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A Survey of Human Wickedness in Shakespeare's Macbeth

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Abstract: The present article investigates the reasons of general human behaviors accompanied by their nature and characteristics in Shakespeare's great tragedy, Macbeth. Shakespeare with a mixture of tragic and comic tones tested everybody with the scale of humanism (humanity) in this play. He poses the story of the struggle of the human spirit out of darkness of errors and sin, into the light of truth and wisdom. He uses Macbeth to show that dark thought and unconscious temptations cause a man who lacks strength of character to do terrible actions. Through various soliloquies of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare transforms them into a reflective analysis of human characteristics and identifies the complexity of the human condition. This play is a deep interpretation of realistic view of psychological, social, and divines human personality in the process of life affairs and the interactions among people with their destinies.

Keywords: Humanism; Temptation; Soliloquy; Psychoanalysis; Unconscious human mind.

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1. Introduction

William Shakespeare, a psychoanalyst playwright shared all the characteristics of a divine humanist with a desire to seek the truth about what goes in human mind. His plays are deeply moral and deal with human beings' ethical and moral responsibility for their actions. He focuses on man's uniqueness in creation as a rational being with high responsibility. His profound understanding of humanity enables him to pierce the depth of his universal characters. So he was successful to unravel the different kinds of driving forces in human mind and solve the mystery of human nature. He successfully reflected their opinions, thoughts, reasons, and feelings in his mirror-like drama, Macbeth. In his play, Macbeth, he gives solutions to his readers and spectators to have safe thoughts out of their minds. His characters are the genuine progeny of common humanity. His characters have a universal appeal and significance with general passions and principles. His dramas specially, Macbeth opens our eyes to facts and truth in our surroundings. In Macbeth, Shakespeare poses the depth of the human mind and spirit spoiled by villainous driving force- animalistic parts of human mind in planning and designing evil actions- in central characters' mind. He, accordingly, strives to warn his audience and readers about their true responsibilities in this world. He also reminds them of being unforgettable creatures of flesh and blood. He points out that man is something more than quintessence of dust.

2. Statement of the Problem

One of the big problems of people in new age is human wildness. There are many people who are killed by cruel fellowmen. If we have a psychoanalytical look on this issue we find that human beings are aggressive by instinct.

His aggression comes from their id- the driving force in human minds which lead them to brutality. In Macbeth we become familiar with outmost horrors and direness. That's why the character Macbeth confesses that he has supped full with horrors. Shakespeare portrays human wildness and aggression and then makes us see the outcomes of such behaviors; the characters conflict with themselves and with each other. Whatever they try to get, they miss their valuable thing. They miss their humanity to get material things. They try to be happy with material things but they are uneasy. Shakespeare reminds us that happiness without humanity is impossible. Through Macbeth, Shakespeare makes everybody to become familiar with their universal mental characteristics.

Freud (1929) Stated that human behaviors have roots in their mind so the mind is the source of human characteristics. He believed that human mind designs happiness or brutality. So the problem of mind is a crucial issue of human life. This article tries to demonstrate the extent to which Shakespeare is successful in portraying human characteristics with variety of characters that differ in sex, age, state of life, virtues and vices. It also tries to consider the mental and physical problems as the results of one's decline under the influence of unconscious dark thought. Shakespeare believes that the hostile destiny of one lies in his choice of his mind driving force- id and superego. If one chooses id, he may have uneasy life. If one chooses superego, he may have a guide that leads him to happiness. Shakespeare shows us Macbeth as a symbol of a slave man under the slavery of his id. Under such situations, Macbeth could not remove his hallucination as his own enemy that caused turbulence. Whereby he killed others and was killed. In other words he corrupted himself and his society with his enemy- dark thought.

3. Research Questions

- Can unconscious mind shape human dangerous behavior?
- Can Macbeth's curiosity lead him to happiness?
- Does appearance versus reality?
- Is Lady Macbeth successful with her murderous plans?

