession:*

*"O! Yet I do repent me of my fury,  
That I did kill them."*

Hence this leads to the interpretation that Macbeth was a man who became the victim of his desire and temptation. He could not control himself to act against his will which lead to his loss of conscience. His guilt made him made and he himself became reason for his inappropriate end.

## 9. CONCLUSION

To sum up the discussion it is said that the writer does not allow the hero any kind of moral excuses. He is conscious of the idea that any action done makes it more likely that the person will definitely do other such actions. The function of this process is clear as it is easier for Macbeth to rise to the fearful ceremony. Shakespeare's Macbeth is considered as the darkest tragedy as it is differentiated even from those other plays by an underlying bleakness and by its desire in the supernatural forces. Like other great plays of Shakespeare, Macbeth has fascinated literary critics for centuries.

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