

# Towering Ambition of Macbeth: A Critical Analysis

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**Abstract:** *The paper endeavors to find out the universal significant of Shakespearean's Macbeth to ensure an earth free from greed and violence. Greed and towering ambition are tragic flaws that lead our lovely earthly life to misery. The study believes that the realization of human being to get rid of craving and high ambition can make our world a land of dream. The worldwide message of Macbeth is explored with various comprehensive explanations as well as vivid reference with great thinkers. The tragedy of Macbeth is similar to the tragedy of all modern man yet who sells happiness and peace in lieu of money and power.*

**Keywords:** High ambition, natural punishment, the universal demand of Shakespeare, sin and sufferings.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), a mastermind of renaissance humanism, is hitherto alive in every generation because of his marvelous staging of human characteristics and versatile philosophy on life. It is alleged that Shakespeare is more famed because of his tragedies than comedy. People can make out themselves and their flaws in his different tragedies. The story of *Macbeth* (1606) is very elderly and known but it is fetching more and more relevant in every cohort. Through the ardor of globalization, men are becoming more and more discontent about what they belong. They are hounding but where, they do not know. Some time they mislay their morality as well as themselves to fulfill it. Macbeth depicts the reality of discontent life with a vivid heart touching presentation.

Macbeth, a valiant combatant of Scotland, was returning with his friend Banquo and stopped heeding three witches who prophesized Macbeth three positions as thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor and the King hereafter. Coming from there, Macbeth truly got first two positions but the king. He shared this event to his wife lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth became more ambitious about her husband's future. When Macbeth invited King Duncan, the honest king of Scotland, Lady Macbeth made a plot how to slay old king Duncan to ensure the position of her husband as a king of entire Scotland. She enticed her husband to slaughter the king. To be the thane of two territories was adequate for a general soldier but they could not make contented themselves. At last, Macbeth with inspire of his wife killed the old innocent king Duncan who believed Macbeth truly. Duncan says, 'he was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust' (act.1 scene.4). The greediness of Macbeth and his wife did not give chance to live Duncan long. Greed, materialism and avarice can snatch the heart from a breathing man. The scene of killing Duncan and his bodyguards proves how greed hypnotizes people making brutal than beast.

*Macbeth: I have done deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?*

*Lady Macbeth: I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.*

*Did not you speak?*

*Macbeth: One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other;*

*As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.*

*Listening their fear, I could not say 'Amen,'*

*When they did say 'God bless us!'*

*Lady Macbeth; Consider it not so deeply.*

*(Act.2 Scene.2)*

Like, Shakespeare, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) also comprehends this. He asserts, 'the greed of gain has no time or limit to its capaciousness. It's one object is to produce and consume. It has pity neither for beautiful nor for living human beings. It is ruthlessly ready without a moment's hesitation to crush beauty and life'

Through the experience of the world, it is very clear the conflict between man to man, bloodshed all for greed and higher ambition that Macbeth belonged. So it is very necessary to wipe out it from the nascent of life. As Bertrand Russell, a profound educationalist, responds, 'the love of property produces many terrible evils in later years; the fear of losing valued materials possessions is one of the main sources of political and economic cruelty. It is desirable that men and women should, as far as possible, find their happiness in ways which are not subject to private ownership, i.e. in creative rather than defensive activities' (On education, Bertrand Russell)

However, after killing Duncan, Macbeth got natural punishment. He lost his sleep. He had been suffering from insomnia. His sleepless night, actually symbolize the stress and anxiety of high ambitious people who are not content with what they have. So, they make violence to get more than their capability. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare describes 'Though I heard a voice cry, sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep; (Act: 2. Scene: 2). Macbeth had been already king of Scotland. He got all but happiness and a plummet of sleep. Human being is a darling component of nature, but when they become a tremendous materialist through hacking after possession and power,

nature withdraws them. Ambition is something conflicting with happiness and contentment. That's why American monk Thomas Merton (1915-1968) opines, 'When ambition ends, happiness begins'. Besides, Lady Macbeth also started to suffer. It is an axiom, after doing a crime one must suffer. Lady Macbeth was going to be mad unable to wash the blood from her hands. She suffered from hallucination that she felt a smell of blood in her hands. She tried again and again to wash her hands but it prevailed. No one smelled it but she only smelled the bad fume of blood. A sinner suffers in mind always that she cannot pass over. Lady Macbeth repents, 'here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfume of Arabia will not sweeten this hand. Oh, oh, oh' (Scene: 2).

Man need to comprehend that if he does any sins or injustice for greediness, he must suffer. He can skip from the ogle of people but he cannot pass over nature. Man's mind is a powerful court what can reconcile all. Here Shakespeare is trying to counsel us. Other he inserts, 'Time is the old justice that examines all such offenders, and let Time try (As you like it)'. So, people should believe on nature and time that do not betray. To Shakespeare, nature is alive. Like Shakespeare, English poet S.T. Coleridge also picked up the power of nature if anyone becomes greedy. In *The rime of ancient mariner* (1798), we see when ancient mariner with his companions killed the albatross because of greediness how nature castigated them. After losing all of his followers in death, ancient mariner realized the philosophy of life as what might the fruit if we hurt an innocent creation. Like King Duncan, here 'albatross' is the pictogram of innocence. Men kill the innocence when they become discontent with what they have.