4. Significance of the Study

Shakespeare, one of the greatest humanists and a master of the mixed motives of human characters of all classes of men and women, shows us his profound sympathetic understanding of life, society, and human nature. He also shows us the reality of human beings and their relationships through symbols such as light and dark, ghosts, sleep, weather, blood, hallucinations, nature, and men and woman's trait. He is like a surgeon who tries to give an autopsy report of social body of the world. He tests and examines everybody and then provides them with good solutions. Macbeth is one of his psychopathological dramas. In this play, he portrays human characteristics in the mirror of conscience as the essence and origin of judging and punishing mechanism that gains a high level of significance. So this article tries to show all concepts of human struggles to fulfill their dark thoughts. That's why Macbeth and Lady Macbeth under an atmosphere of pessimism-fog and filthy air- thought that "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" which signifies the concept of struggle between good and evil. So everybody can see their situations in the present or future. Shakespeare demonstrates that the sin of man originates from his dark thought. The dark thought also originates from one's unconscious dark desires. When we read one of Shakespeare's best known tragedies, Macbeth, we can find ourselves and our surroundings. This tragedy awakens the readers and audience to the dangers from human wildness and then teaches them how to use their mind for making safe and good decisions. It also strengthens their faith in a brighter future and cultivates their passion and affection for good and lightness against darkness and evil. This article presents a psychopathological means for readers to recognize their mental weakness and strength thereby to be aware of their interactions with external world. It is also significant that the audience and readers share tragic emotions of pity and fear and then feel that they have fellow-feeling for the suffering of others. Shakespeare puts his prophetic idea of what human beings are, the quality of life in this world and hereafter, and the discrepancy between appearance and reality of people. This drama makes audience and readers be much more confident about themselves and their abilities in their life whereby to have a better guard against unconscious animalistic desire- human mental wildness. Finally Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have found out that human commission is not bloodshed. They also found out that all of human foul deeds burn themselves and others. The significance of Shakespeare's this play is how it revives the power of originals in different cultural, social, and religious context. It also represents moral themes and the vanity of proud ambition.

5. Historical Background

Before the advent of psychoanalytic methods, literature was the device by which the deepest knowledge of psychic life and relations among human beings were expressed. Literature embodied subtler and more enduring insights that those contained in the psychological theories of these days. Psychoanalysis enables us to find out the intuitions of the great writers such as Shakespeare, in a discursive way. Paris (2008) stated; "Psychoanalytic theory illuminates literature, that literature enriches theory, and that combining theory and literature enhances both our intellectual and our emphatic understanding of human behavior....There is a triangular interaction between literature, theory, and the individual interpreter". So through psychoanalysis we can talk about what the great writers know, but through literature we can understand what psychoanalysis is talking about. Psychoanalysis and literature both deal with humans in conflict with themselves and other people. Fry (1987) declared; "Literature is silent but criticism speaks. It is not that literary artists do not know what they are talking about but that they cannot talk about what they know. If they try to do so, they are as limited as the rest of us. Psychoanalysis has given us a language that permits

us to talk about what the great writers have conveyed through the silent medium of art, to bring it more directly into the realm of conceptual understanding. Although that language has changed and will keep doing so, we must cherish the illuminations it has brought". Looking at the history of human characteristics, everyone acknowledges that human beings are different in behaviors. To account for this difference, many philosophers and psychologists are replete with the idea that the generations of men and the individuals have different concerns, follies, passions, vices, virtues, actions, and motives. Gasset (1941) Believes that the essence of man is that he can lose himself in the jungle of his existence or he can find himself again. The term human nature can be defined as what it essentially means to be a human being; what makes different from anything else.

To understand literature specially dramas, there are some fundamental theories about all human beings. First, traditional rationalist view, in which Plato as one of the greatest philosopher believed that everybody has a Self: the ego or "I" which exists in physical body and is rational and conscious. This feature can think, reason, and perceive. He also believes that the rational part of the self has its center in the brain. Through reason, human being discovers the truth about how he ought to live. In Plato's opinion, humans can control their appetites and aggressive impulses by their reason. Both Plato and his student Aristotle stress reason as unique in humans which enables them to be different from all animals. In addition both emphasize the use of reason as the purpose of human nature. That's why the purpose of human beings is to be rational. The next one is Freud (1856-1939) who is known as the father of psychoanalysis whose theory is related with fundamental attributes of human nature and behavior in the light of their relevance to human unconscious and consciousness which in spite of historical and cultural differences are universal.

6. Methodology

At the beginning of twentieth century, many modern critics have applied the methods of psychoanalysis to the literature particularly to the dramatic works of Shakespeare. Dr. Sigmund Freud's publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 2004, has demonstrated a well-known psychoanalytic criticism to the Shakespearean works such as Macbeth. His psychoanalytical interpretation helps many readers to find out the implications-reading beneath the lines of literature. His concept of conscious and unconscious levels refers to what we see or what we can't see. The concept of mind is like the iceberg. Its surface appears to be shown as the level of consciousness, while what is hidden beneath the surface or what counts as the heavier part is the level of unconsciousness. What we consider as the appearance vs. reality, signifies the motif that the conscious vs. unconscious psyche. So we find conscious Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are in contrast with unconscious Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Freud also believed that our mind or psyche is composed of three structures; the id, the superego and the ego. The id is the darkest side of the mind in which animalistic desires drive men into malpractice. The superego is as a teacher teaches what is good and what is bad. The ego satisfies id based on principle of superego. Therefore, through psychology, we can better understand the themes and messages of Macbeth. He applied many subjects of psychoanalytic criticisms such as matters of autonomy and emotional isolation, unconscious motivation, sexual desire, neurosis, ambition, and jealousy related to the dramas like Macbeth. He has examined Macbeth's aggression and Lady Macbeth's masculine drive toward self-sufficiency as they struggle with each other and others. The subject of uncontrolled ambition, jealous passion led them to corruption. Consuming sexual desire led Macbeth to be manipulated by Lady Macbeth.

7. William Shakespeare (life and Literary Works)

William Shakespeare, one of the greatest Renaissance humanist English-speaking poets and playwrights who had a great knowledge of human nature in his mind and wrote what he knew and then transformed it to the theatre and all over of the world. Based on generally agreed facts, it has been said that he was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England and was baptized three days after. His father, John Shakespeare, was a trader of agricultural products. His mother, Mary Arden, was a landed local heiress. John had a remarkable run of success as a merchant during William's early childhood, but his fortunes declined, however, in the late 1570s. William lived most of his early life in his birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon. He attended the free grammar school in Stratford to learn Latin and Classical Greek. In 1587 he went to London to promote his literary activity. He chose Globe theatre to be employed as an actor and playwright. His knowledge of Latin and Greek caused him to have good theories for dramatizing. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway, who was 26. Their first child was a daughter named Susanna, who was baptized on May 26, 1583. The second time, they had twins, a son named Hamnet and a daughter named Judith. Hamnet died while he was still a child on August 11, 1596. After the early death of his only son, Shakespeare did not have any direct descendants. About the first seven years of his twins which is known "Lost Years", Shakespeare disappeared from all records, and then, turned up again in London some time in 1592. In London, he became part of the Lord Chamberlain's Men as an actor, playwright and shareholder of Globe theatre. His timeless moral and ethical works include seventeen plays in the field of comedy, ten plays in the field of history, ten plays in the field of tragedy, and five works in the field of poetry. His deep interest was in reflection of inner psychological conflict in character. He died on his 52nd birthday, April 23, 1616.

8. Summary of Shakespeare's Macbeth

Macbeth is Shakespeare's shortest tragedy. It's about the story of a brave Scottish military general named Macbeth who guides the military forces to fight against their country enemies. He won the war and returned from the battlefield. He became proud of his strength. On the way, he faced with trio of witches prophesy that Macbeth will be King of Scotland. Those strange creatures planted the seed of greed and ambition in his mind. They

were implications of dark thoughts in Macbeth's Mind. In fact, there were no real witches in the real world. Those are the symbols of Macbeth's "dull brain (1.3:149)". He was shocked by the image of his desire of kingdom. Through a letter to his wife, he stated about what he saw and heard on the way from the battlefield. His wife raised his thoughts, persuading him to kill King Duncan. They designed a murderous plan to take the throne and crown. So they invited the King to their castle as a guest. After he had dinner and went to sleep, Macbeth killed him. Macbeth charged Duncan's servants with murder. He killed those servants pretending they were the murderers. King Duncan's two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, fled Scotland to save their own lives. Macbeth usurped the throne and crown of kingdom and became the King of Scotland. He killed some of his suspicious rivals because they might claim kingship. After a short time of his kingship, the elder son (Malcolm) of former King Duncan came back from England with his army to depose Macbeth. His army forces killed Macbeth thereby Malcolm became the new king of Scotland. Lady Macbeth's destiny was to die because of conscience stricken. Her sense of guilt caused her to walk in sleep. At last, her psychological disease- her sense of guilt- caused her to commit suicide.

9. Discussion and Result

Through Macbeth, Shakespeare aims to warn the audience and readers about the potential power of mind in choosing evil or good. Our evil originates from our id (our wildest and darkest part of mind) but our goodness originates from our superego (our logical part of mind):

- At first, Macbeth is too kind, good-natured, and generous- conversely not cruel, violent, or ambitious enough- to be a true man as Lady Macbeth asserts: "too full o' the milk of human kindness (1.5:13)." In his soliloquy Macbeth is saying that he is the king's relative and host and that it is his duty to protect him, as well as closing the door on the murderer trying to get to the king, not to be the murderer himself." First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,/ Strong both against the deed; then as his host,/who should against his murderer shut the door,/not bear the knife myself(1.7.13-16)". As the play progresses Macbeth changes from an honorable man to a violent, aggressive, impulsive, and cruel creature with no sympathy. After the death of Banquo, Macbeth defines himself as an animal by declaring: "the very firstlings of my heart shall be/the firstling of my hand (4.1:147-148)." He fails to maintain his human respectful characteristics. His feelings are gradually destroyed and changed into unnatural man who cut off from humanity and from God. When he learns about the death of his wife, says: " she should have died hereafter (5.5:17)". It shows his complete lack of grief for his wife.