It is much inbred to human being when they did any sin; they try to counsel him as any way. Like Lady Macbeth, she says, 'What is done cannot be undone' (Act.5 scene.1). Macbeth and his wife Lady Macbeth got whole empire but lost happiness or bliss. Later, Lady Macbeth killed herself because of mental pressure. After the death of her wife and getting yarn of war, he understood his misdeeds. He comprehend life is not mere possession. He saw the death body of his beloved wife, he says,

*'Life is a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing. (Act.5 scene.5)*

Shakespeare believed that life is nothing but a stage of drama where we are like meager poor players. We are coming and going. We cannot belong anything undyingly here. He added our life is like a story. We are living on this tale. Macbeth reminded us that sometime we do something seriously, later we are laughing for our doing. Life is an idiocy. It is a noisy place where everybody is fighting for

craving and yearning. But ultimately he gets nothing but suffering. Then Macbeth understood as S.T. Coleridge says, 'a sadder, a wiser' (*The Rime of Ancient Mariner*). Like Shakespeare vividly cleared his outlook on life, 'signifying nothing'. Like Macbeth, Leo Tolstoy's (1886) Pahom, a peasant in a village, believed, "if I had plenty of land, I shouldn't fear the Devil himself!". After buying and selling a lot of fertile and good land; lastly, he got an offer, their offer is very strange: for an amount of one thousand rubles, Pahom could walk around as large an area as he wanted, starting at dawn, marking his route with a spade along the way. If he reaches his starting point by sunset that day, the entire area of land his way encloses would be his, but if he does not reach his starting point he will lose his money and receive no land. He is delighted as he believed that he could cover a great distance and had chanced upon the bargain of a lifetime. He ran out as much as possible, marking out land until just before the sun sets. Toward the end, he understood he was far from the starting point and returned as hasty as he could to the waiting man who was the owner of the land. Finally he returned at the nascent point just as the sun set. The owner became happy for his success, but exhausted from the run, Pahom died just as reached there. His servant buried him in an ordinary grave only six feet long. Pahom got a huge the lands as a substitution of his life. Through the story we see, human nature pushes to want more and more. People are never content with their lives, no matter how well off they may be, and, while trying to better out standard of living, they put themselves in danger of ending up with nothing.

Like Pahom, Macbeth died fighting with Macduff. Being obtuse to dig up throne, once Macbeth killed Macduff's wife and children, now he took revenge killing Macbeth. Macbeth left the earth captivating nothing but blame of Scotland. Shakespeare at the launch of the play opines through the witches, 'fair is foul, foul is fair (Act.1 scene.1)'. It is an enigma of life. There is nothing actually happiness in life. Fair and foul depend on person. Happiness does not depend on it. It depends on content that Macbeth could not keep on and that is the tragic flaw of his life.

Siddhartha Gautama Buddha (563-483 BCE) also deemed in this philosophy. In Buddhism, suffering is an ingrained part of existence; that the origin of suffering is craving for sensuality, acquisition of identity, and annihilation. Like Shakespeare's Macbeth, Buddha also vividly asserted the cause of human sufferings is desire, craving and longing. Let's end with Socrates, "He who is not contented with what he has, would not be contented with what he would like to have."

Shakespeare endeavored to portray the meaning of life through entertaining and lucid presentation as every people could absorb his works. Sometime he asserted comic scene in tragedy or tragic scene in his comedy believing life is not mere tragedy or comedy but mingling both. The most of his plays contain some specific themes closely related to

universal human beings. Hence, any reader can be attached with his writings. Shakespeare often pursued his reader to understand the life how it is. His *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* urge to know the tragic flaws of all human beings and identify the causes of human sufferings. Readers can eliminate his desolation through reading his works and get the meaning life. Poet John Keats states, '*I never quite despair and I read Shakespeare- indeed I shall I think never read any other Book much. I am very agreeing with Hazlitt that Shakespeare is enough for us*'. Critics often state that Shakespeare touched every path of human life feeling every passion of all mankind through his genius hand. American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson esteemed him saying, '*No sequent centuries could hit orbit and sum of Shakespeare's wit*'. So, Shakespeare will triumph in all centuries germane and up-to-the-minute fulfilling reader's appealing. Shakespeare himself had also confident in his works as he wrote, '*So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, So long lives this and this gives life to thee*'.

**Reference:**

1) *Macbeth*- William Shakespeare; publisher: [Penguin Classics](#), ISBN: 9780141396316 ; Edition: 1st Edition, 2015