- From a psychoanalytic perspective, there are three scenes which include visual manifestations of unconscious motivations. First: in 2.1, when Macbeth sees dagger tempting him to kill Duncan:" 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 (2.1:33-36) signify that he couldn't prevent his mind from dangerous temptation. So he submits himself to moral decline. He has images of dagger and bloodshed in his mind which are motivating and leading him to commit criminal action: "Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,/and such an instrument I was to use! (2.1.42-43)". The dagger may be a symbolic of his own self. In 5.1, Lady Macbeth's imagination of spots of blood on her hands, signifies manifestation of symbols of guilt: "Yet here's a spot....Out, damned spot! Out, I say! (2.1:25 and 28). Third: in 3.4, the appearance of Banquo's ghost to Macbeth's guilt signifies a manifestation of Macbeth's guilt:" But now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in/to saucy doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe? (3.4:24-25)"

- Manipulating the male and gaining cruel masculine power are Lady Macbeth's desires to gain the power. The women in Renaissance England didn't enjoy great agency over their lives. They were expected to marry and to be subservient to their husbands. Their husbands' actions and powers determined their fortune. In Macbeth, Shakespeare depicts a woman, Lady Macbeth, who tries to take some control over her own destiny. She seeks the opportunity to become the Queen of Scotland, and she makes plan to materialize the possibility. However, she can't do it alone; as a woman she needs her nearest man-her husband- to cooperate. She tries to gain power through manipulating her husband. She knows that femininity and power do not go together, so she should move forward from her gender. That's why she invokes dark spirits to "unsex" her and make her do her plan. Therefore, she is the only female characters have been changed to the witches. She must gain her power through Macbeth in order to live within the society and still direct her own future. That's why gender and power are interwoven. She must also manipulate Macbeth to promote her plan. She found man's Achilles' heel. As the first tactic, she questioned her husband's manhood. She wants him to prove himself to be a man. So it is based on the process of: "Cruel and piercing emasculation". That's why she openly tells her husband: "when you durst do it, then you were a man;/and to be more than what you were, you would/be so much more the man (1.7:49-51)". She attempts to strip Macbeth of his gender if he does not accept to murder Duncan as she desires. Lady Macbeth recognized that fear of being powerless is another sensitive layer of manhood. She knows that her husband would fear losing such power, and uses this fear to her advantage. She also uses her female power: the power to bear children to continue the blood line of her husband. She boasts about this essential power. The patriarchal world depends on women to bear its heirs, and women could destroy men's wishes for a bloodline, if they were disloyal and unfaithful or even through infanticide. She directly boasts about her power in bearing children (nurturing qualities) and power in infanticide (destructive abilities) when she tells Macbeth: "I have given suck, and know/how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:/I would, while it was smiling in my face,/have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums/and dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you/have done to this(1.7:54-59)". So through this speech, Lady Macbeth wants to persuade her husband to act as she wishes. She was a driving force behind King Duncan's murder.

- Lady Macbeth is more morally corrupt and more fiercely ambitious than Macbeth. She runs her ambition in the most blood-curdling way and urges her husband to murder. That's why she says: "Hark! I laid their daggers ready,/he could not miss 'em. Had he [King Duncan] not resembled/my father as he slept, I had done't. (2.2:11-13)". She tries to decrease the inauspiciousness of murder and wants to indicate that murdering is usual and natural. She criticizes her husband about thinking of murdering as a sorry sight; " A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.(2.2:21)" On the other hand, Macbeth appear to have some initial scruples, but when the play progresses, his ambition, however, he is seen to go even further, not hesitating to eliminate anyone else who stands in his way. He tries to continue his way of malpractice:" Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill (3.2:55)". He goes further by saying:" I am in blood/stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,/returning were as tedious as go o'er(3.4:136-138)". He is like a hyena kills more and more, placing less and less value on life in general. It could be said that he becomes the worse of the two. He sees nobody except himself. That's why he confesses his outmost brutality: "I have almost forgot the taste of fears.....I have supped full with horrors;/direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,/cannot once start me(5.5:9-15)"

11. Conclusion

Shakespeare wrote Macbeth to show the human suffering from wildness and brutality. This play demonstrates that everyone has the ability to do good or evil by decisions are made that affect the outcome of a person's future. Shakespeare uses the character of Macbeth to demonstrate to his audience and readers that the decisions we make and the actions we take can easily be affected by simple aspects of human nature such as greed or ambition, insatiable appetite, for power that some people seem to possess and that we can so easily be manipulated by others to do wrong. Macbeth is an example of the worst form of human nature. His greed and poor decision making caused him to lose every valuable thing he had worked so hard for. He became blinded by his hunger for power which drove him to incredible lengths such as killing his own cousin, best and long-time friend, to usurp what was promised him by the witches-his dark mind. He points out that although we may know what the right thing to do is we often don't choose to do it. Macbeth has witches in his mind which urge him to kill King Duncan and gain the throne. He accepts without hesitation. He is easily manipulated by his wife's emotional blackmailing.

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